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The Judeans of Elephantine

Communities in Egypt during the Persian Communities in Egypt during the Persian Period

A Thesis
Presented to the University of Dublin
For the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Near and Middle Eastern Studies
2014

Heidi Campbell

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Declaration

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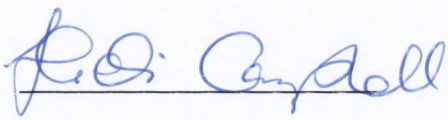

Heidi Campbell

Summary

The central question of this thesis is to determine the underlying reasons behind the destruction of the temple of Yahu in Elephantine. I intend to bring together an examination of the Judean community in the Egyptian context as we can speculate from the papyri and archaeology and as it is presented in the scholarship. I hope to present a greater understanding of the Yahu communities of Elephantine.

In opening this thesis, chapter one will discuss the history of Elephantine island. I will describe the role the island played throughout Egyptian history from the formation of the state through the persian period and including its decline during the Hellenistic and Roman periods. The Egyptian community lived and worshipped the god of the inundation, Khnum, on the island of Elephantine since the Old Kingdom. In this chapter I will discuss the development of the cult of Khnum and the significance of the island of Elephantine to Egyptian religion. By examining the birth and growth of this Egyptian cult we can understand the rivalry, conflict and integration of the Yahu community and the Egyptians.

Having set the historical context for the community, chapter two will discuss numerous possible emergence dates for the community developed and examined through primary and secondary sources. Chapter two will also contribute in setting the context for the social and political condition within the Judean community.

In chapter three I will look at the differences between temples and sanctuaries and the various gods worshipped on Elephantine and Syene. I will also examine a number of comparable temples and shrines as cultic spaces dedicated to Yahu outside Jerusalem in sanctuaries such as Arad, Beer-Sheba, Heliopolis and Gerizim. We will develop a better understanding of the uniqueness and similarities of the Elephantine temple by examining what evidence we have for these other temples. Hence this thesis will attempt to examine the life, culture and context of the Yahu community in Elephantine. It seeks to develop the glimpse we have of the community through the papyri to gain a more complete understanding of the garrison as a whole.

In chapter four I will discuss in detail the origins of the temple of Yahu in Elephantine. By examining the papyri, the historical background of Elephantine island and the Xanthus inscription we can speculate the possible origins of the temple structure. This chapter will also examine the evidence available to discern the source of funding for the temple. This chapter will discuss some of the legal and private issues within the garrison, providing clear evidence for the peaceful and assimilated relationship between the Judean and the Egyptian communities.

Chapter five will discuss the designation of the term Judean and how it is used in establishing a context for the Judean community. This chapter will examine current scholarship and the contemporary developments in the understanding of Judaism and religion during this period.

In chapter six of this thesis we will uncover the relationships and cultural development of the Yahu community with the Egyptians, Persians/Assyrians and Judeans. The idea will be developed that many of the conflicts did not in fact represent the actual social condition of the community. We may speculate that due to the evidence of inter-marriage and worship of foreign gods, the communities existed well alongside each other. This chapter will also examine the numerous reports of rebellions against other "foreign" groups throughout Egypt, indicating a nationwide dissatisfaction with Persian control.

The final chapter of this thesis is a speculative examination of the fate of the community. By examining references in the papyri and using what archaeological data we have, chapter seven will discuss the role of Elephantine after the destruction of the Yahu temple.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank, most sincerely, all the staff and postgraduate students of the departments of Near and Middle Eastern Studies, Religions and Theology and Classics in Trinity College Dublin. In particular I would like to thank my supervisor Prof. Anne Fitzpatrick for her constant patience, advice and support and especially for her passion in this area of research that made every chapter a challenge and a pleasure to complete. I would like to acknowledge the small group of postgraduates under Prof. Fitzpatrick, Robert Stratton, Ronald Geobey, Audrey Barnett, Magdalena Szklarz, Constanza Ficorella and Killian McAleese, for their feedback and advice throughout our presentation sessions and discussions. I would like to thank Prof. Andrew Mayes for introducing me to the intriguing world of ancient Egypt. I would also like to thank Prof. Brian McGing and Prof. Zuleika Rodgers for developing my understanding of archaeology, Josephus and the classical world.

This thesis would never have reached completion without the sacrifices and support of all my family and friends. I would like to thank in particular my brothers, Derek and Kealan who made it possible for me to begin this degree. I would also like to thank Fr. P.J. Byrne whose friendship and support on my travels to Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Syria and Turkey has allowed me to have personal interaction with the geographical areas we share such a passion for. Most importantly, I want to acknowledge Yvette for her constant friendship, wisdom and support. She has listened to every draft of this thesis from the beginning to its completion and has offered support and advice throughout. Above all, my mother Julie, who has been there for me throughout this research with constant love and support.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my grandmother Christine "Daisy" Campbell who first inspired me to investigate the secrets and mysteries of the past. It is only through the study of ancient cultures and civilisations that we can hope to understand the development of religion, cultures and relationships in our modern world and into the future.

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Fig. 1. Bodsworth, Jon. "Relief of Khnum, temple of Amun at Kawa, in Ancient Nubia" Wikimedia Commons, 2007 [Online] available at <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File: Relief_of_Khnum.JPG> (accessed 12/5/09)

Introduction

This thesis is an in-depth study of the Yahu community in Elephantine during the persian period in terms of their emergence, religion, lifestyle and eradication. The Aramaic papyri discovered in Elephantine are our only substantial source for the existence of this community. While most commentaries rely solely on Porten and Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents,* this thesis will use the most recent translations of the texts by using both *TAD* and Porten *The Elephantine Papyri in English.*[1] I have also included a copy of selected relevant primary literature (p.l) particularly for quick access to the papyri. I am aware of a number of early French and German studies of the Elephantine papyri, however I do not examine these in this thesis, specifically due to their early date but also because they cover much of the ground examined and developed by both by Cowley and Porten.[2]

Chapter one will provide a background history of the island of Elephantine. I will examine the history of the area from the formation of the state (3000BCE) to the persian period, and after the decline of the island during the Hellenistic and Roman periods. In

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[1] Bezalel Porten and Ada Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt. Vols 1-4 (*Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1986-1999)., Bezalel Porten, *The Elephantine Papyri in English. Three Millenia of Cross-Cultural Continuity and Change* (New York: Brill, 1996).

[2] N. Aimé-Giron, "Trois ostraca araméens d'Éléphantine," *ASAE* 26 (1926). N. Aimé-Giron, *Textes Araméens dÉgypte* (Cairo: Institut Français, 1931). A. Dupont-Sommer, "Un Ostracon Araméen inédit d'Élephantine adressé á Ahutab," *RES* (1942-45). Eduard Sachau, *Drei Aramäische Papyrusurkunden aus Elephantine* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1908). A. Alt, "Psammetich II. in Palästina und in Elephantine." *ZAW* 30 (1910). A. Ungnad, *Aramäische Papyrus aus Elephantine* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1911).

this chapter I will also examine the role played by the god Khnum in the history of the island. I will investigate the religion of the Egyptian community of Elephantine, the worship of Khnum and the connections with the Yahu community. This chapter will examine general concepts of Egyptian religion and the conditions they created for a Yahu worshipping community. I shall argue that the Judean community was ultimately well assimilated into many aspects of Egyptian culture.

Chapter two is a study of the dates and historical contexts of the emergence of this group and the cultural heritage from which it emerged. The legitimacy of a number of different emergence dates from contemporary scholarship will be examined and tested against evidence brought forth through careful examination of the Aramaic papyri, inscriptions and biblical texts.

Chapter three will provide some insight into the temple of Yahu in Elephantine alongside other Yahu temples and sanctuaries outside Jerusalem, specifically those with a large community and garrison. This section will examine the Arad, Beer-Sheba, Heliopolis and the Gerizim temples. The emergence and role of these temples and sanctuaries will be examined. Light will be thrown on the differences between sanctuaries, temples and altars and their connections with the Temple of Jerusalem and of course to the temple of Elephantine. I will also examine the various deities worshipped and mentioned in the papyri.

In chapter four I will speculate the origins of the temple and the sources of funding. Through the examination of specific case studies in the Aramaic papyri I will attempt to throw light on the

everyday lives of the community, their wealth and social practices. Through these activities and the evidence presented in the archaeology and papyri we can speculate on the origins of the temple. Oaths, marriage contracts and property deeds will be examined in an attempt to complete the political, social and religious background of the Yahu community.

In chapter five I will present the most contemporary arguments concerning the categorisation of Jews and Judeans at this time. There is significant debate in biblical studies surrounding the designation of the term "Jew" for persian period Judeans and I will seek to examine the view that we cannot consider this Yahu community Jewish but rather a typical Near Eastern syncretistic community with clear historical and cultural links to Judah.

Chapter six reveals the complex interactions and social development of the communities of Elephantine. Through the careful examination of the papyri, it will be argued that social integration with the Egyptians was achieved to an extent while antagonism and contempt developed causing ultimately, the destruction of the Temple of Yahu. Discontent was not only to be found within Elephantine. In fact there are accounts of disturbances among foreign groups and Egyptians throughout major cities such as Thebes. This chapter will attempt to provide some account of these rebellions and therefore what can be assumed about the disorder between the Yahu community and the Egyptians. I will also ask why this separate syncretistic group would appeal to both Jerusalem and possibly Samaria for funds and permission to reconstruct the Temple? In this light to what degree were the Yahu community separate from Judah? I will also

examine the possibility set out in the papyri of a relationship or connection between the Elephantine and Samarian communities.

The final chapter of this thesis will seek to account for the fate of the community through evidence available in the archaeological and literary data. We will speculate if the temple was ever rebuilt. We will also question the likelihood if the community remained on Elephantine or if they left after the decline of the community.

Chapter One

A Brief History of Elephantine Island

Introduction

In this opening chapter I will begin my examination on the Elephantine communities by researching the role that the island played throughout its history. I will begin by investigating the activity on the island during the early Egyptian period. By this study I can provide evidence of the importance of Elephantine island both as a trading post but also as an important cultic centre. I shall then describe the role of the island during the persian period, by establishing the religious and political position of the island in the greater Egyptian context. I will show the significance of the evidence provided in the Aramaic papyri in building a study of the communities that lived there. I wish to establish a context for both relationships and conflicts between the Judean community and the Egyptians as demonstrated throughout the papyri and as examined in the secondary material.

The chapter will exam of the role of Khnum and the role of Elephantine as centre for this major Egyptian deity. The identity of the Elephantine community was no more solely Judean then it was solely Egyptian. They were a unique group whose culture was influenced by their past and present, similar to every other so-called foreign group living in Egypt at this time.[3] Local cult was

---

[3] Such as the foreign mercenaries on Syene Island just east of Elephantine.

part of everyday Egyptian life and intrinsically linked to the local traditions.

At the beginning of the first dynasty one of the first acts of the new Egyptian state was to construct a fortress on Elephantine guarding the main shipping and trading route. Foreign mercenaries were indeed used on the island for most of its history as a garrison, however the Judeans were established on the island at a specific time in Egyptian history, when the political domination changed from the High Priests of the the city-cult to the Assyrians and later Persians. While many scholars have argued that the nature of the passover sacrifice was the trigger for much of the animosity between the Yahu community and the Khnum priesthood, I disagree with Schäfer's assessment that the Passover was at the heart of disputes between the two groups, rather, that the developing political struggle placed the Judean community at odds with the Egyptian priesthood.[4] It is therefore essential for this thesis to investigate the importance of the role of Khnum in the Egyptian pantheon in order to develop a full examination of this research question, by researching both the Egyptological and biblical studies perspectives.

Finally, in this opening chapter, I will provide evidence for the role of the island during the Hellenistic and Roman periods. While it is doubtful that the Elephantine garrison continued to exist into the Hellenistic period it is relevant for this study to briefly mention how after the garrisons disappearance the island

---

[4] Peter Schäfer, *Judeophobia, Attitudes towards Jews in the Ancient World* (Boston: Harvard University Press 1997).

itself fell out of focus through inscriptions and activity, with a clear shift in recognition moving to Syene.

Tradition has it that the island of Elephantine was named so due to the unusual elephant ear-shaped rocks just off the island or perhaps due to the high volume of ivory that was traded there from an early date. Elephantine existed as a military garrison from and as a main centre of trade from an early date, we can also speculate that Elephantine formed the departure point for expeditions. In this chapter I will briefly examine Elephantine's role as a trading post, military role and as a point of expedition. I will then examine in detail the role of Khnum on the island, the role of the city-god and the importance of cultic activity in order to develop a local context from which we can later examine the relationships between the Judean community and the Egyptians.

1.1 Elephantine as a point of expedition, trade and as a military base

It is believed that Elephantine was first permanently occupied soon after the formation of the state in 3000 BCE, presumably at the time when borders where being defined.[5] Throughout the dynastic era we have evidence of extensive trade between Egypt and Nubia, and Elephantine was renowned as one of the most beautiful regions of Upper Egypt with many upper class nobles being buried

[5] Robert Wenke, *The Ancient Egyptian State. The origins of Egyptian Culture, 8000-2000 BC* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

on the cliffs overlooking the island.[6] Three men buried at Elephantine had described on their tombs how they led trading expeditions deep into Nubia during the 6th dynasty.[7] The biography of Harkhuf that is carved on his tomb in Elephantine, records how he made three journeys to Nubia during the reign of Pepy II.[8] Throughout their entire histories both the islands of Elephantine and Syene have been central trading districts with ivory, food produce and granite among the vast array of materials being traded.

From pre-dynastic times the local population of Elephantine worshipped at a small shrine. We have today, evidence of small votive objects depicting strange hedgehog plaques that possibly suggests a distinctive religious tradition.[9] The principle focus of the state religion in Elephantine was a large temple to Khnum, while a sanctuary in the area to the deified local hero Heqaib attracted popular worship until the middle kingdom. Heqaib was a high official of the late 6th dynasty during the reign of Pepi II and was responsible for relations with Nubia. He was venerated as an intermediary between humans and gods. During the annual Festival of Sokar a statue of Heqaib was carried through the streets of Elephantine.[10] We have record of the biography of Pepynakht Heqaib, who was a military official on Elephantine under Pepy II.

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[6] Wenke, *The Ancient Egyptian State,* 295.

[7] Marc Van de Mieroop, *A History of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Blackwell Press, 2007), 84.

[8] Ibid., 89.

[9] Rosalie David, *Religion and Magic in Ancient Egypt* (London: Penguin, 2002), 276ff.

[10] Ibid., 278.

> Custodian of the domain and scribe of a phyle of the pyramid of Neferkara, bearer of the royal seal, sole companion, overseer of foreigners, Heqaib. Overseer of the pyramid town of Pepy I, sole companion, ritual priest, overseer of foreigners, who brings products of the foreign countries to his lord, Pepynakht. The leader of the phyle of the pyramid of Merenra, he who instills the terror of Horus in the foreign countries, the revered Heqaib, count, sole companion, chamber attendant, herdsman of Nekhen, lord of Nekheb, overseer of all foreigners, revered before the great god, Pepynakht.
> I am speaker of perfection and a repeater what is desires, I never said anything evil to a superior against any man, because I wish my name to be perfect in the sight of the Great God. I gave bread to the hungry and clothes to the naked. I never judged my fellows in such a way that a son was deprived of his fathers property. I am the beloved one of his father, the favored one of his mother, and beloved by his siblings.
> The majesty of my lord sent me to devastate the land of Wawat and Irtjet. I did what pleases my lord and killed a great number there, including the chiefs' children and the commander of the excellent Nubian troops. I brought a great number of them to the court as prisoners, I being at the head of the expedition, a large and strong force, as one who is strong of heart, and my lord was delighted with me as he was with every mission on which he sent me.
> ....
> The majesty of my lord sent me to the land of Aamu (Asiatics) to bring back (the body of) the sole companion, warden of Nekhen, Kaaper's son, overseer of foreigners Ankhti. He had been building a reed boat there to travel to Punt, when the Aamu and Sand-dwellers killed him and the armed division of the expedition, which was with him.
> ....

According to Van de Mieroop, Heqaib's mortuary temple became a cult site during the Middle Kingdom and Egyptians honoured

Heqaib as the patron of travelers to the south and as an intermediary for the living with the realm of the gods.[11]

As we move into the persian period (529- 334 BCE) we see a change in power and authority within Egypt's political and cultic fields. The control and domination of the high priests having been diminished during the third intermediate period, and now seems almost entirely overlooked by the new authorities. As I will discuss in more detail later, the role of the governor becomes and increasingly significant one for Elephantine in particular.

1.2 City-gods

> ". . . the Egyptians held the view held by many archaic societies that the cohabitation of deities and humanity constituted a primordial state that had irretrievably vanished."[12]

The shared Egyptian state (Pharaoh and priesthood)[13] kept the divine at a distance and yet provided spiritual guidance by compensating for the gods with symbolic presence. As the Pharaoh was believed to be divine, there was a physical representation of the gods. However, it was through local cult and the authority of the priesthood that a more accessible form of cult

---

[11] Nigel. C. Strudwick, *Texts from the Pyramid Age* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), 333-335.

[12] Jan Assmann, *Search for God in Ancient Egypt* (London: Cornell University, 2001), 18.

[13] Ben Harring, "Administration and Law: Pharaonic" in *A Companion to Ancient Egypt. Vol 1,* ed. Alan B. Lloyd (Oxford: 2010), 226.

developed, one that effected the everyday lives of the Egyptian people. The worship of cult statues and amulets for example allowed people access to gods in their own homes.[14] This symbolic attitude was so effective that in the later periods of Egyptian history, the entire land was considered to be symbolically inhabited by the gods. The temples, in turn, paid no taxes to the state, instead they were issued with royal donations and maintained by the town or city of the temple.[15]

The gods of a temple ruled their individual cities. An Egyptian city was always the city of the deity. This is made clear in some paraphrases such as, "city of Amun", "city of Thoth" and "city of Ptah", which were referred to as Thebes, Hermopolis and Memphis in Greek.[16] The Greeks later introduced names of this sort for most Egyptian cities, the city of the wolf god, Wepwawet became Lykopolis, in Greek meaning the city of the wolf and the "city of sobek," the crocodile god, became known as Krokodilopolis, the city of the crocodile. While the originally Egyptian names were different, the Greek understanding of the role of the city-god displayed the perception that the Egyptian city was the territory of a deity.

---

[14] Kasia Szpakowska, *Daily Life in Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) 124, 133. We have many examples of various statues found in domestic dwellings used for various everyday issues; for healing, wealth, a good harvest and to conceive. I will discuss the use of statues and ritual below.

[15]Assmann, *Search for God*, 19.

[16] Ibid., 19.

Fig. 2. Wallis, E.A. "Wepwawet: Jackal God of Abydos" Crystalinks, 2010 [Online] available at <http://www.crystalinks.com/wepwawet.html> (accessed 12/5/09)

Amun played a leading role in the theology of Ancient Egypt. His role as Supreme Being is somewhat confusing when we consider the multitude of gods worshipped, from creator-gods to sun-gods. However, we may suggest that when viewed from the perspective of the cult, there was only one god in whom all these aspects were united. Amun did not compete with the traditional creator-gods, rather he incorporates their essence to himself. Animal worship and other traditional forms of worship were promoted and encouraged during dynasty 26 (685-525 BCE).[17] There was a conscious attempt to reproduce the dress, art, religion and writing of earlier times. Ancient titles of nobility were revived, canopic jars were once again used to hold mummified viscera, and pyramid texts were once again inscribed on the walls. There was also a surge in the production of high-class ushabtis.[18]

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[17] David, *Religion and Magic,* 308.

[18] Ibid.

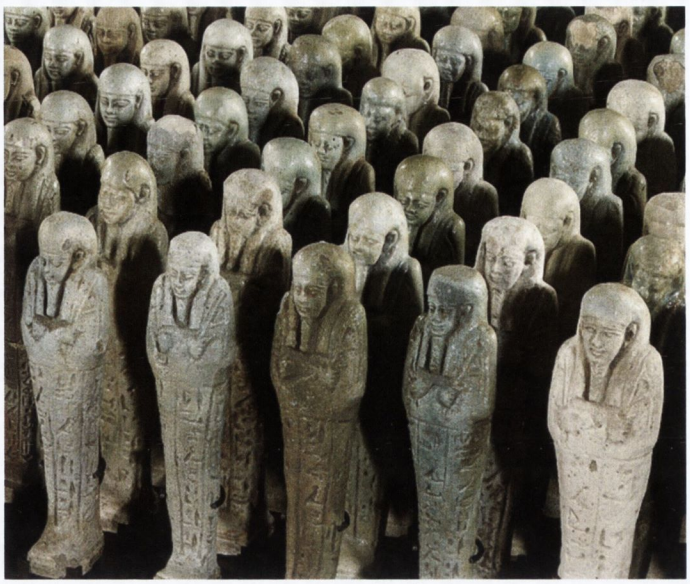

Fig. 3. Poncet, Georges. "'Ushabti troop of Nefer-ib-Ra-em-heb' faience" Musée du Louvre, Paris, 2007. [Online] available at <http://nga.gov.au/journey/noflash/index.cfm> (accessed 12/5/09)

The Egyptian word for ram sounded similar to the word Egyptian word for soul, *ba*.[19] Khnum, therefore, is sometimes associated with

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[19] The closest translation of the term *ba* is the soul, although is not totally comparable with the modern conception of the"soul". In fact, the *ba* was similar to the aspect of a person that makes them individual, somewhat similar to modern concept of personality. Unlike our understanding of the soul, the *ba* could be viewed as a physical separate mode of existence even before death. The *ba* of a deity for example, could exist separate to that god/goddess. For example, the sun was the *ba* of the god Re and the Apis bull was the *ba* of Osiris. There is very little account in Egyptian records of the *ba* of ordinary people, however, the Middle Kingdom text, "A Dialogue of a Man with his *Ba*" identifies the journey through life, of a man and his soul and the difficulties of life versus the uncertainty of life after death. After death the *ba* of the deceased unites with their *ka* (body) to form a kind of transfigured spirit or soul. The *ka* was the unique temperament and nature of the person and comes into existence at birth. In fact, it was believed to have been modeled by the god Khnum on his potter's wheel at the same time as the physical body. The united *ka* and *ba* are known as the *akh* and exists in both this world and the underworld. The soul of the deceased is only able to survive if the body is provided with the proper sustenance and protection. There is therefore, major debate in the world of Egyptology concerning the removal and display of mummified bodies in respect of the deceased's burial beliefs and traditions.

the souls of other gods. Most literature on the afterlife (including coffin and pyramid texts) show the nocturnal sun as a man with a ram's head because it is the soul of Ra that is in battle throughout the underworld.[20] Khnum embodied the dangerous but life-giving nature of the annual inundation. As a creator deity, he shaped people and animals, their lives and health and played a major role in the Egyptian pantheon. He was sometimes paired with the frog goddess Heqet, however he is better known for his membership of a triad with Satet and Anukit.[21] It was because of the mud spread by the inundation that Khnum was associated with the potter's wheel.[22] In the Pyramid and Coffin texts, he mainly makes objects such as boats.[23] He is also viewed as an assistant at birth. His role was to keep the bodies of people healthy, which takes place in the celestial realm. Later texts that discuss the births of divine kings show Khnum making the royal body and it's ka (double) in his wheel, and is also evident in the hymns to Khnum seen below in primary literature. The so-called *Famine Stela* (see appendix page 247) found at the first cataract was a decree by King Djoser (2667-2648 BCE) but was actually composed 2,500 years later.[24] It tells of seven years of severe famine due to the failure of the Nile flood leaving the land parched and barren. King Djoser summoned the wisest priest, Imhotep, who could read the sacred books and

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[20] Geraldine Pinch, *Egyptian Mythology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 154. Raymond Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead.* (London: University of Texas Press, 1985), 44, 57, 61.

[21] Pinch, *Egyptian Mythology*, 154.

[22] Ibid.

[23] James Henry Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt, Vol.4* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 890.

[24] Ibid., 990.

ordered him to discover the source of the inundation. The priest discovered that the floodwaters came from twin caverns under the island of Elephantine. Only the god Khnum had the power to unbolt the doors and release the flood. Djoser made offerings to the ram headed god and later Khnum appeared to the king in a dream and promised the inundation.

It is quite probable that this decree was a way for the priesthood of Khnum to legitimate their hold on the land and to accentuate the importance of placating the god. It is a common tradition to legitimate decrees and laws by rooting them in the past.[25] There is no evidence that this decree had any actual effect on the power of the priesthood.

1.3 City life.

Generally Egyptian cities were not permitted to be surrounded by walls, instead only temple enclosures and divine dwellings were fortified.[26] The aim of these high walls was to declare control and dominance of the flat land constituting the centre of the city. Elephantine was not an exception. The Khnum complex was fortified with a surrounding wall which cut close through the Yahu

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[25] Although composed in the early Ptolemaic period the Famine Stela found on Sehal Island legitimates the cult of Khnum and the hierarchy of the Khnum priesthood by setting the law under an earlier Pharaoh.

[26] Breasted, *Ancient Records*, 19.

area of the island and close to the Yahu Temple.[27] These monumental buildings held the promise of divine presence and promised protection for those who served the god. However, one could only follow the god of one's own city and divine service was reserved for city-dwellers.

> Happy is he who lives in Thebes. He goes to rest in the sacred place as a living ba.[28]

"A city was ultimately a temple located on the primeval mound, the home and domain of an autochthonous deity".[29] For Assmann we must accept that statement literally; that it was precisely in its nature as a divine dwelling that a city bound people to one another and made them feel safe.[30] According to Assmann, the temple was considered the centre of civil municipal administration in Egypt and so it was for Elephantine.[31] He comments that city dwellers could work in the temple as lay priests, who were the "hour-priests" that served in the temples in monthly rotations, and these "hour-priests" were under the control of the royal official.[32] With the exception of very large temples that could employ many

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[27] Bezalel Porten, *Archives from Elephantine* (California: Berkeley, 1968). I will deal in more detail with the question of land ownership and domination in respect of the wall and the construction of a second boundary wall after the first destruction of the temple in later chapters.

[28] Breasted, *Ancient Records,* 830.

[29] Assmann, *Search for God,* 25.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

persons, most smaller local temples consisted of about ten to twenty persons who dwelled in houses inside the temple enclosure.[33]

1.3.1 *Death and Temple Practice*

The most important investment in an ancient Egyptian's life was his tomb.[34] McDowell discusses how the workmen of Deir el-Medina were famous for their tomb building and how they built their own tombs.[35] Deir el-Medina is a site on the west bank of the Nile at Thebes, situated in a bay in the cliffs north of the Valley of the Queens. The village was inhabited by successive generations of workmen until the end of the 20th dynasty. Some deities represented in the tombs found at Deir el- Medina such as the ram headed god Khnum and the goddesses, Anukit and Satit, originated in the region of Elephantine at the first cataract. As in Elephantine, Khnum was worshipped here as the god of the inundation.[36]

Funerary goods such as ushabtis, canopic jars, amulets and funerary masks were all standard items for tombs. These items not only provide us with insight into funerary and religious beliefs but also everyday life. Items such as perfume bottles, cosmetic

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[33] Assmann, *Search for God, 25.*

[34] A.G, McDowell, *Village Life in Ancient Egypt, Laundry Lists and Love Songs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

[35] Ibid., 67ff.

[36] Sigrid Hodel-Hoenes, *Life and Death in Ancient Egypt. Scenes from private tombs in New Kingdom Thebes* (London: Cornell University, 2000), 241-247.

containers, games, toys, vessels for food and drink and even food offerings provide us with invaluable information on the daily life of an ancient Egyptian.[37] In tombs we also find small clay models of workmen, servants, brewers, bakers, also model houses and estates all of which were believed to come to life and exist in the owner's afterlife. The necropolises across Egypt contain an abundance of artefacts and literature that allows significant in-depth study of funerary customs. Elephantine is no different. In a short paper written by Dietrich Raue of the British Museum, he examines the existence of communities in Elephantine from the third millennium BCE by researching the necropolis on the island. [38] Generally great cemeteries grow up around a royal burial site, thus the Thebes, Giza and Saqqara necropolises are particularly important for the study of religion development and funerary architecture.[39]

The highest goal in life was to be buried in the city were one had been born.[40] So it is significant to note the many Elephantine city dwellers that abandoned the island to side with the Nubians under Psammetichus I (or Psamtik as referred to in some literature), would be bound to link their family name to their city. For it was the city that retained their memory thus keeping them

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[37] Rosalie David, *The Experience of Ancient Egypt* (London: Routledge, 2000), 16.

[38] Dietrich Ruae, "Who was who in Elephantine of the third Millennium BC." *British Museum Studies in Ancient Egypt and Sudan* 9 (2008), 1-14.

[39] David, *The Experience of Ancient Egypt*, 9.

[40] Ibid.

alive even after death.[41] It was only fear of retribution that could cause officials to flee.[42] Such a case is recorded in the middle Egyptian story the Tale of Sinuhe. Flight in this context was treated as desertion and severely punished. While forced labour is among some of the known punishments for desertion, it may well be accurate to assume that Psammetichus allowed the development of a Yahu temple to be constructed both out of necessity but also as retribution for the abandonment of the garrison by the Egyptians. While this is highly speculative, we may assume that the local Egyptians having abandoned their posts, were considered untrustworthy and a foreign group of mercenaries employed for a specific role would have been far more reliable. Furthermore, the granting of a temple for the Judean community may not have been so unusual. Foreign groups during Ptolemaic period were granted temples and as far as we are aware, there were temples to Bethel, Queen of Heaven (Anath/Astarte) and Banit on the neighbouring islands.[43] We must note however, that the key characteristic of the Egyptian legal court system was its flexibility.[44] There are no fixed rules that we know of and it seemed to be guided on custom and tradition.

Some temples were made of brick, but as a rule a temple was a monumental stone construction at least from the New Kingdom

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[41] David, *The Experience of Ancient Egypt*, 9.

[42] Ibid., 10.

[43] Porten, *Elephantine*, B1. "Greetings, Temple of Bethel and Temple of the Queen of Heaven." Porten and Yardeni, *TAD*, A2.4. "Greetings to the Temple of Banit in Syene.", "and also perfumed oil for the Temple of Banit." (p.l).

[44] McDowell, *Village Life*, 169.

onwards and for the most part for earlier periods too. Stone was confined to the sacred architecture, which included temples and tombs. The contrast between the sacred and the profane was thus strongly emphasised in architecture.[45] The Ptolemaic temples offer the advantage of a clearly defined model; nearly the same architectural concept underlies all the large temples and this common plan was derived from the existence of a primeval temple designed by the creator-god himself at the beginning of the world.[46] For example, we can view the Edfu complex as a typical case study. At the temple of Horus at Edfu, two elements clearly stand out: the monumental pylon and the freestanding naos of the sanctuary. This naos is surrounded by (1) a corridor, (2) a ring of thirteen rooms opening off three sides of this corridor, (3) another corridor connected to the roof, (4) an outer corridor, (5) the exterior walls of the temple.

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[45] Assmann, *Search for God*, 35.

[46] Ibid., 30.

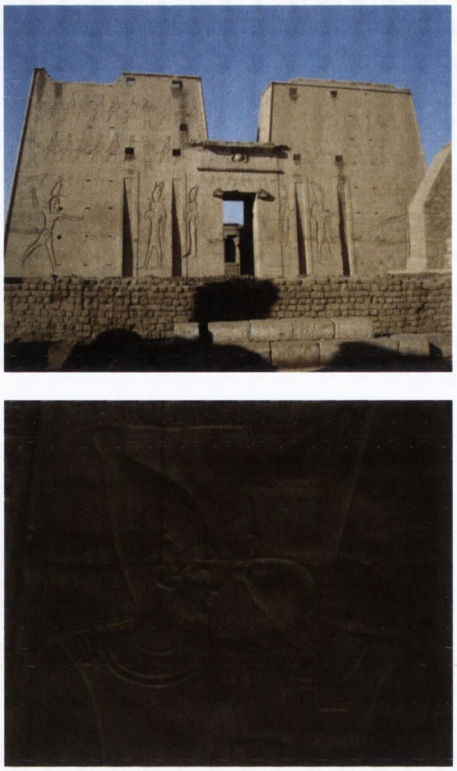

Fig. 4. Temple of Edfu, Egypt. Personal photographs by author. 13 0ct, 2007.

From the exterior to the interior, the rooms become ever smaller while the floor becomes higher and the ceiling lower. The darkened Hall of Appearance follows the courtyard which is flooded with light.[47] The inner rooms purposefully lay in deep darkness with only remote slits in the roof that cast random streams of light and ventilation. The insulation and isolation of the Holy of Holies is connected with the notion of "screening off."[48] The impure were unable to penetrate these five "layers" of protection surrounding the sanctuary. The god resided in his temple in two forms: as a cult statue and as a portable processional barque.

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[47] Assmann, *Search for God*, 30.

[48] Ibid., 31.

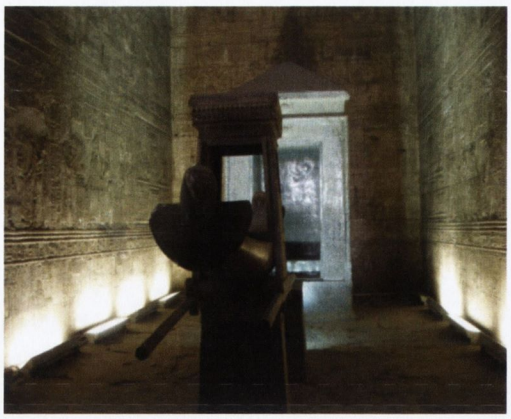

Fig. 5. Barque of Horus, Temple of Edfu, Egypt. Personal photograph by author. 13 Oct, 2007.

The statue reified the god who rested in the most screened off part of the temple. The barque of the god left the Holy of Holies on festival days and proceeded outwards through the hypostyle halls and "appeared" in the profane outer-world. The processional route also extended beyond the temple, along a specific avenue to the river where it was sent downstream to meet with his counterpart, Hathor.[49] Other temples too had sacred avenues that connected one temple to another that allowed the god to visit during processions.[50] For example, the avenue of the sphinxes and rams connected the Luxor and Karnak temples.

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[49] Lorna Oakes and Lucia Gahlin, *Ancient Egypt: an illustrated reference to the myths, religions, pyramids and temples of the land of the pharaohs* (London: Hermes House, 2005), 474.

[50] Ibid.

Fig. 6. Avenue of Sphinxes and Rams, Luxor, Egypt. Personal photograph by author. 11 Oct. 2007.

The festival outings meant the deliberate design of urban planning. For example, the avenue of the Sphinxes and Rams that connected the temples of Karnak and Luxor held little respect for the surrounding city, but instead creates a processional pathway 2700 meters long for solely cultic purposes.[51] These processional avenues were astounding in their monumentality and were uncompromising with the surrounding city. Houses and businesses were destroyed to create this uninterrupted avenue that cut in two the cities of Luxor and Karnak.

Fig. 7. Su. "Temple of Satet" Egyptian Monuments, 2009. [Online] available at <http://egyptsites.wordpress.com/2009/01/31/elephantine-island/> (accessed 30/10/09).

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[51] The avenue of Sphinxes is still being excavated today. It was used to carry the statue of a god/goddess from one temple in accordance to various festivals.

The temple of Khnum was the largest temple dedicated to the ram-headed god. We also have evidence that Khnum's consort Satis also had a large temple on the island, which certainly may have connected to the temple of Khnum. The inundation is portrayed in the story found on the Famine Stela.[52] Anukit, usually shown wearing a feathered headdress, was a concubine of Khnum. She was the goddess of the cataract on Egypt's southern border and had her chief shrine on the nearby island of Sehel. Satit, daughter of Khnum and Anukit, married her father Khnum and was also worshipped on the island of Sehel as a goddess of hunting and the inundation.[53]

1.3.2 *Temple Cult and Ritual*

The floor of most of the later temples represented the god Geb (the earth) and the ceiling represented the goddess Nut (the sky). Columns appeared as plants growing from Geb (mainly papyrus plants) and also fertility figures displaying fruitfulness that must always point toward the temple sanctuary as offerings.[54] The ceilings were painted in dark blues and navy with bright stars or other astronomical representations. Between Geb and Nut, stretched wall reliefs and decorations with numerous cultic scenes. Secondary deities or "theoi synnaoi" who were worshipped in the small side chapels surrounding the Holy of Holies provided the social representation on these reliefs.[55] No deity was ever the sole

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[52] Breasted, *Ancient Records,* 450.

[53] David, *The Experience of Ancient Egypt,* 306.

[54] Assmann, *Search for God,* 35.

[55] Ibid., 30.

occupant of his or her temple. The great morning liturgy greeted the god and signified the cult statue's awakening in the sanctuary. In Elephantine, the excavations have reconstructed the architectural history of a temple that includes *all* periods of Pharaonic history.[56] This allows us to study in detail the developments of architecture and divine dwelling throughout ancient Egypt, no other temple exists that displays such an apparent evolution from a cave system to temple.[57]

The daily cult ritual entailed the priest awakening, greeting, worshipping, purifying, anointing and dressing the cult statue. The statue was also given three large quantities of food offerings daily. This daily cult ritual was a highly complex affair. There were rites of clothing and these clothing rites alone consisted of at least 45 individual acts.[58] On top of that, every action was broken down into its smallest elements and developed into individual rites. Assmann gives us the example of nine acts of the morning clothing ritual. 1) lighting the flame, 2) taking up the arm shaped censer, 3) placing the pan on the censer, 4) placing incense in the flame, 5) going to the sanctuary, 6) breaking the cord, 7) breaking the seal, 8) sliding the door bolt, 9) "revealing" the god.[59] (Opening the door leaves of the shrine).

The offering ritual was just as complicated and it consisted of preparatory rites to purify the offerings as well as the actual

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[56]Assman, *Search for God*, 30.

[57] Ibid., 32.

[58] Ibid., 48.

[59] Ibid.

offering and praise of the deity. The temple of Esna from the Graeco-Roman period contains a rich source of documentation for the cult of Khnum.[60] In the morning hymn he is identified with Amun, Re, Shu and Horus. He is most closely linked with the creator-god, which is revealed especially throughout the Great hymn to Khnum.[61] This ceremony mirrored the ritual of dressing the Pharaoh in the morning and was thus rooted in the concept that the deity was resident in a city. Therefore, it was not directed at a distant and separate god but at the presence of a divine "enlivened" resident. The priest assumes the roles of such deities as Horus, Thoth, Anubis, and Harsaphes. This was simply an interaction between deities as Assmann states rather than a communication between the human and the divine.[62] Another ritual celebrated at Elephantine was the Great Hymn of Khnum, which was sung at the feast of installing the potter's wheel and was celebrated on the first day of the month of Phamenot. It consisted of three parts with the creator-god element featuring predominantly.

1.3.3 Statues and Cultic Ritual

The city-god nearly always determined the life and death of the inhabitants of the city. The concept of the city deity was one of the most ancient elements of Egyptian mythology. The centre around which everything revolved was the cult, the daily routine of

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[60] Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: a book of readings. Vol.3, The Late Period* (London: University of California Press, 1980), 109.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Assmann, *Search for God,* 49.

service rendered to the gods who were in the form of the cult statue. The statues themselves have two natures: one divine and one material. The creators of the statues are reminded of their own divine origin and through worship they bring the divine to earth.[63] For example the text from Dendara says of Hathor:

She flies down ('pi) from the sky,
To enter the akhet of her ka on earth,
She flies down onto her body,
She joins with her form.[64]

This *descensio* as Assmann refers to it, affected not only the cult statue, but also all the representations of the god in the temple even those on the walls.[65]

She unites with her forms,
That are carved in her sanctuary

She alights on her forms,
That are carved on the wall.[66]

The gods therefore do not "dwell" on earth rather they "install" themselves there and specifically they "install" themselves in their images.[67] The ritual of *Uniting with the Sun* was carried out several

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[63] Ibid., 40.

[64] Breasted, *Ancient Records*, 683.

[65] Assmann, *Search for God*, 42.

[66] Breasted, *Ancient Records*, 683.

[67] Assmann, *Search for God*, 43.

times a year on the occasion of major religious festivals.[68] The festival of the inundation led by the god Khnum is one such example of a major festival. The priests would carry the small cult statues to the temple roof to be bathed in the sunlight and "charged" with divine substance.[69] A verb was even derived from the noun *ba* to designate the statues "charged" condition.[70] What is striking about this concept is that it was not only statues of the sun-god but also all divine statues which were enlivened by contact with the sunlight. (This is with the exception of the Amarna theology, which did not use cult statues).[71] Many rituals throughout Egyptian history often become linked and assimilated into other rituals and quite often this ritual of enlivening became linked with the ritual of the "Opening of the Mouth" which was carried out in connection with the "Uniting of the Sun" at Esna and

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[68] During this ritual, the statue of the god is carried by the High Priest and bathed in the suns light normally at dawn. The divine spirit and power of the god is enforced through the light of the sun. This ritual is enacted for most main city-gods on their specific feast days as described for the feast of the inundation of Khnum.

[69] McDowell, *Village Life,* 91.

[70] Assmann, *Search for God,* 44.

[71] McDowell, *Village Life,* 96.

Komombo. It was a comprehensive series of rites whose roots were set in the funerary cult.[72]

As early as the Old Kingdom, this was carried out on divine images as routinely as the Uniting of the Sun ritual in the Ptolemaic period. In the New Kingdom, the ritual included scenes from the solar cult that were enacted in the forecourt of the tomb in the light of the sun. With regard to the classical Egyptian concept of the essence of divine images, the most obvious text is the so-called Memphite Theology (dynasty 25).[73] This text is made up of a tractate on the Memphite deity creator god Ptah:

He "bore" the Gods,
He created the cities, He founded the names,
He placed the gods in their cult places,
He established their offerings,
And equipped their sanctuaries,
He made their "bodies" according to their wishes

So the gods entered their "bodies,"
Of all kinds of wood,
All kinds of minerals,
All kinds of clay,
And of everything that grows him,

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[72] Assmann, *Search for God*, 45. The "Opening of the Mouth" ceremony is used to bring life to the dead and their funerary statues and sometimes on entire temples as well. Most evidence for the ritual comes from the Pyramid texts, the Book of the Dead and New Kingdom inscriptions. The later inscriptions went so far as to include details of 75 separate elements to take place during the rites. The most important acts involved in the ceremony included touching various parts of the mummy or statue with special instruments in order to open the mouth and restore the senses and allow the soul to rejoin the body. Toby Wilkinson, *The Thames Hudson Dictionary of Ancient Egypt* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2005), 177. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian*, 61ff.

[73] Breasted, *Ancient Records*, 450.

(The earth = creator god),
In which they took form.[74]

This text confirms the triad of city, temple and cult image. The statue is not the image of the deity's body but the body itself, it gives him form. The statues themselves were not considered to have been made but "born". In royal inscriptions, "to bear" is practically a technical term for the fashioning of a cult statue and the artisans say that they "bore" the statues or the deities of the statue.[75]

The hymn of the two architects lauds the sun-god as "the Khnum and Amun of humankind".[76] Here, Khnum is portrayed as the creator-god who forms the child in the womb and Amun, the one who imparted breath of life into it. It is also worth noting that in Egypt deities "spoke" through movement to make their wills known.[77] Thus, the image moved towards the "pretender" chosen to be the successor to the throne. Oracles had to be formulated in such a way that require a yes or no answer, therefore a forward movement signified yes and a backward movement indicated no.[78]

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[74] Breasted, *Ancient Records*, 450.

[75] David, *The Experience of Ancient Egypt*, 9.

[76] Breasted, *Ancient Records*, 392.

[77] Assmann, *Search for God*, 35.

[78] Ibid.

1.4 The Political and Military Role of Elephantine

Even as far back as the first dynasty (3000 BCE) Elephantine was an important military location.[79] The extension of political control during the first dynasty is evident by the remains of a fortress on the highest point of the shore on Elephantine.[80] A large fortified wall was then built around the fortress during the second dynasty (2890 BCE- 2686 BCE).[81] Throughout Egyptian history, Elephantine island was an important strategic location for military supremacy particularly during the intermediate periods.[82]

According to Van de Mieroop a vast amount of archaeology from the third and fifth dynasties (2686-2345 BCE) can be found in Abydos and Elephantine.[83] Although problematic much of these remains and the great monuments are dated in this period in a sequence provided by using King lists. Elephantine was also home to a number of political and cult related stele such as the Sethnakht stele in which Sethnakht of the 20th dynasty accuses earlier kings of having given away their gold and silver to Asiatics.[84] A papyrus composed during the reign of Ramses IV (1155-1149 BCE) but written under the name Ramses III stated:

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[79] Katheryn Bard, "The Emergence of the Egyptian State" in *Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 83.

[80] Bard, "The Emergence", 83.

[81] Ibid., 83.

[82] Bard, "The Emergence", 131.

[83] Van de Mieroop, *A History of Ancient Egypt*, 54.

[84] Ibid., 244.

> A certain Syrian, Yarsu, was their chief. He made the entire land tributary to him. One would gather his companions and steal their property. They treated the gods just like men. No one made offerings in the temples.[85]

The significance of this text for this examination of Elephantine is that it shows Elephantine's importance as a place where military, political and official decrees were highlighted. I wish to highlight the importance of Elephantine and its significance as a garrison town, a cultic centre, and multi-ethnic trading post in order to focus this study on the reasons behind the eventual eradication of the temple and as far as we can speculate the Judean community with it.

During the third intermediate period (1069- 664 BCE) control and domination spread from Nubia into Egypt, the extent to which is a strongly debated topic.[86] According to Van de Mieroop, Theban sources mention viceroys of Kush at least until about 750 BCE.[87] there is evidence that they left inscriptions on the temples around Elephantine but it remains uncertain the extent of their actual power or if it was simply a ceremonial position.

Psamtik I (or Psammetichus 664-610 BCE) reunified Egypt after his father Necho I (672-664 BCE) had previously ruled at Sais under Assyrian protection and had been assassinated by the Nubian King, Tanutamani in 664 BCE.[88] Psamtik succeeded with

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[85] Van de Mieroop, *A History of Ancient Egypt*, 244.

[86] Ibid., 277.

[87] Ibid., 277.

[88] Alan B. Lloyd, "The Late Period" in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2002) 71.

the same Assyrian support and initially controlled half the delta with centres at Sais, Memphis and Athribis, as well as Buto. His bond with Assyria, however, did not last and in 658 BCE he gained support from Gyges of Lydia, an episode that has been echoed in Herodotus, whereby Psamtik employed Carian and Ionian mercenaries in his efforts to strengthen and extend his authority. He also opened trade links to the Greeks and Phoenicians. He eventually gained control over the entire delta and from here he gained rule over the rest of the country by 656 BCE. While this control was developed through diplomacy, there was a clear and threatening presence of foreign mercenaries including the newly formed Yahu worshipping garrison at Elephantine.[89] They threatened the local control of the Egyptian temples. Particularly under Cambyses, the foreign groups were quite often placed in positions of control over the local Egyptians. The mercenaries who played a significant role in the conquest and control of the country made a major contribution. They guaranteed Egypt's security from external attack against enemies, particularly from Nubia in the south.

Egyptian life under Psamtik II and the Saite Period (dynasty 26, 664-525 BCE) in general, was not so difficult or different as it had been under previous Egyptian Pharaohs. The inscription of Neferibre-Nofer contains many references to his building work despite the lack of information we may have for the rest of his reign.[90] Nerferibre-Nofer was a "magazine overseer" who could have been no other than the Neferibre-Nofer of another statue at Cairo who held the same office under Psamtik II and bore also the

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[89] Ibid.

[90] Breasted, *Ancient Records,* 985.

name Irhoro. Besides being guardian and tutor of the king, he also held the rank of "hereditary, prince, count, wearer of the royal seal and sole companion."[91]

This fragmentary reminder contains references to liberal offerings to the gods, "for the sake of the life, prosperity and health of king Psamtik (II), living like Re".[92] As Lichtheim tells us in her description of the translation, the victory stela of Psamtik II is an important monument that sheds light on the Nubian campaign, which is addressed in Herodotus.[93] Lichtheim points out that the text has some noteworthy literary features, particularly the description of the king's sightseeing tour of Elephantine.[94] Psamtik never actually led his army into Nubia instead choosing to wait in the safety of the Elephantine garrison awaiting a report on the battle.

> His majesty was roaming the marshes at lake Neferibre, circling its inundated land, traversing its two islands, viewing the sycamores of god's land on its mud bank, his heart eager (5) to see the goodness (or, beauty), like the Great God traversing the primeval water. Then one came to tell his majesty:
> "The troops your majesty sent to Nubia have reached the hill-country of Pnubs. It id a land lacking a battlefield, a place lacking horses...
> Victory Stela of Psamtik II [95]

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[91] Ibid., 982.

[92] Ibid., 500.

[93] Lichtheim, *Ancient Records*, 84. Herodotus 2. 161.

[94] Ibid., 85.

[95] Ibid. (p.l).

In 525 BCE, the country was invaded and conquered by Cambyses (dynasty 27). The Persian rulers identified themselves with the Egyptian pharaoh, thus gaining popular acceptance. Herodotus tells us that Cambyses failed in his duty to the gods when he killed the Apis Bull worshipped at Saqqara, despite having his name inscribed on a sarcophagus of one of the bulls claiming to be a promoter of the cult.[96] Cambyses did not succeed in his attempt to invade Nubia.[97] Herodotus tells us that Cambyses sent the "fish eaters' (ichthyophagi) of Elephantine to spy on the land and report back to him.[98] We can presume that during this time in Elephantine, he toured the island and its temples. Doubtless many temples became desolate when their incomes were cut off and Kraeling believes that those cults of animal worship such as Elephantine suffered most.[99] According to a demotic edict of Cambyses, only three temples were officially recognised, that of Ptah at Memphis and the other two remain unknown.[100]

The reports on the outcome are uncertain but we can presume that the Nubians accepted vassaldom because Darius I later lists them among the tributary peoples.[101] Darius I (521-486 BCE) made

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[96] David, *Religion and Magic*, 309.

[97] Herodotus 3. 19.

[98] Emil Kraeling, eds, *The Brooklyn Museum Aramaic Papyri. New Documents of the Fifth Century B.C. from the Jewish Colony at Elephantine*. (Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1953), 27.

[99] Ibid., 28.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Ibid.

additions to the Egyptian temple and performed his duties as pharaoh of Egypt. In 522 BCE, Cambyses left Egypt in charge of a governor, Aryandes, when an impostor claiming to be his brother, Smendes (Bardiya) rose to prominence in Persia and died on his journey back.[102]

1.4.1 The Role of Satrap and Governor during the Persian Period

In her article dedicated to Bezalel Porten, Lisbeth S. Fried examined the relationship between the governor and the satrap in the Persian Empire by examining accounts from Bactria and Egypt.[103] The first text she examines is a letter sent from Akhvamada, the satrap, to Bagavant, the governor, and dating from 348 BCE. It requests the release of troops from a building project to help gather the harvest.[104]

> And now concerning what you have sent me saying: "A message has been sent to me from you (instructing me) to give the order to build the wall and the ditch around the city... However, Spaita, the judges, and others of the garrison of the place came to me saying, "There are locusts in great number ... and the harvest is ripe for harvesting. If we build the wall the scourge of locusts in the city will increase and will inflict...in the land. But I have no authority to let them go... And now the troops that have been appointed for you to have at

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[102] Ibid., 29.

[103] Lisbeth S. Fried, "The Governor in Persian Imperial Administration" in *In the Shadow of Bezalel. Aramaic, Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honor of Bezalel Porten*, ed. Alejandro Botta (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 319-331.

[104] Fried, "The Governor", 321.

> your disposal, let them go in order that they may crush the locusts... [105]

Fried discusses how this letter clearly shows that the Persian governor had no autonomy whatsoever.[106] She comments that the governor could not decide by himself to halt the building project, instead he had to first ask permission of the satrap. Furthermore, the overseer could not do anything himself but had to await instruction from the governor, nor could the satrap carry out the task, he would have to tell the governor to give the order.[107] Xenophon however maintains that the garrison commanders were only accountable to the King.[108]

> When he arrived in Babylon, he (Cyrus) decided to send out satraps to govern the nations he has subdued. But the commanders of the garrisons in the citadels and the colonels in command of the guards throughout the country he wished to be responsible to no one but himself. Xen. VIII 6:1

For Fried this is consistent with the claim that the garrisons only role was to protect the people. However, as Fried points out, the Bactrian letter shows that civil and military authorities were the same.[109] Therefore, while the governor had troops at his disposal he had to take orders from the satrap not the King. For Fried, most importantly, the troops were used by the governor and the satrap to control the people and to extract taxes and tribute from

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[105] Fried, "The Governor", 321.

[106] Ibid., 322.

[107] Ibid., 323.

[108] Ibid., 325.

[109] Fried, "The Governor", 325.

them.[110] While I will examine in detail the relationship between the Yahu community and the Egyptians in chapter six, it is appropriate to examine briefly here, the role of Vidranga for the Yahu community in the light of Fried's examination of the roles played by Persian officials. Both officials mentioned in the papyri, Vidranga the governor and Naphaina the garrison commander, were Persian. As pointed out by Fried, governor Vidranga effectively had the control of the Judean garrison at his disposal.[111] His son, the garrison commander Naphaina had control of several detachments in both Syene and Elephantine.[112] This situation offers us the opportunity to speculate into the motivation behind all the letters sent by the Judean garrison concerning their governor and commander. It is clear now why we do not have evidence of any letters sent to Vidranga and Naphaina concerning the trouble with the Khnum temple, there was evidently nothing they could have done without higher authority from the satrap. I will examine this theory and discuss this topic in more detail later in chapter six when we discuss the inter-relationships between the Judeans and the Egyptians.

1.5 The Role of Elephantine Island during the Hellenistic and Roman periods.

While the records for the role of the Judean community and indeed the garrison itself disappear after the persian period, the island of

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[110] Ibid., 326.

[111] Ibid.

[112] Ibid.

Elephantine continued to function as an area of trade and cultic activity throughout the Greek and Roman periods. The garrison remained important in the Ptolemaic period when the south revolted against the Ptolemies in 206 BCE although there is no mention of Judean or foreign troops. There is mention of a Ptolemaic temple built sometime during the reigns of Ptolemy VI and VIII (180-116 BCE) built on the site of an ancient shrine.[113] In chapter three of this thesis I will discuss in more detail the development of the temple site and the common practice throughout the Near East of installing different deities in older temples and also the practice of temple complex development and how the Persians, Greeks and Romans continued the common tradition of developing former temple sites.

Demotic papyri from Elephantine record certain social and local events on Elephantine during this time, one letter asks a high royal bureaucrat for support in becoming a priest of Khnum, and there are requests for oracles to be obtained on vital questions like which of two women should the questioner marry.[114] It is also interesting to note that included in later material from Elephantine includes documentation on prostitution. Egyptian documentation of prostitution in general is not common. There are in fact only two published receipts of activity, and come from Elephantine, as Bagnall discusses they were issued by Pelaias to Thispsansnos daughter of Tachontbekis for the balance owing for the year, amounting to one drachma.[115] Pelaias features in another ostracon

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[113] Rodger Bagnall, *Hellenistic and Roman Egypt. Sources and Approaches*. (Cornwall: Ashgate, 2006), V15.

[114] Ibid., V15.

[115] Ibid., XVI 6.

in which he gives permission to a visiting woman to, "sleep with whomever she wishes" on a particular day.[116] Bagnall also mentions other prostitution related tax collection, this time being paid for by a man where he is permitted to pay four drachmas for two months, again recorded in Elephantine.[117]

Conclusions of Chapter One

The goal of this chapter was to briefly explore the context within which the Yahu temple existed and the world within which they emerged. At the beginning of this chapter we examined the role which the island of Elephantine played throughout dynastic history. From the establishment of a colony from the earliest age of the state about 3000 BCE to its role during the period of the Judean garrison.

It is relevant for us to examine the development of city-gods and the process of cult practice in order to understand the activities that most likely took place in the temple of Khnum. We need to recognise the importance of the city-god in order to understand the function of cultic worship in the city temples. For this thesis in particular, the recognition of the nature of city-gods in relation to the community and the city is important in our understanding of the way in which the Khnum priests worship and respect Khnum. We examined selected aspects of temple practice and worship in Egypt in an attempt to understand more fully religious practice in the Khnum temple in Elephantine. It provides a context for an

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[116] Ibid., XVI 6.

[117] Ibid., XVI 6.

examination of the attack on the Yahu community as an act of religious offence or territorial dominance, a subject we will examine in chapter six.

While there is no extant material remaining on death and burial for the Yahu community, we can examine how the Egyptian community dealt with death. For the Egyptians, there is a tangible amount of material about the underworld and death. In death, the Egyptians believed their bodies divide and their soul (*ba*) travels with their physical body to be judged. Respect and devotion to the gods was tantamount in reaching a state of acceptance in "the west."[118] Perhaps then it is not so surprising that the Khnum priesthood seemed to react so violently towards the Yahu community. Perhaps what offended the priests so wholly, as Schäfer argues, was the total lack of respect towards Khnum perceived by the sacrifice of lambs or goats and the celebration of the politically charged Passover.[119] It would be the view of this thesis that if the Yahu community had been given land to build

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[118] "The West" is the term used in Egyptian myth to symbolise the afterlife. The area of the setting sun were the sun-god enters the underworld in order to do battle with the gods of death so as to ensure the continuation of life, is the point from which the underworld begins. In essence therefore, when the sun sets the world and the people sleep. According to Egyptian myth, the world dies until the sun-god renews it once more. It is also the reason for the morning hymns, in order to welcome the new day and the victory over death. Quite often the Nile is demonstrated as the gateway to the underworld.

[119] In chapter six I will examine Schäfer's argument in particular, (other scholars who argue this will also be examined) that there was severe antagonism between the Yahu and the Elephantine community and that the Passover was thought to be a major element in their rivalry due to the nature of its theme and the sacrifices which were called for.

their Temple, then the Khnum priests had an understandable reason to quarrel. If this is so, then the land belonging to the city-god Khnum, one of the most important deities, had been taken and given to a foreign god where he would be offered a sacred animal in sacrifice. I will explore these suggestions in chapter six of this thesis.

Another important point made in this chapter relates to the role of the satrap and governors during persian period Egypt. Drawing on the examination of texts by Lisbeth Fried, we have established an understanding of the political framework within which the Yahu community in Elephantine existed. While the Judean community may well have felt threatened by the Khnum priesthood they had to take their appeal all the way to the satrap of the district in order to have anything done. Why then do they appeal to the governors of Samaria and Jerusalem? We could speculate that the ethnical link and the worship of Yahu held a connection between the Judeans of Elephantine and Israel and Judah. We may certainly include that the request from Elephantine for Passover dates to Jerusalem indicated that there was some form of connection between them. We will discuss these questions further in chapter six. This could provide some hints as to why the community seemed so negative about their governor and commander.

The role of Elephantine into the Hellenistic and Roman periods is one of a city in decline. With a few last moments of importance during the early second century BCE the island withdrew in significance with the development of Syene and the greater Aswan region. It is clear that once mention of the garrison

and the Judean community within Elephantine ends, all the major activity in trade and political interactions focuses on Syene throughout the Hellenistic and Roman periods. It is unfortunate to consider that this island once mentioned as one of the most beautiful in Egypt, a place where nobles desired to be buried, where the great god Khnum presided, and the central trading post for Nubian goods and granite, during the second century CE was referred to as a remote frontier where the Roman poet Juvenal is said to have been banished for his satirical attacks on the imperial court.

Chapter Two

The Origins of the Yahu Community in Elephantine

Introduction

The divine triad for the island had been composed of Khnum and two goddesses, Anukis to whom the gazelle was sacred, and Satet "the one from Sehel" who is associated with the antelope.[120] In his in-depth study of Elephantine Island, Hermann Kees's research into the emergence of the Judean community in Elephantine typifies the viewpoint of scholars when dealing with this community. He states:

> ... Once again the fort of Abu was talked of and there was stationed a Jewish garrison serving a Persian defence force against Nubia.[121]

This chapter will endeavour to identify an approximate emergence date for the Yahu community and examine the community as a whole from its emergence to the ultimate destruction of the Yahu Temple. There has been major debate concerning the origins of the Yahu worshippers at Elephantine since the publication of the Aramaic papyri found in the area at the beginning of the twentieth century. The fact that the Aramaic papyri found in Elephantine between 1815-1904 represents only a

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[120] Hermann Kees, *Ancient Egypt. A Cultural Topography* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1997), 30.

[121] Ibid., 32.

small amount of what was most likely produced from this community makes it very difficult for us to make presumptions and conclusions concerning this unique community. However, we must make our conclusions with the limited evidence we have, while obviously bearing in mind that there may be additional information lost, but as Grabbe puts it, "argument from silence is a valid form of logic: of course, absence of evidence- where one might resonably expect it- is a valid argument."[122]

The community of Elephantine was already established and settled when the papyrus account begins early in the fifth century BCE and also the garrison is a recognised force by the time Cambyses enters Egypt in 525 BCE and military control moves from Egypt to Persia.[123] The foundation of the colony occurred, then, sometime in the sixth or seventh century at the latest, possibly during the brief control by the Assyrian empire of Egypt.

While retaining a military colony, the papyri indicate as we shall later see, that the Judean enclave established trade and civil law as well as maintaining a temple dedicated to Yahu. Soldiers occupied homes with their families and women could hold property and take legal action without the aid of husband or father. According to Cowley, they also lived on equal terms with the Egyptians, a point I will argue later in chapter six.[124] It is

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[122] Lester Grabbe, "Elephantine and Torah", in *In the Shadow of Bezalel: Aramaic Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honour of Bezalel Porten,* ed. Alejandro Botta (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

[123] Porten, *Archives,* 13. A.E. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967) 11ff.

[124] Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri,* 89.

understood through the papyri that the community were mercenaries under the employ of the Persian ruler and certainly not under Jerusalem.[125] The garrison itself is a sister colony to the Aramaean garrison at Syene with many papyri discussing the two as a pair, leading to much discussion about the level of communication and social interaction between the nationalities in these garrisons.

2.1 Dating the Emergence of the Judean Garrison

In this section I aim to examine a number of emergence dates proposed by various scholars. I will begin with the earliest date and finish with the dates put forward by Porten and the significant differences between them. I will then justify my findings through the evidence both in the papyri and the secondary sources. I will also note the difficulty in dating the emergence of the community when the scholarship overlooks the community's Egyptian context and continues to associate the Judean community directly back to Jerusalem.

2.1.1 Early Dating of the Emergence

MacLaurin gives one of the earliest dates for the origins of the community of Elephantine where he argues that the emergence could date back to the Exodus. For him the evidence indicates that a colony of Yahu (Yahweh) worshippers who had adopted no culture or religion from Palestine since Patriarchal days, since they

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[125] Porten, *Elephantine*, B15, B17, "Vidranga, who is chief here", B19, B20. (p.l).

had not lived in Palestine, had settled at Elephantine.[126] He claims that the Exodus (1.7ff) portrays the possibility that part of the "Bene Israel" stayed behind in Egypt when others followed Moses.[127] This theory assumes that we accept elements of the Exodus story as historical when in fact it is a story created as a theologically idealised construction. He uses the reference in Exodus 10:8-11, 24, which claims that only a small section of the Hebrew population took part in the Exodus.

> So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh, and he said to them "Go worship the Lord your God! But which ones are to go?" Moses said "We will go with our young and our old; we will go with our sons and daughters and with our flocks and herds, because we have the Lord's festival to celebrate." ... "No, never! Your men may go and worship the Lord for that is what you are asking. (Exod 10:8-11)

While highly unlikely, it is an interesting theory that those who may have remained in Egypt came to Elephantine. For this theory we must examine the likelihood that during the exodus, a small group of people did not attempt a journey to find a new homeland, but instead remained in Egypt. If we say for a moment that a large number of Yahu worshippers did in fact leave Egypt at this time after being grudgingly released from servitude by the Pharaoh, is it likely that some may have decided to stay in Egypt? It seems likely that if granted freedom some of this group might have preferred to remain in relative safety. According to Exodus,

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[126] E.C.B. MacLaurin, "Date of the Foundation of the Jewish colony at Elephantine," *JNES 27* (1968), 93.

[127] MacLaurin, "Date of the Foundation", 93.

once this group left Egypt, they began to worship "idols".[128] Although this line of argument is drawing from highly theological material, the worship of idols by the community may suggest that the worship of gods bedsides Yahweh was most likely commonplace at this time. That some of this group should travel as far south as Elephantine, particularly at this time, may have been possible due to the nature of Elephantine as a major trading route. However, it seems highly unlikely that the early Yahwists of the Exodus story travelled to Elephantine to settle here. There is no literary or archaeological evidence that such a community existed in Elephantine so early. It is perhaps not until the establishment of the temple of Yahu in Elephantine that we can discuss with some degree of certainty the existence of Yahu worshippers in Egypt.[129]

Even if we take elements of the Moses story to provide an acceptable timeframe for the emergence of the community and accept that a number of Yahu worshippers remained in Egypt and became part of a military garrison in Elephantine, would Pharaoh ever have trusted this community?[130] It seems unlikely that Pharaoh would trust this group as any form of organised military

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[128] Exod. 32.

[129] However we must, as always, bear in mind the importance of the Aramaic papyri of Elephantine for our understanding of the community. Elephantine was an important trading route and Josephus's account is most likely noted because of the importance of the city and the size of the Yahu worshipping community. There is therefore, the possibility of other communities particularly smaller groups may have existed and their account has since been lost.

[130] The historical Pharaoh featured in the Moses story has been a much researched topic within both Egyptian and Biblical scholarship. A number have been suggested as the Pharaoh featured in the Moses story, including Ramsees II and Merneptah.

unit if we consider that they caused so much disruption as the Exodus story presents them. Would pharaoh have trusted them enough to allow them their own temple in opposition to the main Egyptian deity of the region, Khnum? More importantly, examining such threads from the Exodus story in order to illuminate the origins of the community is highly problematic. No pharaoh would take risks of political security by permitting the rights and privileges clearly given to the Elephantine group if he had just encountered such an antagonistic group as they are portrayed in the Moses story, but more importantly the acceptance of Exodus as historical is problematic.

The main sources we have for the history of the Kings of Israel and Judah are 1 and 2 Kings. Unlike the Assyrian and Persian Empires, no lengthy monumental inscriptions have been recovered from either Israel or Judah. Later books such as Chronicles, present the history of Israel and Judah as the inevitable tragic outcome of Yahweh's people who have strayed from the commandments. Davidic rule is portrayed as the only legitimate option and the Northern Kingdom is regarded as an abomination. This opinion was shaped decisively by the experience of the restored Judean community after the fifth century BCE and its struggles to define its identity by idealising the past.[131]

An argument put forward by Cyrus Gordon in his article "The Origin of the Jews in Elephantine" states that the so-called "Jews" came from a Judean enclave in Aram such as those established by

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[131] Lester Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism, in the Second Temple Period.* (London: T & T Clarke, 2004) 290ff.

Solomon to secure the Empire.[132] According to his study, while Aramaic is the language of the Persian Empire and the language used in the papyri, Gordon agrees that this group had no knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures or language at all.[133] For Gordon, the significance of not knowing the Hebrew language indicates that the community did not emerge from Judah at all, especially when we consider that in 586 BCE the Lachish ostraca is the language of writing and probably speech was still firmly Hebrew with no trace of Aramaic. [134]

Gordon develops his argument further and states:

> If the colonists had come to Judah at any time after the enthronement of Rehoboam, we should expect them to have a unique interest in the Jerusalem Temple instead of appealing to Samaritan and Jerusalem authorities in the fifth century BC on equal footing.[135]

It is quite legitimate for us to consider this argument but we must also consider that the Elephantine community appealed first to Jerusalem without any reply and also to Persian officials.[136] It was only after seven years of little or no help that they appealed to Jerusalem again, this time receiving a reply from both authorities of Jerusalem and Samaria.

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[132] Cyrus H. Gordon, "The Origin of the Jews of Elephantine," *JNES 14* (1955).

[133] Gordon, "The Origin of the Jews," 56.

[134] Ibid.

[135] Gordon, "The Origin of the Jews," 56.

[136] Porten, *Elephantine,* B19, B20, B21, B22, 139-151. (p.l).

> Memorandum. What Bagavahya and Delaiah said to me. Memorandum. Saying, "Let it be for you in Egypt to say before Arsames about the Altar-house of the God of Heaven which in Elephantine the fortress built was formerly before Cambyses and which Vidranga, that wicked man demolished in year 14 of Darius the King: to rebuild it on its site as it was formerly and the meal-offering and the incense they shall offer upon that altar just as formerly was done."[137]

We could speculate that in order to force a reaction from Jerusalem, the Elephantine community, aware of the tensions between Israel and Judah, mentioned the governor of Samaria in order to achieve their goal.[138]

2.1.2 *Emergence in the Seventh Century* BCE *and during the Saite Dynasty* (664-525 BCE)

Porten sets out three distinct periods when the Jews may have settled in Elephantine: (1) during the thirty five year period from 735 BCE to the siege of Jerusalem in 701 BCE, (2) during the seventh century when Manasseh joined Egypt in order to ward off Assyrian rule, (3) the period of thirty years between the time of Jehoiakim and the assassination of Gedaliah.[139]

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[137] Porten, *Elephantine*, B21, 148. (p.l).

[138] I will develop this further in chapter six of this thesis. Instead of linking Jerusalem and Elephantine in some form of relationship where Elephantine relies on Jerusalem as the subservient community it may be suggested that Elephantine appealed to both the Persian authorities and perhaps also to Samaria.

[139] Porten, *Archives*, 13.

Porten makes the point that a Jewish community in Elephantine was supported and needed by the Pharaoh and that the temple was built as a way of unifying the Jews of Egypt and securing a permanent military community.[140] He states that Manasseh, best known for his paganization of the Jerusalem Temple through the sculptured image of Asherah, had caused many priests to flee to the sanctuary in Egypt when his ways were abolished.[141] While the author of 2 Kings certainly indicates that the sacrilege committed by Manasseh most likely caused the defilement of the Temple, it is also mentioned as if as an afterthought that he also shed much innocent blood until he had filled Jerusalem with sin.[142] Warranted through the prophesy of Isaiah that there will be a pillar to the Lord on Egypt's border[143], they joined the Jewish garrison justifying the construction of a temple and continued the use of multiple forms of Yahu and Anat, as well as dedications and offerings made to Egyptian gods such as Ptah and Amun. It is evident in the biblical sources that Manasseh sent troops to Egypt (2 Kings 13:7).

Once again, we need to remind ourselves that this is not a typical or developed Jewish community and so we cannot assume to attribute typical "Jewish laws/customs to them. A fragmentary demotic papyrus found at Elephantine and dating to the 41st year

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[140]Bezalel Porten, "Settlement of the Jews and Arameans at Syene" in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period,* ed. Lipschits and Blenkinsopp (Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2003) 461.

[141] Ibid., 2. Kings 21:7.

[142] 2 Kings 21: 16.

[143] Isaiah 19:19, "On that day there will be an altar to the Lord in the centre of the land of Egypt and a pillar to the Lord at its border.

of Amasis (529 BCE) recorded that a number of Pharaoh's men journeyed to Upper Nubia at this time. Porten believes that this could provide us with evidence that even at this early stage in the community, the Elephantine and Syene garrisons may have integrated both Judeans and Syrians. This would surely strengthen the claim that the Elephantine temple and the cult of Yahu in Elephantine not only resembled very little from what we understand as the Jerusalem temple as described in later Deuteronomistic sources, but portrayed nothing but selected customs and traditions from Jerusalem. It may be suggested that the temple of Yahu was one set apart and autonomous from the Jerusalem temple. We have very little evidence of communication between the two communities and what communication there is tells us little about the relationship. What we can say with some degree of certainty is that Elephantine expressed some kind of expectations from Jerusalem when they requested aid for the rebuilding of the temple. We will address this further in chapter six.

As we will discuss in the next chapter, temples to 'foreign' gods were found across Egypt including Elephantine and Syene. For example:

> Greetings, Temple of Bethel and Temple of the Queen of Heaven.[144]
>
> Greetings to the Temple of Banit in Syene... and also perfumed oil for the Temple of Banit.[145]

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[144] Porten, *Elephantine*, B1, 89. (p.l).

[145] Porten and Yardeni, *TAD*, A2.4. (p.l).

While we may accept that many foreign temples were constructed throughout Egypt, surely some special reason of royal favour is required to account for the fact that the Yahu worshippers had received the privilege of having a temple erected of a non-Egyptian god so close to the sanctuary of Khnum, the leading god of the region. Logically, most scholars agree that the establishment must have taken place sometime in the middle of the seventh century to the early sixth century BCE.[146] The final important rival to Assyria was Egypt, which from the ninth century had supported the Syro-Palestinian rebels.[147] I would certainly find it likely that the emergence took place during times of turmoil for Israel under the Assyrian empire or the reign of Psammetichus I. After the Egyptian troops abandoned Elephantine, the Israelite/Judean and Asiatic soldiers who took over the garrison may very well have been rewarded under Psammetichus II for their role in the Nubian campaign. It is possible that their reward was the establishment of their own temple. There was certainly no reference to a temple to Yahu in the area before this period.

Although short, the Saite Dynasty (664-525 BCE) provided Egypt with a national pride it had previously lost. The developments of building projects saw the return of former cultural expression. However, life under the Saite rulers was not so perfect. Egypt depended on foreign mercenaries including Carians and Greeks to help defend their borders. Garrisons most likely became areas of competition for position. With the Egyptian community at Elephantine under pressure from king

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[146] Porten, *Archives*, 11ff. Kraeling, *The Brooklyn Museum*, 89.

[147] Marc Van de Mieroop, *A History of the Ancient Near East CA 3000-323 BCE* (Oxford: Blackwell Press, 2007) 256.

Psammetichus, any protestations from the local Egyptians could easily have been ignored. The building of the Yahu temple may even have been a punishment against the Egyptians for their abandonment of Pharaoh. This punishment may have included the seizure of Egyptian land in order to build the Yahu temple. This is a major point for this thesis and it will be dealt with in detail in chapter six. I will argue that it was the seizure of Egyptian land that could have been one cause for agitation between the Yahu colony and Egyptians and also one of the major causes for the ultimate destruction of the Yahu temple and the building of the "wall" through the colony's district. According to the papyri, in the request for aid, the community mention the building of a wall through the garrison by the Egyptians.[148] It may be suggested that due to the specific nature of the location of the wall and way in which it was forcibly built alongside the "stopping up of the well", that in fact the Egyptians were claiming back land that had been given over to the Judean garrison when they had been position there.

For Modrzjewski, the end of the seventh century and the beginning of the sixth saw the appearance of the Yahu worshippers in Elephantine.[149] The fall of Judah in 587 BCE encouraged a flow of "Jewish" soldiers into Egypt to make their home in the already established Yahu centered garrison. Modrzjewski examines the hypothesis that the Yahu colony emerged during Josiah's time or the reign of his successor Jehoiakim who had been faithful to the Egyptian pharaoh Necho II (Wenhemibra 610-595 BCE). Certain

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[148] Porten, *Elephantine*, B17, 136. (p.l).

[149] Josef Modrzejewski, *The Jews of Egypt, from Rameses II to Emperor Hadrian.* (Edinburgh: T & T Clarke, 1997), 36.

place names referred to in the book of Jeremiah[150] describe Yahu worshippers settling in Egypt in places such as Migdol, Daphne, Memphis and Patros, "the southern country," which most scholars agree includes Elephantine and Syene.[151]

A difficulty I have with Modrzejewski's study of the emergence of this Yahu colony is with reference to their role in the participation at the Nubian campaign of Psammetichus II (595-589 BCE) and his lack of reference to Psammetichus I (664-610 BCE). Gyges of Lydia sent Psammetichus auxiliary troops, Ionian and Carian mercenaries, who helped him establish power and independence.[152]

> From this city you will make a journey by water of equal distance with that by which you came from Elephantine to the capital city of Ethiopia, and you will come to the land of the Deserters... These once, to the number of two hundred and forty thousand of fighting age, revolted and joined themselves to the Ethiopians. The reason was this: In the reign of Psammetichus there were garrisons posted at Elephantine...
> Now the Egyptians had been on guard for three years and none came to relieve them; so taking counsel and making common cause, they revolted from Psammetichus and went to Ethiopia. Psammetichus heard of it and pursued after them... he besought them with many words...
> Herodotus 2:30 [153]

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[150] Jer 44:1.

[151] Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri*, 89. Kraeling, *The Brooklyn Museum*, 43. McLaurin, "Date of the foundation", 93.

[152] Kraeling, *The Brooklyn Museum*, 43.

[153] See appendix, 265.

The Egyptian soldiers of Elephantine had revolted after having no furlough for three years and left Elephantine to join the Ethiopian campaign. Such a situation could provide the occasion for settling a new garrison at Elephantine, inducing some of the Asiatic mercenaries including the Jewish/Hebrew contingent sent by King Manasseh of Judah, to take over the post. However, there is no further discussion of Psammetichus I by Modrzjewski under whom, according to Porten, the Judean community likely emerged.[154] For Modrzejewski this account points to Psammetichus' II reign and describes one of the first encounters of Israelites/Judeans and Greeks in his Nubian campaign.

Sauneron and Yoyotte state that undated fragmentary texts from Edfu bearing the cartouche of Psammetichus I describe war in Lower Nubia (Wawat), indicating that relationships were not peaceful between Egypt and Kush at this time.[155] They also suggest that in 664, Manasseh fought against the Kushite rulers of Egypt as a vassal of Ashurbanipal alongside Psammetichus I in order to conquer Egypt.[156] Kahn argues however, that there is no vassal forces mentioned in the Assyrian sources for the campaign of 664 BCE in contrast to the campaign of 667 where a list is provided including the name Manasseh King of Judah.[157] In fact, Kahn states that Psammetichus I governed only a fraction of Egypt at the time and that Manasseh as a loyal vassal of Assyria would not have sent

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[154] Modrzejewski, *The Jews*, 25.

[155] S. Sauneron and J. Yoyotte, "Sur la politique Palestinienne des rois saites." *VT*, 2 (1952) 131-36.

[156] Ibid., 131ff.

[157] Dan'el Kahn, "Judean Auxiliaries in Egypt's Wars against Kush," *JAOS Vol. 127, No. 4* (October- December, 2007), 511.

troops to aid an Egyptian ruler that had already distanced himself from Assyria at this stage.[158] Despite the limited sources, the most important point to be made from the situation is that Manasseh most likely did not give permission for those troops that ended up in Elephantine. Kahn, in his examination of the Judean auxiliaries, does not take into account Jeremiah's explanation for Judean troops in Egypt (Jer 44). It may be speculated that the community having emerged in Elephantine as a group of mercenaries employed by the Assyrian empire, set up a social system that resembled the one from which they emerged and that as time went on those remaining in Judah who did not wish follow the developments and reforms being established may have therefore found Elephantine appealing.

Some scholars consider that the Letter of Aristeas signifies Judah's alliance with Egypt in the days of Psammetichus II.[159] The letter written by Aristeas to his brother addresses the need to translate the Hebrew law into Greek. Tcherikover views the Letter of Aristeas as attempting to defend the Judean law by providing explicit reference to its importance and historiography.[160] Written during the second century BCE, the letter is an account of the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek on the request of Ptolemy II Philadelphus to be included in the library of Alexandria.[161] While the author, content, context and credibility of the letter is

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[158] Ibid., 511.

[159] Alt, "Psammetich II," 288-97.

[160] V. Tcherikover, "The Ideology of the Letter of Aristeas" *Harvard Theological Review,* 51.2 (April 1958), 59-85.

[161] Moses Hadas, *Aristeas to Philocrates.* (New York: Ktav publishing, 1951), 101.

contested across biblical and classical scholarship, the veracity of the information concerning the sending of Judean mercenaries to aid Psammetichus has been maintained by most scholars.[162] Although there is debate over which Psammetichus is being discussed.

> Previously many *of them* had come into the country (Egypt) along with the Persian, and even before this others had been sent out as auxiliaries to fight in the army of Psammetichus against the king of the Ethiopians (Kush), but these were not so numerous as Ptolemy son of Lagus transported.[163]

Modrzejewski states:

> "From the time of the exile until the reconstruction of the Temple of Jerusalem after the return of the Jews from Babylon between 587 BCE and 515 BCE the sanctuary at Elephantine was the only place in the world where Jewish sacrificial worship was practiced."[164]

Thus according to Modrzejewski, the Elephantine temple acted as a replacement for the Jerusalem Temple, which he sees as problematic, particularly from Jerusalem's point of view.[165] For Modrzejewski, as long as the Temple existed in Jerusalem, the Jews were careful to avoid any competition with it. This thesis would disagree with Modrzejewski's statement with regards to Elephantine, as this Judean community would have clearly

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[162] Ibid.

[163] Ibid.

[164] Modrzejewski, *The Jews*, 36.

[165] Ibid., 36.

considered itself separate from Jerusalem. While we will discuss evidence later that the community did celebrate both Sabbath and Passover with a continued form of patrimony, the community represented the form of cultic worship that existed in Judah at the time from which they emerged, rather than the developing structure of faith represented by the post exilic Judean community. The significant pieces of evidence that indicate contact between Elephantine and Judah was the request for the Passover dates and the request for aid in the rebuilding of the temple. More significantly, how much more papyri was there that has gone undiscovered or destroyed and what would that have told us? I will discuss the Aramaic papyri in more detail in the following chapters when we address the inter-relationships between the Yahu community, the Egyptians, and Jerusalem.

For Porten, "the Jews had a fully-fledged temple built under Pharaonic rule and confirmed by the Persian conqueror Cambyses in 525 BCE".[166] Therefore, under which pharaoh does Porten presume the temple was constructed? According to this study, in the Assyrian Period, no Assyrian king ruled long enough to be considered Pharaoh, although some Egyptian king lists name them as Pharaoh. Porten believes that the temple emerged during the years when the Assyrians were exacting taxation laws on Israel and a group of rebellious soldiers left for Egypt.[167] At this time, the southern Nubian Pharaoh would have ruled Egypt but each region probably controlled itself under the aristocratic priesthood. He suggests that the Judean community of Elephantine emerged

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[166] Porten, "Settlement of the Jews," 456.

[167] Ibid.

during the reign of Psammetichus I. It may be assumed that a military community remained in Egypt and was permitted to build its own temple in return for cooperation. The Nubian pharaohs continued typical Egyptian religious practice and it is highly probable that they would have allowed a Yahu Temple to be built either out of gratitude or as punishment of the local Egyptian priesthood who had abandoned their posts.

2.2 Emergence of the Judean Community in the Assyrian context

While Assyria had ruled over quite a large portion of the Near East , it was only during the rule of Esarshaddon (681-669 BCE) that their dominance reached as far as Egypt. Throughout ancient Near Eastern history victorious armies had deported defeated populations, but the Assyrians greatly expanded this practice especially after the mid-eighth century.[168] The royal inscriptions are explicit about the numbers moved. In one example, it is estimated that over one million were deported during three centuries of Assyrian rule.[169] In a controlled and strategic manoeuvre, the Assyrian empire gained control and power through the deportation of conquered subjects from their newly acquired regions. Mainly specialist craftspeople (but not exclusively) were

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[168] Herodotus 2.81. Karen Radner, "Mass deportation: the Assyrian resettlement policy", University College London, Last modified November 5, 2012, http://www.ucl.ac.uk/sargon/essentials/governors/massdeportation/.

[169] James Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 276-301. Van de Mieroop, *A History*, 233.

chosen in order to assist in building projects, but it was often the defiant and disorderly regions that saw entire populations being moved.[170] An example would be the Israelite deportation under Ashurbanipal. This systematic deportation of the empire provided labour and people to inhabit new cities and it reduced opposition in peripheral territories. Moreover, not all of the exiled groups were considered slaves or prisoners but were workmen who remained in the areas of settlement.

Israel became a vassal state under the Assyrians around 738 BCE, which meant that the Israelite rulers retained their positions but had to pay annual tribute to the Assyrian empire. There are also great conflicts described in the biblical accounts that claim Israel was not so easily controlled.[171] Israel had voluntarily offered payments to Assyria to maintain peace. [172] However with the death of Pekahiah in 735 BCE and with the support of Damascus, Israel refused to pay.[173] When the vassal states refused to pay Tilgath-Pileser, he made a demonstration of force in southern Syria.[174] It was probably on one of these occasions that Menahem of Israel paid tribute:

> Pul (Tilgath-Pileser) the King of Assyria came against the Land; and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, for his hands to be with him to confirm the

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[170] Pritchard, *ANET*, 276-301.

[171] 2 Kings 13: 25, 2 Kings 14: 25.

[172] 2 Kings 17: 4ff, Is 18: 2, 30: 1ff. Herodotus 2. 141.

[173] Ibid.

[174] H.W.F. Saggs, *The Might that was Assyria* (London: Sidgewick and Jackson, 1984), 89.

> kingdom in his hand... So the King of Assyria turned back and did not remain there in the Land.[175]

It is quite possible for us to conclude that with the introduction of an annual tribute on top of the already existing temple tax, many despondent groups would seek solace and comfort elsewhere. According to Byrne, Israel actually had to re-structure its political economy in order to afford the purchase of luxury goods demanded by Assyria.[176] He notes that access tolls increased profits, while Joash of Samaria and a "willing Mari of Damascus", provided tribute.[177] Byrne states that despite this account the Calah Slab indicates that tribute was forcibly taken.[178] When Tiglath-pileser III died, Hoshea continued to pay Assyria tribute until a major rebellion forced him into conflict with the new King Shalmaneser V. He laid siege to Israel for three years and conquered it just before his death.[179] His successor Sargon II claimed the victory and renamed the region Samerina. In the eighth century both Israel and Judah sought Egyptian help against the Assyrian threat. The 25th dynasty gave a special promise to provide opposition to the Assyrian advance.[180]

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[175] 2 Kings 15: 19, 20.

[176] Ryan Byrne, "Early Assyrian Contacts with Arabs, and the Impact on Levantine Vassal Tribute", *BASOR*, (August 2013), 20.

[177] Ibid.

[178] Ibid., 20. Byrne also notes that the Assyrian "language of war" quite often remained unclear in regards to "received and imposed tribute."

[179] Pritchard, *ANET*, 276. (Shalmaneser III: The fight against the Aramean Coalition).

[180] Porten, *Archives*, 7.

According to Porten, it is not surprising to find many Yahu communities mentioned as 'established' in Lower Egypt, Pathros and Nubia at this time.[181] Egypt would certainly have been a promising and tempting place to seek refuge from the Assyrian empire with its size and strength and its history of reclaiming control over all who threatened it. According to Sargon's inscription, the Assyrian's deported 27,290 people from Israel and settled them in eastern Syria and northern Iran.[182] Despite the obvious callous treatment of the rebellious groups, the Assyrian's external policy was actually quite flexible. Local vassals or puppet rulers continued to govern Judah and the states east and south of Israel, although their territories were significantly reduced. It was a strategy to control this region as it left these self-controlled areas to act as a buffer between the Assyrians and the Egyptians, which allowed trade to pass peacefully between them.[183]

The relation and allegiance between Israel, Judah and Egypt seems to strengthen when threatened by Assyria, which is not surprising considering Israel's forced political bond with Assyria for quite some time before the conflict with Shalmaneser V. After the separated monarchies in Israel and the formation of the divided monarchy, Israel sought security and safety on the side of the Assyrian Empire, which guaranteed local kingship and protection in return for payment through taxation, labour and military assistance. According to Byrne, the extent of Assyria's control over Israel at this time is unclear, however petty states in

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[181] Isa 11: 11, Jer 40-44. Porten, *Archives*, 9.

[182] Pritchard, *ANET*, 289.

[183] Van de Mieroop, *History of the Ancient Near East*, 252.

the northern Levant continued paying tribute.[184] One account discussed the division of monarchy as a punishment on Solomon who neglected to maintain purity in the cult of Yahweh, which led to his successor failing to retain control of the land and Yahweh raising a rival king to the North:

> Therefore the Lord said to Solomon, 'Since this has been your mind and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and give it to your servant. Yet for the sake of your father David I will not do it in your lifetime; I will tear out of the hand of your son. I will not, however, tear away the entire kingdom . . . (1Kings 11:11-13)

Deuteronomistic writings quite often described the Northern Kingdom as being rebellious and incapable of proper Yahweh worship since, for example, it did not worship in the sole correct sanctuary in Jerusalem, as well as the worship of other gods such as Baal.[185] In fact it may also be a consideration that not only could the Elephantine community have emerged from the group described in Jeremiah 44, but also from the group described in 1 Kings 16: 31, and 2 Kings 17:29-41 from Samaria.

> But every nation still made gods of its own and put them in the shrines of the high places that the people's of Samaria had made. . . They also worshiped the Lord and appointed from among themselves all sorts of people as priests of the high places who sacrificed for them in the shrines of the high places. So they worshiped the Lord but also served their own gods, after the manner of the nations from among whom

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[184] Byrne, "Early Assyrian", 21.

[185] For example, 1 Kings 15: 16, 1 Kings 16: 31, 2 Kings 3: 4ff, 2 Kings 16: 5.

> they had been carried away. To this day they continue to practice their former customs. (2 Kings 17: 29-35)

Despite the fact that there is no reference to "high places" in the Elephantine papyri, we may speculate that this statement in Kings not only may have represented the various groups living throughout Judah and Samaria as described, but could also be seen as an an accurate description of Elephantine.

The reigning King Basur was killed in a political coup when his son Panammu appealed to Tiglath-Pileser III (744-727 BCE) of Assyria to come to his aid.[186] With Assyrian aid he regained his throne and the kingdom of Israel became a loyal Assyrian ally. It was through this formal relationship of obligation that later kings, if ousted by internal opponents, could rely on Assyrian aid to uphold legitimate claims to the throne. Adjacent states less friendly to Assyria often had land seized and awarded to those dynasts that demonstrated loyalty to the Empire.[187] In return, vassal kingdoms were expected to show active support for Assyria in various campaigns. It is likely that Panammu accompanied Tiglath-Pileser III in his war against Damascus in 734-732 BCE. A commemorative stone relief erected near the place of his death further rewarded Panammu's loyalty, and his body was brought to Assyria for "proper" burial.[188] The accession of Panammu's son to the throne was also ensured and the gratitude of the new king was expected. The coalition between Israel and Assyria could have meant that

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[186] Pritchard, *ANET*, 276-301.

[187] Pritchard, *ANET*, 294.

[188] David Noel Freedman, eds, *Anchor Bible Dictionary* Vol. 1 (London: Doubleday, 1992).

Israelite soldiers were stationed in Elephantine by Assyrian command when Assyria took control of Egypt in the seventh century BCE and remained there under the Persians. Alternatively, the Judeans or those Israelites opposed to the Assyrian expansion may have left the disputing kingdoms and joined the kingdom of Egypt. This latter conclusion is described in the book of Jeremiah and discussed by Modrzejewski.[189]

With the kingdom in disarray, Jeremiah proclaimed that it was the will of Yahweh that he and his followers stay in Judah. However Egypt was clearly perceived as a safe haven at this time. The people rejected Jeremiah and claimed that the land of Egypt is a place where they shall not see war or be left hungry. In a powerful and rather extreme response Jeremiah states:

> If you are determined to enter Egypt and settle there
> then the sword that you fear will overtake you there and
> the famine you dread shall follow you close,
> and there you shall die by the sword, by famine and by
> pestilence! (Jer 44:1-30)

Despite the warning a large group of Judeans evidently settle in Egypt to live in Tahpanhes, Migdol and Pathros.[190] Jeremiah then predicts that Nebuchadrezzar will overtake Egypt and bring war and pestilence. Yahweh declares that they are no longer permitted to return to Judah. In an act of rebellion against Yahweh's proclaimed wishes, the people vow to make offerings to the Queen

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[189] Jeremiah 44-46. Modrzejewski, *The Jews, 36.*

[190] Isaiah 11.11 .

of Heaven and pour out libations to her as they did on the streets of Judah.[191]

It was because of these practices that Jeremiah claims the land was made desolate. The development of restrictions on offerings and worship of the Queen of Heaven that Jeremiah indicates may well be a cause for the Judeans to settle in Egypt. If certain groups were dissatisfied with the development of worship in Judah it could be proposed that they moved to an area that would give them the freedom to continue this form of worship and would revert to the practice of worshipping Yahu in Elephantine with other goddesses, such as Anat-Yahu.

We can see intense diplomatic activity in the time of Isaiah and of Jeremiah to secure the assistance of Egypt against the Assyrians. According to Porten, Jewish soldiers and refugees are explicitly recorded as being present in Upper and Lower Egypt from the eighth century BCE but the majority came to Egypt after the destruction of the Temple.[192]

In 701 BCE Hezekiah of Judah had joined an insurrection of coastal cities backed by Egypt. Sennacherib's army entered Palestine and repelled the coastal cities and the Egyptians and placed Hezekiah's capital under siege.[193]

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[191] Jeremiah 44: 19.

[192] Porten, "Settlement of the Jews", 219ff.

[193] Ibid.

> As to Hezekiah the Judean, who did not submit to my yoke, I besieged and captured 46 of his strong walled towns with innumerable surrounding villages, by consolidating ramps to bring up battering rams (to the walls), by infantry attack, mines, breaches, and siege engines... He himself I shut up inside Jerusalem, his royal city, like a caged bird.[194]

Hezekiah paid tribute and Jerusalem was spared. This interaction clearly marks out an increasingly common occurrence of a military relationship between Jerusalem and Egypt during times of common threat. However, Assyria did control Israel and parts of Phoenicia for most of the period.[195] On the bronze gates of Shalmaneser, we see the tribute of Tyre being brought by boats, although when Shalmaneser moved on the southerly regions of Syria, he was resisted at Qarqar (853 BCE) by a coalition of Syrian and Palestinian Kings including Hadad-ezer of Damascus and Ahab of Israel.[196]

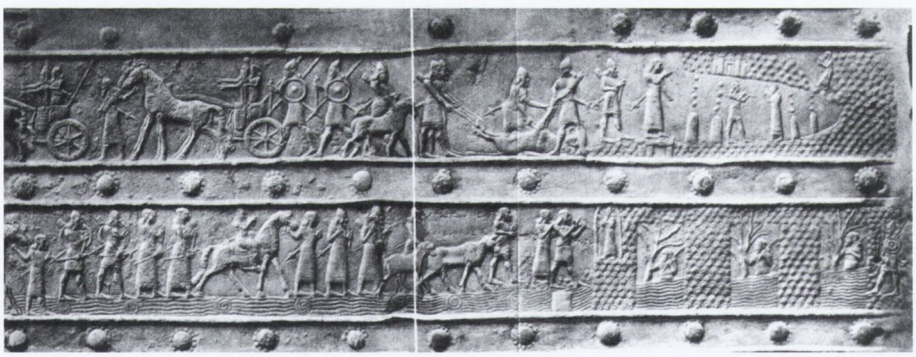

Fig. 8. Eckhard Unger. "The Bronze Gates of Shalmaneser III from his palace at Balawat" Wikimedia Commons, 2009. [Online] available at <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Balawat-Salmanassar.jpg> (accessed 13/6/10)

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[194] Saggs, *The Might that was Assyria*, 101.

[195] Ibid., 75.

[196] Pritchard, *ANET*, 287/288.

Shalmaneser's own recollection of the event shows that he defeated the coalition, and while scholars like Saggs agree he did win this particular battle, Qarqar was a significant set-back to the Assyrian strategy.[197] However, within twelve years the Assyrian empire engulfed Palestine and Ahab's successor is displayed doing obeisance before Shalmaneser on an Assyrian monument.

The distance to Egypt from Nineveh was one of the elements that made control over the region almost impossible, but the enormous wealth of Egypt made it a prize worthy of effort. The attack upon Egypt began in 675 BCE and continued for several years.[198] An Assyrian inscription narrates the final attack in 671 BCE.[199] The king describes the advance to Rapihu, "by the side of the wadi of Egypt [El Arish], where there is no river " which meant they had to draw water from a well with ropes and transport it with them. He marvels that the god Marduk came to his aid and kept his troops alive.[200] Any control Assyria did have in Egypt was indirect and local Egyptians always remained in control of administration.[201] After gaining control over southern Palestine through the use of vassals, Esarshaddon set his sights on Egypt and despite his age and after three campaigns he defeated the

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[197] Ibid., 75.

[198] Saggs, *The Might that was Assyria,* 108.

[199] Ibid.

[200] Breasted, *Ancient Records*, 935ff.

[201] Van de Mieroop, *A History of the Ancient Near East*, 256.

Nubian ruler Taharqa and claimed the northern capital Memphis.[202]

As expected, the hold of the region was weak and by his death, Taharqa had reclaimed control. It is here in the history of the region that we find a very interesting mention of the Delta region and an army recruited from the Syro-Palestinian vassals. Assurbanipal attempted a further play for Egypt but was interrupted by a rebellion among the delta vassals. In order to calm the rebellion and seize control of Egypt, he called for the assistance of an army recruited from the Syro-Palestinian vassals such as Judah, Edom and Moab and set sail with ships from Phoenicia and Cyprus down the Nile.[203] It cannot be coincidental that these groups came together to form a military unit. Surely, here is the key to unlocking the dates for the emergence of the Elephantine community. These soldiers plucked from Syria and Palestine, were sent to control a situation in the Delta by Assurbanipal (665 BCE).[204] It is legitimate therefore to assume that these same soldiers could have settled in Elephantine to protect Egypt from the Nubians to the south and the rebellious vassals, and ensured their own rights over the island to build their own temple to worship in. What is apparent is that Psammetichus I (656 BCE), Necho's son, who was educated in Assyria, proclaimed himself sole king and ruler of Egypt. He would later request the help of the Syro-Palestinian

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[202] Breasted, *Ancient Records*, 935ff.

[203] Van de Mieroop, *A History of the Ancient Near East*, 256.

[204] Daniel David Luckenbill, *The Annals of Sennacherib* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1924), 69-71.

army from Elephantine to help prevent the Babylonian conquest of Syria and Egypt.[205]

Early in the 650's, Psammetichus began to assert national independence by expelling Assyrian garrisons that had been left in the cities.[206] As already noted, he was later to use the Elephantine garrison so we can only presume that they as a Syro-Palestinian garrison were permitted to stay. Elsewhere, Gyges of Lydia had to choose whether to aid Egypt in ousting all Assyrian control or aid Assyria in retaining Egypt. By 651 BCE, Psammetichus had cleared the Assyrians from Egypt and with war raging with Babylon, Assyria lost its grip for good on the riches of Egypt. Modrzejewski does not recognise that the development of a strengthened Egyptian-Judean relationship was under Assyrian threat.[207] The Assyrian period tends to be overlooked as a settlement date for Elephantine.

Manasseh may or may not have sent Judean troops to aid Assyria in Egypt and Kush in 664 BCE, but of those Elephantine troops that fought in the campaigns in southern Egypt, we have already suggested that it may be speculated that they most likely abandoned the heavy taxation and the developing religious orthodoxy to join the foreign garrisons of Egypt's southern

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[205] Van de Mieroop, *A History of the Ancient Near East*, 256.

[206] Saggs, *The Might of Assyria*, 111.

[207] Modrzejewski, *The Jews*, 23.

borders.[208] According to Byrne, the Iran stela (727 BCE) reveals a notable increase in the required tribute. Access to "luxury trade" forced states like Israel into accessing luxury Arab goods.[209] The Iran stela records that Tiglath-pilesar would no longer be sated with wine, oil or wheat but instead imposed upon Menahem of Samaria and Rezin of Damascus, among others, explicit payments of silver, gold, tin, iron, elephant hides, ivory, died textiles, dromedaries and she-camels.[210]

Conclusions of Chapter Two

It is certainly the case that the Elephantine community originated in either Israel or Judah, or both, and that they brought with them their own tradition and culture which allowed them to fit quite easily into the typical Near Eastern cult practice, and specifically into the local multi-cultured island of Elephantine. However, what if we could actually view the Yahu colony as an example of real cult worship as it existed in Israel and Judah during the eighth century BCE? The idea that the Yahu community were a syncretistic group, is a theory that most studies on this community would agree with. For this examination I wish to show that the Yahu community not only represented this typical Near Eastern syncretistic way of life, but that the community may also

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[208] As suggested, according to Jeremiah many of the groups that were moving to Egypt were those that wished to continue the public worship of the "Queen of Heaven" alongside that of Yahweh.

[209] Byrne, "Assyrian Contacts", 22.

[210] Ibid.

have represented the condition of cultic practice in Judah at the time. The Judean community, in fact worshipped subsidiary gods and goddesses alongside Yahu such as the Queen of Heaven as described in Jeremiah.[211] The form of cult practice in the Temple of Elephantine was also practiced in shrines and sanctuaries across both Israel and Judah.

This chapter has sought to investigate some of the theories put forward for the dating of the origins of the Elephantine Yahu community.[212] This thesis is in agreement with Porten, that the emergence of the Judean community of Elephantine took place during the years of Tilgath- Pileser III and Psammetichus I/II. They may well have been a small group of soldiers in the relative peace of Egypt escaping the tyranny of the Assyrian Empire, sometime in the early 7th century. They may also have entered Egypt with the Assyrians. The typical Assyrian protocol in controlling foreign kingdoms was to take groups of mercenaries and soldiers and conscript them into the army to guard foreign areas of control. The Yahu worshippers that were placed in Elephantine to replace the deserting Egyptians were soldiers from Israel, Judah and surrounding regions.

This thesis is in agreement that the community of Elephantine emerged during the brief seven year rule of Egypt by the Assyrian Empire. If so, then the community of Elephantine may provide us

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[211] Porten, *Elephantine*, B1. (p.l).

[212] That is not to mistake the Egyptian community that have settled there since the 2nd dynasty. The historical significance of the Egyptian ownership over the land and the great and affluent history of the region will be examined in the following chapter.

with significant insight into the cultural and social characteristics of Judah and Israel at this time. I intend to provide a detailed description of life in the colony in the final chapters where we will examine the destruction of the temple of Yahu and the background of those responsible in an attempt to create a clear picture of the Yahu community as a whole.

Chapter Three

The Altar House of Elephantine and Life in the Community

Introduction

In this chapter I will discuss what is known about the temple of Yahu, its location and origin. I will also discuss the various deities mentioned in the papyri and their connection to Yahu. This chapter will examine the temples and sanctuaries that existed at this time and also the temple of Heliopolis that existed after Elephantine. It is necessary to examine these other Yahu-worshipping communities in order to investigate possible connections that may suggest reasons behind the destruction of the Elephantine temple. Due to the lack of substantial evidence on the community of Elephantine, both archaeological and literary, it is important for this thesis to examine evidence of Yahu worship elsewhere and compare and contrast the evidence in order to create a more complete picture of social, religious and political lives of garrisons and communities like Elephantine throughout the Near East. Compared to Elephantine, various cultic areas around Israel and Judah such as Arad, Beer-Sheba, Heliopolis and Gerizim, we may presume, have a far more extensive set of sources. However, this is most certainly not the case. In fact, while no scholar would challenge the existence of the temple of Elephantine primarily due to the literary evidence, there are many questions over the status and function of the temples in all four mentioned locations.

This chapter will attempt to examine some other examples of temples, sanctuaries and cultic spaces in order to illuminate our findings on the cult at Elephantine and create the context from which the Yahu community existed. By investigating other forms of Yahu worship outside of Jerusalem at this time, we can analyse aspects that may have been unique within the Elephantine community and attempt to find similarities within the cultic practice of the other Yahweh temples. Through this research into the cultic practice and social integration of these temples, we may find further evidence to attest to the overall theory of the syncretistic identification of the Elephantine garrison.

3.1 Temples and Sanctuaries

The worship of Yahu is clear, the observance of Passover and Sabbath is also strongly suggested, Judean and Israelite names are common and communication with Jerusalem is certainly documented. However this thesis will attempt to re-examine the community and present them as a group similar to the communities that existed in Judah and Israel at this time. I will begin this study by addressing Yahu worship at this time both in Elephantine and also other significant sanctuaries and temples dedicated to YHW.

The term "temple" throughout biblical scholarship has primarily been reserved for references to the Temple of Jerusalem and Samaria. Other cultic buildings, particularly those associated to Yahweh throughout Israel and Judah that would otherwise be deemed temples, are quite often referred to instead as sanctuaries and shrines. This is a clear example of the ideas of Judaism and the

reforms of Hezakiah and Josiah being projected to an earlier date. Biblical scholars and in particular biblical archaeologists rarely, if ever, refer to temples to Yahweh throughout Israel and Judah apart from Jerusalem, even to buildings before the time of Hezekiah's temple reforms. And yet, there were temples complete with altar and sacrificial courtyard.

Temples dedicated to Yahweh prior to Hezekiah's reforms would normally have included a sacrificial altar. Architectural reforms such as those discussed below from Arad and Beer Sheba indicate a widespread movement to abide by these reforms and abolished the altar by the late eighth century BCE. However, despite the abolition of the altars, these sanctuaries still retained some structure related to that of the temple they may have been, at least for a short period. There is a categorical difference between a temple and an altar that is not always addressed.[213] A temple was a roofed structure while an altar was found only in the open.[214] The temple is always considered the dwelling place of the god and was often equipped with furnishings and accessories mirroring that of priestly dwellings.[215] In fact, temples quite often reflect local dwelling places in general. According to Haran, every temple would be coupled with an altar found in the adjoining court but

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[213] Clearly due to the fact that the Jerusalem Temple became the only place to sacrifice therefore leaving many temples without altars such a distinction between temple and altar is rarely required for non-biblical archaeology.

[214] Menahem Haran, "Temples and Cultic Open Areas as Reflected in the Bible" in *Temples and High Places in Biblical Times*, ed. Avraham Biran (Jerusalem, Jewish Institute of Religion: 1981), 32.

[215] Ibid., 32.

not every altar would be attached to a temple.[216] Furthermore, only priests could function in the temple while any locals could serve at solitary altars.[217] Also, not all offerings could be celebrated at solitary altars, certain ceremonies were reserved for temple and altar structures.[218] The temple-altar sacrificial system connected with the divine dwelling place is rooted in general ancient Near Eastern cultures, and so Yahu-worship and likewise the Temple of Jerusalem itself were not untypical.

3.2 The Elephantine Temple

Rosenberg believes to have discovered the site of the temple on Elephantine island.[219] Although uncertain, he believes that due to the existence of a large tiled floor area which indicated a building of superior quality, the site excavated in 1997 in an area designated by Porten could be the remains of the temple.[220] Porten has created the possible location of the temple by painstakingly assembling all

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[216] Haran, "Temples", 32. Contrary to this theory Yohanan Aharoni's excavations of Arad discussed below shows evidence of a temple but the altar is removed from stratum VIII (late eighth century BCE). Ze'ev Herzog, "The Israelite Fortress at Arad" *ASOR* 254 (1984), 20.

[217] This is in direct contrast with Egyptian cultic roles were the King, high priests and other high officials were the only people permitted into the central area of the temple. In fact, most lower priests and private individuals had no direct dealings with the figure of the god and access to different parts of the temple depended on rank. Salima Ikram, *Ancient Egypt: An Introduction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 148.

[218] Haran, "Temples", 32.

[219] Stephen G. Rosenberg, "The Jewish Temple at Elephantine," *Near Eastern Archaeology* (vol. 67 March: 2004), 10

[220] Ibid.

locations of buildings and the relation of them to the temple of Yahu to create a map that is highly likely to suggest the location. For Rosenberg, the dimensions put forward by Porten actually recorded the courtyard rather than the building itself.[221] According to the archaeology, the temple was only six meters wide and the courtyard was twenty-three meters wide, while the lengths of both buildings have been unrecoverable.[222] According to papyrus B43, the temple of Yahu is referred to as a shrine. For Rosenberg, this suggests an altar in the open air or a plain shrine roofed but with a number of doorways.[223]

> And behold the boundaries of the house which I, Anani, gave Jeshoisma my daughter: east of it is the protecting wall which the Egyptians built, that is the way of the god;
> above it the house of the shrine of the god adjoins it wall to wall;
> below it is the wall of the stairway and the house of Hor son of Peteese, a gardener of Khnum the god, adjoins that stairway;
> west of it is the wall of the large room.[224]

According to the archeology, no altar area was found, however parts of the walls and the surrounding courtyard have been identified.[225] A large section of the western end of the site has been lost due to subsidence, so it may be suggested that the altar was

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[221] Ibid., 10.

[222] Ibid.

[223] Porten, *Elephantine*, B43. (p.l). Rosenberg, "The Jewish Temple", 6.

[224] Porten, *Elephantine*, B43. (p.l).

[225] Rosenberg, "The Jewish Temple", 6.

situated in this area.[226] For Rosenberg, the architectural design of the temple of Yahu suggests that the community originated in Israel and not at the time of Manasseh.[227]

There is also current archaeological methods employing the use of satellite photography that scans areas and is capable of photographing large areas of land and the various layers of building activities. While this study would indeed show more information on possible Yahu temple structures, this research has not yet been published or made available to me.

3.2.1 Other deities present in Elephantine and Syene

According to the papyri we have evidence of other so-called foreign deities being worshipped at Elephantine and Syene. There is mentions of varying compounded names such as Anathyahu, Herembethel and Eshembethel. While the goddess Anath does not seem to have a specific temple or shrine dedicated to her in Elephantine or Syene, she is certainly referenced in the papyri compounded with the god Yahu.[228] Anath or Anat was a goddess of love and war and sister to the god Baal. She is most often connected with youth and virginity but also known for her ferocity in battle. Ramsees II (1279-1213 BCE) was particularly devoted to her. Her primary role in mythology is through the story of Baal's death and resurrection when she is said to have mourned and searched for him and finally went to retrieve him

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[226] Ibid.

[227] Ibid., 12.

[228] Porten and Yardeni, B1, B52. (p.l)

from the underworld. [229] She is most often represented in Egypt as a nude goddess standing on a lion and holding flowers. During the Hellenistic period she is blended with the goddess Astarte and renamed Atargatis.[230] There is much less known about god Bethel, "house of god", apart from the biblical and Assyrian sources. He is most likely an aspect of various gods and often linked to Baal and Anath. In Elephantine he is compounded as Herembethel and Eshembethel, perhaps indicating the fact that they had actually temples/houses in Syene. It is interesting to note that the two name compositions of HeremBethel and Eshembethel are both believed to represent a form of Yahweh and that these temples were are mentioned to have existed on Syene. Unfortunately apart from a couple of sparse references to these temples we have no other evidence for their existence nor the activity that occurred within them.

3.3 Arad

"So far, the only archaeological remains which may perhaps be regarded as representing an Israelite temple are those at Arad, but even this is highly doubtful."[231]

Arad, itself, is only mentioned three times in the biblical sources (Num 21:1; 33:40; Josh 12:14). The name comes from an inscription incised on a sherd at the site.[232] In five seasons of

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[229] Van de Mieroop, *A History of Ancient Egypt*, 226

[230] Ibid., 227.

[231] Ibid., 35.

[232] Herzog, "Israelite Fortress", 1.

excavations, twelve clear occupational strata were established.[233] The fortress of the eleventh and twelfth centuries BCE saw not much more than an unwalled village with a paved courtyard and some dwellings.[234] It was not until the ninth century BCE that a solid wall was built and the village took on the hallmarks of a fortified garrison.[235]

Haran makes an interesting point in reference to general temple requirements. For him the temple, in essence, is the dwelling place of the god and he concludes that nomadic cultures would only have required altars for sacrifice and worship and that the actual temple would have had no significance, seeing as they themselves did not require any permanent dwelling place.[236] While Elephantine certainly maintained a priesthood and temple structure, they did not introduce the reforms of Hezekiah, as far as the papyrological evidence shows us and therefore remained, as this thesis agrees, a representation of temples and sanctuaries to Yahweh across the Near East during its existence.[237]

The development and actual structural plans of the temples is a topic fervently debated in Near Eastern studies.

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[233] Ibid., 2.

[234] Ibid., 3.

[235] Ibid., 9. We are also give huge amounts of detail from the excavation reports of Y. Aharoni.

[236] Haran, "Temples," 32.

[237] As we have discussed this thesis is in agreement with Porten that the community most likely existed from 650- 402 BCE (It is unknown if the temple was ever rebuilt, this subject will be discussed in chapter five).

Whether or not sanctuaries copied the same design and measurement of the Solomon Temple and what these differences and similarities tell us about Arad, Beer-Sheba, Heliopolis and Gerizim and their relationship to Jerusalem, is a much discussed topic. These discussions and conclusions can reveal much about the Near Eastern world at this time. For instance, how much influence did the Temple of Jerusalem have over the development of temples during the first temple period, approximately 835-422 BCE? and what does this tell us about the cultic development of the people in association with neighbouring gods and cults? Also, can we observe the celebration of feast days to other Near Eastern gods, such as those expressed in Jeremiah 44? Aharoni concluded that the provincial sanctuaries reflect local building traditions, while the Solomon Temple was designed under foreign influence.[238]

3.3.1 Temple at Arad

The temple at Arad itself changed in appearance throughout its existence. Originally a cultic platform thought to be an altar from the twelfth to eleventh centuries BCE, the temple proper was built over this area during the tenth century BCE and consisted of a broad-room and a niche, presumably the holy of holies.[239] Two limestone incense altars stood at either side of the entrance and outside there was a squared courtyard with the sacrificial altar in

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[238] Yohanan Aharoni, "Arad: Its Inscriptions and Temple", *B.A.*, vol. 31.1, (1968), 25.

[239] Herzog, "Israelite Fortress," 7.

the centre.[240] Near the altar a small bronze figurine of a crouching lion was found (stratum IX).[241]

The temple was then rebuilt during the ninth century BCE with some alterations and an extension was added to the main hall.[242] The sanctuary was primarily a 'broad-house' having a holy of holies measuring 20 X 6 cubit, with a large forecourt of about 10 X 10m, with the altar standing in the centre.[243] According to Herzog, the temple resembles the one believed to have existed in Beer-Sheba.[244] For the purpose of this study the most interesting development in the cultic area comes in the late eighth century BCE. The temple remains of this stratus reveal a dramatic change, the altar has been abolished.[245] The holy of holies and the hall continue to exist but the courtyard of the temple was covered over "with a fill of about 1m thick, which completely covered the altar."[246] The abolition of the sacrificial altar may possibly be associated with the reforms of Hezekiah, who had been ruling from about 715 BCE and attempted to unify the northern tribes with the south by creating a cultic centre in Jerusalem.

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[240] Ibid., 7.

[241] Aharoni, "Arad," 21.

[242] Ibid., 11. The extension of about 1.5m was noted by Aharoni to reflect a change in standards during the 10th century from the short to the royal Egyptian cubit.

[243] Zeez Herzog, "Israelite Sanctuaries at Arad and Beer-Sheba" in *Temples and High Places in Biblical Times.* Avraham Biran, ed. (Jerusalem: Jewish Institute of Religion, 1981), 120.

[244] Ibid., 122.

[245] Herzog, "Israelite Sanctuaries," 19.

[246] Ibid., 19.

In spite of the disuse of the sanctuary during stratum VI, certain matters pertaining to religious administration continued to be dealt with in Arad.[247] One such ostracon tell of bringing tithes "before the month ends."[248] While many of the ostraca found at Arad are lists of personal names, some of them most probably belonged to the administration of the sanctuary.[249] The most interesting of these, are a group of eight found in the room next to the holy of holies, however as these only indicate names, very little can be drawn from them.[250] For Herzog, there can be little doubt that the officiants at the temple were Israelites of recognized priestly and levitical orders.[251] This is primarily due to the fact that on the base of a bowl from a room on the eastern side of the temple courtyard, there was written references to payments from or allotments to groups such as "the sons of Korah" and "the sons of Bezal(el)."[252]

3.3.2 Inscriptions at Arad

An abundance of epigraphic finds also accompany the archaeological remains, including administrative and cultic literary

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[247] Aharoni, *Arad*, 149.

[248] Ibid., 149. Inscription 5 and 20.

[249] Aharoni, *Arad*, 148.

[250] Ibid., 148.

[251] Herzog, "Israelite Fortress", 32.

[252] Ibid.

evidence that span a period of almost 350 years.[253] Of particular interest are the abundance of names with the -yahu component which appears in 30 of the 85 inscriptions.

> ...yahu
> Obadya(hu) son of Shemayahu...
> ...
> Yedanyahu son of Sheba(nyahu)
> Heldai...
> ... son of Abiyahu
> ...(y)ahu[254]

This inscription was found from stratum VI and is clearly a list of names. Interestingly the name *Yedanyahu* also appears in the Elephantine papyri, indicating the popularity of the name at the time. More importantly, this may suggest a link in popular culture across the Near East linking places like Arad to Elephantine.

The commander of the Arad garrison was in a position of wide authority and on occasion received orders from the king.[255] It is interesting also to make note of some of his duties such as issuance of supplies and rations to groups visiting the fort and maintaining daily patrols of neighbouring posts[256] The same may be presumed of Elephantine. As a military garrison the commander here, too, would have had such duties to fulfill. The

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[253] Herzog, "Israelite Fortress," 31.

[254] Aharoni, *Arad,* 53. Inscription 27.

[255] Herzog, "Israelite Fortress," 31.

[256] Ibid.

function of Arad then, could not have just been to restrict passage but to supply rations to various groups of caravan troops.

There is also various allusions in the ostraca to a group of people call Kittim, whom Aharoni assumes are Greek mercenaries who travelled to Arad in need of refreshment and rest.[257]

> To Eliashib: And now, give the Kittiyîm 3 baths of wine, and write the name of the day. And from the rest of the first flour, send one homer of flour in order to make bread for them. Give them wine from the aganoth vessels.[258]

Another interesting inscription comes from an ostracon whose scripts indicates it dates from stratum VII.

> I have come to reign in all...
> Take strength and...
> King of Egypt to...[259]

For Aharoni, this inscription was sent to the commander of the garrison, Eliashib from Jehoahaz son of Josiah, King of Judah, during his short reign.[260] In light of the research undertaken in this thesis, this is a most interesting inscription. In the following chapters, this thesis will present the questions of relationship between Elephantine and Jerusalem and moreover speculate on a

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[257] Ibid, 31.

[258] Yohanan Aharoni, *Arad Inscriptions.* (Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration Society, 1981), 12.

[259] Ibid., 103. Inscription 88.

[260] Ibid., 104. 2 Kings 23:31; 2 Chr 31:2.

certain amount of autonomy for the Judean garrison in Egypt. Elephantine was left to practice in relative peace, as far as we are aware, up until the time of the temple's destruction. Therefore the laws of Josiah for example, certainly did not reach so far into Egypt as to effect the Yahu temple at Elephantine. It is particularly interesting to note the speed of the changes that took place in temples such as Arad as these reforms came into place, as indicated in the archaeological evidence, (although, this must remain speculation as we cannot be specific enough with the dating and the conditions behind the changes.) Why was Elephantine ignored? It is the opinion of this thesis that perhaps sanctuaries and garrisons that were geographically manageable for Jerusalem were immediately developed. Temples in other jurisdictions and kingships were left to observe the traditions they began with and it may be speculated that these places became areas were those that wished to remain part of the old way of observance could live.[261] While it seems unlikely that there may have been communications between Elephantine and Jerusalem, (we simply do not have record of any) it is more likely that Elephantine was left to its own devices. It seems highly improbable that the community of Elephantine would have appealed to Jerusalem for aid if there had been severe animosity between them. Bagavahya, the governor of Judah, who was expressly appealed to concerning the reconstruction of the temple of Elephantine, possibly in a bid to abolish forms of ritual practice outside Jerusalem, only agree to help with the rebuilding of the temple on the condition that meal offerings cease.

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[261] Jer 44:24.

3.4 Beer-Sheba

In addition to temples and solitary altars, there existed unenclosed cult areas, generally located in the vicinity of a city and comprised of various elements, such as an altar, a pillar or even sacred tree.[262] These were found mainly outside the city in areas where nomads or travelers were known to stop, they are in fact generally associated with the Patriarchs.[263] For Haran, Beer-Sheba is considered an open cultic place, not a temple- city[264] It is clear that in his assessment of a sole altar versus a temple structure, the archaeological evidence of Beer-Sheba, reveals that only an altar existed. However, according to Herzog, evidence of a "basement building" connected to the courtyard was built approximately during the reign of David, destroyed, and then built again, in the same spot during the Hasmonean period, indicating that a temple did in fact exist.[265]

3.4.1 Foundation and Temple of Beer-Sheba

The excavations at Beer-Sheba began in 1969 and still continue to this day and a number of clear occupational stratifications have become clear. The fortified city that occupied the whole Tel was constructed in the tenth century BCE.[266] According to Herzog, the first royal shrine was "undoubtedly" established, along with the fortified city sometime around 1010 BCE during the reign of

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[262] Haran, "Temples", 35.

[263] Ibid., 36. For example; Gen.12: 6-7; 33: 18-20; Josh. 24: 27-28.

[264] Ibid., 36. He references Gen. 12: 8; 28: 16-22; 35: 1, 7, 14 *et al.*

[265] Herzog, "Israelite Sanctuaries," 122.

[266] Aharoni, *Arad*, 4.

David.[267] The earliest wall was a solid at about 4m thick and built on a foundation of stone.[268] The city plan of stratum II (eighth century BCE) was dominated by a peripheral street encircling the entire city, with rows of building erected on both sides and the most important buildings would have been built on high ground.[269]

According to Haran, the existence of an altar in Beer-Sheba does not mean that a temple existed here also.[270] A royal sanctuary was not recovered here, only the horned altar is evident, a fact that contrary to Haran, Herzog concludes is sufficient evidence that a sanctuary did in fact exist.[271] Four limestone incense altars were discovered, two are characteristic of the Late Iron Age, the third is from the persian period and the fourth is dated to the Hellenistic period.[272] Incense altars of this type, shaped as tiny boxes on four pedestals but made out of pottery, were exceedingly common in Assyria at the time, and were most probably introduced to Israel through Assyrian domination and the development and spread of culture.[273] For Aharoni, the Beer-Sheba altar shows surprising resemblance to the one in Samaria, it too is decorated with a design

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[267] Herzog, "Israelite Sanctuaries," 120.

[268] Aharoni, *Arad*, 9.

[269] Ibid., 13.

[270] Haran, "Temple," 32.

[271] Herzog, "Israelite Sanctuaries," 120.

[272] Yohanan Aharoni, *Beer-Sheba I, Excavations at Tel Beer-Sheba.* (Israel: Tel Aviv University, 1973), 52.

[273] Aharoni, *Beer-Sheba I*, 52.

of meshed triangles interspersed with rows of dots.[274] Therefore the spread of popular design in architecture and art is evident. In fact, a number of Egyptian objects in bronze and faience have been discovered at Beer-Sheba also. Interestingly, one such object is the bronze figurine of the goddess Sais, one of the goddesses worshipped at Elephantine and Sehel. Although it is a bold presumption, the idea that there could have been contact between the garrisons of Elephantine and Beer-Sheba is a tantalizing one, but one that a single bronze statue could not definitively confirm.

Along with the temple at Arad it is thought that the abolition of the sanctuary of Beer-Sheba coincided with the reforms of Hezekiah.[275] Why then was the temple of Elephantine left to continue sacrifices and further still to be given the correct dates on which to sacrifice at passover? It is the understanding of this study that the accounts in Jeremiah 44 and 2 Kings 18:24ff, indeed describe those who went to live in Egypt. It describes those that were no longer allowed to worship according to culture and tradition and that limitations and restrictions were placed on cultic practice. It is evident that the sanctuaries of Arad and Beer-Sheba fell under the influence of the religious reforms and were forced to abolish the altars. However, Jerusalem's control did not reach into Egypt and the temples of Elephantine and Heliopolis continued to sacrifice and practice what this thesis argues is representative of Judah before the religious development of the post-exilic era. As I have already mentioned, after the return from exile, cultic developments and reforms were beginning to impact on the

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[274] Ibid., 52.

[275] Herzog, "Israelite Fortress", 21. Aharoni, *Arad*, 30.

practice and role of temples and sanctuaries within Israel and Judah. It is very likely that the temples of Heliopolis and Elephantine had remained separate enough from Jerusalem that it may be speculated that these two temples in fact resembled the cult that existed in the sanctuaries and temples across Israel and Judah before the centrality of the Jerusalem cult. That is to say they worshipped Yahweh alongside various local gods.

3.5 Heliopolis and the Temple of Onias

While Heliopolis is indeed far later than the Elephantine community and both cultural and political situations will have changed immensely, this thesis is of the view that such an important temple in Judean history should not be ignored.

3.5.1 Foundation of Heliopolis

The only source for this community is Josephus, Eusebius and Jerome, 5 Sibylline Oracles and some sketchy rabbinic sources. The community was established sometime between 175/140 BCE and sprung from the disastrous years in Judah when the desecration of the temple by Antiochus IV, the Maccabean revolt, and the change in the priestly line from the Zadokite to the Hasmoneans, led to large numbers seeking safety and security elsewhere.[276] It is during this time that the Qumran groups and the temple of Heliopolis begin to flourish. After Onias III was murdered in Antioch in 171 BCE, Onias IV went to settle in Egypt with a small group of

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[276] Gideon Bohak, *Joseph and Aseneth and the Jewish Temple in Heliopolis.* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 20.

followers. Josephus provides two different accounts of the "flight into Egypt".[277] In *War* he assumes that the temple of Heliopolis was built by Onias III and places the flight immediately after the desecration of the Temple by Antiochus IV (166 BCE). However, in his *Antiquities*, he suggests that Onias IV founded the temple after the change in priestly families in 162 BCE.[278] Some scholars such as Bohak agree that a letter dated 164 BCE sent by Diokatas to a high-ranking officer, whose name is badly damaged but presumed Oni[a, could imply that the letter is addressed to Onias IV thus signifying a date of 164 BCE for his arrival in Egypt.[279]

> And who praised God, shall know thee to be naught. And sometime shall a linen-vested man, A priest, say: "Come, let us raise up of God a beautiful true Temple; come, let us the fearful law of our forefathers change, Because of which they did not understand that they were unto gods of stone and clay Making processions and religious rites...And then shall there a great pure Temple be In Egypt, and the people made by God shall into it their sacrifices bring. (Sib Or 5:660-675)[280]

The most interesting element in this extract is of course the reference to the occurrence of sacrifice in the supposed Heliopolis Temple.[281] For Collins, this oracle was composed in order to legitimize sacrificing away from the Jerusalem Temple. Like the

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[277] Bohak, *Joseph*, 21.

[278] Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, in: Louis, H. Feldman (trans), Steve Mason (eds.), *Jewish Antiquities*, (Boston: 2000), 4: 156-160.

[279] Bohak, *Joseph*, 21.

[280] John Collins, *Seers, Sibyls and Sages in Hellenistic and Roman Judaism.* (London: Brill, 1997), Chapters 12/13.

[281] If we can assume that it is Heliopolis.

community of Elephantine, the Heliopolis community created a new centre of sacrifice away from the Jerusalem Temple. Unlike the Elephantine temple however, Heliopolis emerged later at a time when Deuteronomic law was probably more widely known. At this time Temples outside Jerusalem were regarded as "unclean".[282] Although the extent of adherence to the laws at this time is unknown, Elephantine most likely emerged at a time when sacrifices and worship occurred at sanctuaries across Israel and Judah. The papyri of Elephantine portrayed a culture similar to the one reviled in Jeremiah 43 and 44, that was not only well established in Egypt but also open to Egyptian and Persian traditions.[283] Elephantine simply shared a common cultural heritage with Jerusalem. Ultimately, the misrepresentation of the community comes when scholars continue to refer and consider the Elephantine community as "Jewish", as if there was already a

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[282] Bohak, *Joseph*, 21.

[283] The Jews of Elephantine married Egyptians, took Egyptian names and swore oaths to Egyptian gods they also conducted themselves in the manner of Persian soldiers, respecting Persian authorities and requesting Persian assistance in times of need. W.C Hayes, *A Papyrus of the Late Middle Kingdom in the Brooklyn Museum* (New York: Brooklyn Museum, 1955), 92ff. Porten, *Elephantine*, 125ff.

set and established Jewish cult in the seventh century BCE.[284] While facts concerning cultic activities and rituals for Jerusalem and other Israelite and Judean sanctuaries are slim during the time leading up to the exile, we may speculate and piece together with what hints we find throughout the biblical sources. Sources such as Jeremiah are particularly tantalizing if we could consider for a moment that the scene set forth here could represent the cultic conditions in Jerusalem at the time of the community's emergence in Egypt. This speculation certainly connects the polytheistic nature of the Elephantine community with what might have been the contexts from which they emerged.

> Instead, we will do everything that we have vowed, make offerings to the queen of heaven and pour out libations to her, just as we and our ancestors, our kings and our officials, used to do in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. (Jer 44:17)

3.5.2 *Temple of Onias*

We have no reliable date for the construction of the temple at Heliopolis, in fact according to Bohak, the only information that we have is from Josephus when he states that the temple stood for

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[284] From the outset of the translation of the papyri scholars have translated the term Judean as Jew, therefore creating presupposed form of identity upon the community. Cohen, Kraeling and Porten, examine in incredible detail the translation and language used throughout the papyri, and all translate Judean into Jew. Subsequent scholars commenting and discussing Elephantine such as Modrzejewski and MacLaurin, develop and expand their interpretations again using the translation as Jew. Mason, Schwartz and Schäfer however deal with the likelihood of the misinterpretation of the term Jew, which this thesis attempts to apply to the community of Elephantine.

343 years and also Jerome's claim that it stood for 250 years.[285] Furthermore the exact location of the temple remains unknown. There is significant debate among scholars over the possible location of the temple, with confusion over the designation of areas Tell-el-Yahoudieh, or Leontopolis.[286] Josephus as our main source however, seems to have been slightly misinformed about the temple himself. At the beginning of the *Jewish War*, he states that the Onias temple was modeled after the Temple of Jerusalem,[287] however, later on he claims that the temple was not like that one in Jerusalem but was a tower of large stones.[288]

Despite the lack of evidence and information concerning the Onias temple, it was certainly an important structure for Josephus as he opens and ends his *War* with reference to it. He begins by setting the scene of Onias' escape into Egypt and the construction of a temple there.[289] To conclude Josephus returns attention to the Onias temple with an account of how it was closed down by the Romans.[290] Why the Romans would destroy the temple has never been made clear, but it is presumed to have happened around 72-74 CE.[291] According to Josephus, Paulinus

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[285] Bohak, *Joseph*, 21.

[286] Modrzejewski, *The Jews of Egypt*, 205. Aryeh Kasher, *The Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt: the struggle for equal rights*. (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1985), 109.

[287] Josephus, *War*. I. 33 .

[288] Josephus, *War*. VII. 427.

[289] Josephus, *War*. I. 31-3.

[290] Josephus, *War*. VII. 10.

[291] Bohak, *Joseph*, 38.

"made sure that not even a trace of divine worship was left in that place."[292] Jerome continues to say that Onias' city "was razed to the ground."[293] However, as Bohak states, the Jews of Heliopolis continued to dwell in the city for a further 40 years.[294]

As we have discussed, this thesis is in agreement with Bezalel Porten that the community of Elephantine most likely emerged during the reign of Psamtik I to fight in the Nubian campaigns. The events depicted in Jeremiah describe the cultic conditions that are most likely to have existed in Elephantine.[295] Whether or not Judeans left Judah under the restrictions described in Jeremiah and settled in Elephantine where a community of Yahu worshippers already existed certainly seems possible but may be taking speculation too far. As we have discussed previously, this suggests that Egypt posed a safe place in order to continue the form of worship that the Judean enclave had experienced in their homeland of Israel and Judah which was under threat of reform, as I mentioned above.[296] Moreover, for Modrzejewski, it was out of rebellion against new political and cultural reforms that the wider community emerged in Egypt.[297]However the most likely scenario, considering this community is first and foremost a military garrison under employment by the Persians, is that they emerged

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[292] Josephus, *War,* VII. 433-5.

[293] Jerome, *In Dan.* III. XI. 14.

[294] Bohak, *Joseph,* 39.

[295] Porten, *Archives,* 3-16.

[296] Modrzejewski, *The Jews,* 23.

[297] Ibid.

as conscripted mercenaries to fight under Psamtik I.[298] After the establishment of Elephantine, it may also have been a place where Judeans could practice various rituals to gods associated alongside Yahu. People may have left Judah to join, in a somewhat similar situation the group in Heliopolis may have seen Egypt as a safe haven. According to Bohak, it is likely that Onias had been pro-Ptolemaic and the Seleucid campaign in Jerusalem drove them out.[299] The mainstream account for the establishment of a temple and community in Heliopolis is, of course, the contamination of the Jerusalem Temple first by the illegitimate priesthood and secondly by the profanity committed by Antiochus.[300] From the Ptolemaic point of view, the establishment of a buffer community along an important road leading to Memphis and Alexandria during such a time was clearly a welcome development.

Similar to the Judean community of Elephantine, the Onias community were ensured a certain amount of autonomy within their jurisdiction.[301] In fact, according to Josephus, some of the Jews were offered positions of power among the local Egyptian people, a fact that did not entice a peaceful co-existence:

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[298] Chapter three will examine these theories in detail.

[299] Ibid., 22. Josephus, *War* 1.32, *Ant.* XII. 246.

[300] *1 Macc* 20-29.

[301] Josephus quotes Strabo's brief statement, "In Egypt there is a Jewish settlement which is assigned to them alone." Josephus, *Ant.* XIV. 117, *Ant* XIII. 286-7.

> ... he entrusted to his subjects the fortresses and the guarding thereof, so that they might fill the Egyptians with fear. [302]

Again, similar to Elephantine, our knowledge of ancient Heliopolis is limited. We must rely heavily on Josephus and the rapid urbanisation of the area limits any extensive archaeological excavations. We do know that the community settled in several locations around Heliopolis as indicated by epitaphs from Tel-el-Yehoudieh and Dermerdash.[303]

3.6 Mount Gerizim

No examination of the Judean temples and sanctuaries across the Near East would be complete or accurate without some reference to the temple of Gerizim in Samaria. The mountain itself is 2849 feet above sea level and is situated close to Nablus (Shechem). The very establishment of the temple is still debated throughout scholarship. While actual archaeological remains are still called into question, Yizhak Magen, the leading archaeologist on the Gerizim project believes that he has not only found the temple complex and the sacred precinct but has established various phases to the temple in order to establish an accurate foundation date.[304] Excavations began in 1983 and continued until 2006 and uncovered parts of a large Hellenistic city, the Samaritan sacred

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[302] Josephus, *Ant.* XII. 45.

[303] Bohak, *Joseph,* 26. Gideon Bohak, "Good Jews, Bad Jews and Non Jews in Greek Papyri Inscriptions," *JIGRE* 46-7, (1995). C.C. Edgar, "A Group of Inscriptions from Demerdash", *BSAA 15.* (1914-1915), 32-8.

[304] Yizhak Magen, *Mount Gerizim Excavation, vol. 2: A Temple City,* (Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 2008), 100-169.

precinct as well as a late-Roman-period citadel and a Byzantine church precinct.[305] The discoveries on Mount Gerizim may be divided into three categories, 1. The sacred precinct from the persian period, 2. The sacred precinct from the Hellenistic period and 3. The Hellenistic city. For the point of this thesis, I will be examining the remains from the persian period temple only.[306] According to Magen, the Samaritan sacred precinct was the first structure to be built on Mount Gerizim.[307] In chapter six, I will be examining the reference to Delaiah son of Sanballat governor of Samaria in the papyri.[308]

3.6.1. Foundation and Temple

> Our forefathers because of certain droughts in their country... And they erected a temple without a name on the mountain called Gerizim and there offered the appropriate sacrifices... (*Ant 12.259-260)*

During the persian Period, a sacred precinct and temple were built on Mount Gerizim, as it was sacred to the Israelite population, the surviving remnants of the kingdom of Israel. According to Deuteronomy, "you shall set the blessing on Mount Gerizim" (Deut 11:29), "When you have crossed over the Jordan, these shall stand

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[305] Yizhak Magen, "The Dating of the first phase of the Samaritan Temple on Mount Gerizim in Light of the Archaeological Evidence" in *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.E.*, ed. Obed Lipschits, Gary Knoppers and Rainer Alberts (Indiana: Eisenbauns, 2007) 157-211.

[306] Magen, "The Dating," 158.

[307] Ibid.

[308] I will discuss the possibility of contact between Elephantine and Samaria in chapter six of this thesis.

on Mount Gerizim for the blessing of the people..." (Deut 27:12). Samaritans believed that Mount Gerizim was the correct location for the true temple of Yahweh (and still do today). After the destruction of the first temple by Nebuchadnezzar, a new temple was built by the Samaritans at the beginning if the fifth century BCE. Josephus tells us that the temple on Mount Gerizim resembled that of the Jerusalem Temple.[309] Two main phases of the temple have been revealed; the first phase was the persian period sacred precinct constructed in the mid- fifth century BCE; the second phase dates to the early second century BCE, during the reign of Antiochus III.[310]

Initially, the precinct was small square and featured three gates.[311] According to Magen, the temple's orientation was similar to that of Jerusalem, it faced east and the altar stood at the eastern part of the precinct.[312] The Holy of Holies stood near the western wall and the precinct had a view in all directions. It was constructed here due to its specific cultic significance but also because of the large flat rocky surface that made it possible to erect the precinct and temple without extensive quarrying and hewing.[313] No firm evidence has been found on Mount Gerizim for the existence of a ritual site, an altar, a platform or a ritual structure dating from the iron age to the first temple (1300 BCE- 600 BCE). The excavations themselves yielded tens of thousands of

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[309] Josephus, *Ant*, 12. 310-311.

[310] Magen, "The Dating," 160.

[311] Magen, *Mount Gerizim*, 100.

[312] Ibid., 101ff.

[313] Magen, *Mount Gerizim*, 97.

finds such as pottery, stone, metal and glass vessels and over 14,000 coins.[314] Almost all the ceramic finds from the persian period on Mount Gerizim were found in the sacred precinct, with the private and public construction outside yielding very few pottery vessels that could be dated to the late persian or early Ptolemaic period.[315] It is interesting to note that according to Magen Mount Gerizim is one of the few sites in Samaria to contain a stratum dated to the persian period.[316]

Josephus is one of our main literary sources for the existence of the temple of Mount Gerizim, besides the biblical accounts.[317] He records that Sanballat was sent to Gerizim as governor by King

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[314] Magen, "The Dating." 176.

[315] Ibid.

[316] Ibid., 177.

[317] Josephus, *Ant*, 11. 310, 12. 255; *War*, 1. 62.

Darius (336-331 B.C.E.)[318] and swore to build a temple there where his son in law would rule as high priest. Josephus also tells us that many Israelites then married Samaritans and joined him.[319]

> ...But Sanaballat promised not only to preserve the priesthood for him but also to procure for him the power and office of high priest and to appoint him governor of all the places over which he ruled... And he said that he would build a temple similar to that in Jerusalem on Mount Gerizim,... And undertook to do these things with the consent of King Darius. (Ant, 12.310-311)

The degree in which we depend on Josephus's account is a much debated topic. Magen comments that many scholars including Gutman, dismiss the evidence presented by Josephus for the construction of the temple in the day of Sanballat. Cohen, however,

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[318] Here I think it should be mentioned the problems faced when examining the accuracy of Josephus as a source. While a number of specific details can be cross checked for example archaeological evidence and architectural data, which in many cases prove accurate, there is information which we know he cannot possibly have witnessed first hand. In the case of the identity of Sanballat the archaeological data and the dates for the development of the Gerizim temple precinct as described by Magen do not co relate with Jospehus' identification of the Sanballat in question. Josephus is most certainly detailed and thorough throughout his works. As with all sources, particularly ancient secondary sources we must take into consideration the context from which the author is composing and the audience to whom he is addressing. If we consider that Josephus was aware of both Sanballats why then would he choose to document the incorrect person. Attempting to highlight and distinguish Jewish history by emphasising its historical context and present certain situations within a specific light might seem to be one reason why Josephus opted to choose a different character. It may also be speculated that he simply mixed up the names, or was unaware that they were different people, however the general accuracy and quality of Josephus suggests that such mistakes would be unlikely.

[319] Josephus, *Ant*, 11. 308.

maintains that this evidence should be accepted.[320] For Magen, the discoveries on Mount Gerizim reveal Josephus's error in attributing this time (380-330 BCE) to Sanballat and Darius. For him, through the evidence, the temple was built during the time (second half of the fifth century BCE) of Nehemiah under Sanballat the Horonite (444 BCE) while the city surrounding the sacred precinct was established after the destruction of Samaria by Alexander the Great.[321] The temple of Gerizim had therefore already stood for a century before Alexander's conquest. The pottery and clings found in the sand precinct conclude that this area was still active even following Alexander's conquest of Israel.

Josephus also tells us that during the sacking of the temple of Jerusalem under Antiochus IV, the Samaritans issued a letter requesting that the same does not happen to their temple on Mount Gerizim. The archaeological evidence to support the existence and activity of the Gerizim temple seems to be adequate in establishing an overall outlook on the community. The temple and the activities therein seem to have been considered, certainly by Josephus, as a mirror copy of that of Jerusalem. According to Josephus, the Samaritans themselves felt that they had to appeal to Antiochus not to destroy or corrupt their temple, as he had done to Jerusalem, as Josephus states:

> ...we follow the same practices as through kinship with them, are involving us in similar charges,

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[320] Magen, "The Dating", 190. J. Gutman, "Alexander of Macedonia in the Land of Israel," *Tabriz 11* (1940), 271-94. S.J.D Cohen, "Alexander the Great and Jaddus the High Priest according to Josephus," *AJSR 7-8* (1982-83), 41-68.

[321] Magen, "The Dating", 190.

> whereas we are Sidonians by origin . . . Not to molest us in any way by attaching to us the charges of which the Jews are guilty since we are distinct from them both in race and custom. (*Ant. 260-261)*

3.7 The Social Evidence in the Papyri

As we have seen throughout this chapter the evidence of sanctuaries and temple activities rely heavily on the archaeological data. In the case of Elephantine we have very little archaeology to base our examinations on and so must rely on the information provided in the papyri. The entire compilation of papyri had been discovered over a period of a century to include not only the Aramaic texts but also Hieratic, Demotic, Greek, Coptic, Arabic and Latin papyri. While we reviewed some of the papyri relevant to the Khnum priesthood and the Yahu community already, some twenty letters between Khnum priests and associates are contained within the collection dating from the early Persian rule (492 BCE) to the early Roman domination (11 CE). The Aramaic papyri however, span no more than a century and were composed during the time of Persian supremacy when Aramaic was the *lingua franca* of the Empire.[322]

3.7.1 Law in the Papyri

It seems that for at least 500 years the priests of Khnum were writing back and forth with their companions. Some of the main issues of conversation were the problem of grain (government deliveries were quite often threatened by thieves) and the question of money but the letters primarily were concerned with personal

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[322] Porten, *Archives*, 230.

matters. Unfortunately the Aramaic papyri are a poor source of information when it comes to data concerning administration within either the Temple structure or the garrison organisation. The papyri do shed light on aspects of the structural organisation of the colony. The Judean troop was divided into "detachments" and these into "centuries".[323] Persian officials commanded both of these segments.

Both the Egyptians and the Yahu community share the same legal procedures and conditions as far as we can discern from the evidence we have. Both sets of legal documents, the Aramaic and the Demotic, have an identical framework; "date, parties, scribe and witnesses."[324] Thirty texts in total are legal documents. The contracts were most often what seem to be basic IOU's drawn up by the borrower to the lender. The loan generally stated "I came to you and... you gave me." Items offered for lending ranged from grain to "three cots to sleep on."[325] While all were composed in similar style, the actual terms of the loans varied greatly. For the purpose of this thesis it is significant to note that money loans were not the most common form of lending among the Yahu community. The community instead mainly traded general goods such as wine, skins, wool, garments and grain.

Legal distinction is always made throughout the papyri between "member of the attachment" and "member of the

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[323] Kraeling, *The Brooklyn Museum*, 50.

[324] Porten, *Elephantine*, 18.

[325] Ibid., B46, 252ff.

town."[326] According to Herodotus, the "royal judges" were men who had life tenure of their position but were subject to capital punishment for misconduct in office.

> These royal judges are especially chosen men, who hold office either for life or until they are found guilty of some misconduct; their duties are to determine suits and to interpret the ancient laws of the land, and all points of dispute are referred to them.[327]

Not only did the judges settle disputes and administer justice but also they were often called before the king in both private and public matters. Having fallen in love with his sister, Cambyses summoned the judges to ask their advice on marrying her and if there was any law in the country which would allow it.

> When, therefore, Cambyses put his question, they managed to find an answer that would neither violate the truth nor endanger their own necks: namely that though they could discover no law which allowed brother to marry sister, there was undoubtedly a law which permitted the king of Persia to do what he pleased.[328]

While we may question the reliability of Herodotus for this account, we may speculate that such judges as these were also summoned after the disturbances at Elephantine which caused the destruction of the Temple. As we will examine, the judges of the province of Tshetres investigated the scene and ordered the confiscation of Vidranga's property and the sentence of execution

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[326] Porten, *Elephantine*, B23, 202. (p.l).

[327] Herodotus, 3. 31.

[328] Herodotus, 3. 31.

was heralded for all responsible.[329] Alongside these judges were two officials described by Porten as the "sheriff" and the "spies/ king's eyes."[330] While the "sheriff" carried out the judges' decision, the "spies" enabled the king to monitor the authority and independence of satraps, governors and district rulers, for any sign of disloyalty.[331] We can assume that the "spies" were greatly rewarded particularly in cases of swift action because of the nature of the position and the clear animosity that must have been felt towards them. Porten considers that the "spies" who investigated the destruction of the Temple in Elephantine were locals having been appointed in the province of Tshetres.[332]

3.7.2 *Mibtahiah and the role of Women*

Mibtahiah's Archive is a major source of information for both the status of women in the Yahu community and also the social laws of the Judean enclave. The archive itself contains seven documents, four of these concern a house given to her by her father at the time of her first marriage (if this was in fact a marriage) and one concerns a house given by her father in exchange for certain goods.[333] The first document she appears in depicts the newly married couple moving into the house belonging to the bride.

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[329] Porten, *Elephantine*, B19, 139ff. (p.l).

[330] Porten, *Archives*, 50.

[331] Ibid.

[332] Porten, *Elephantine*, B17, 135. (p.l) Porten, *Archives*, 51.

[333] Ibid. B23-33, 202-254. (p.l).

> Mahseiah son of Jedaniah, a Jew, hereditary-property-holder in Elephantine the fortress of the detachment of Haumadata, to lady Mibtahiah his daughter, saying: I gave you in my lifetime and at my death a house, land, of mine...That house, land - I gave it to you in my lifetime and at my death. You have right to it from this day and forever and (so do) your children after you. To whomever you love you may give (it)... Whoever shall bring against you suit or process, (against) you, or son or daughter of yours, or man of yours, in the name of that land which I gave you or shall complain against you (to) prefect or judge shall give you or your children silver, 10, that is ten, karsh by the stone (-weight)s of the king, silver 2 q(uarters) to the ten, without suit or without process, and the house is your house likewise and your children's after you...And they shall not be able to take out against you a new or old document in my name about that land to give (it) to another man. That document which they shall take out against you will be false. I did not write it and it shall not be taken in suit while document is in your hand.[334]

Each of the traditions, Egyptian, Aramaic, Greek and Arabic, had documents relating to marriage.[335] These marriage contracts contain all regulated matters of personal status and property within the marriage while both the Aramaic and Demotic papyri indicate the prior existence of children.[336] From the papyri we understand that her father Mahseiah b. Jedaniah possessed a plot with a partially dilapidated house with a gateway. After leaving the plot of land and allowing it to fall into disrepair, Khorazmian Dargman b. Harshin who lived northeast of the land, apparently

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[334] Ibid, 25. (p.l).

[335] Porten, *Elephantine*, 23.

[336] Ibid.

laid claim to it.[337] When brought before the court to prove ownership of the land, Mahseiah had nothing to offer and so was forced to take an oath by Yahu that the property did indeed belong to him.

In 460 BCE, that same piece of land was offered to Mibtahiah when she married Jezaniah. The story of the dilapidated house reveals a very noteworthy aspect of the status of religion and cult in the Elephantine garrison. According to the sources, when Mahseiah was unable to produce literary evidence that he owned the land, the court "imposed upon" him to swear an oath by Yahu.[338] Judicial oaths played a major role in the settlement of disputes among general Near Eastern communities and upon swearing by Yahu, Mahseiah was believed and the land remained his. Unusually two different documents were drawn by Mahseiah in leaving his property to his daughter. The first contract to Mibtahiah states that she is the sole owner of the land to do with whatever she likes and to give it away to whomever she wants. Twelve witnesses signed the contract, a surprisingly large number including one neighbour, just proving that Mahseiah had learned from his previous situation. The second document is made out to her husband, Jezaniah and even signed by the same twelve witnesses. It testifies that he is expected to make improvements to the property and dwell there while in return his children by Mibtahiah would inherit the property.

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[337] Ibid.

[338] Porten, *Elephantine*, B24, 159. (p.l).

For Azzoni in her article "Women of Elephantine and Women in the Land of Israel", she notes that this letter is a very rare example considering "patrilocal marriages" were by far more common in the Ancient Near East.[339] What is even more interesting is that her husband Jezaniah's rights to the house were solely tied to his marriage to Mibtahiah. Azzoni also makes it clear in regards to this document that this marriage may be at this point only at the "inchoate stage" as the document states that the couple are not yet cohabiting in the home, so it is not certain if the marriage is ever completed.[340] In examining the social standing of women in the Elephantine garrison and by using Mibtahiah as an example, we may observe that women were certainly granted many significant rights. According to this papyrus, even if Mibtahiah left her husband she was still entitled to at least half the property. Presumably this tactic was a ploy from the point of view of Mahesiah in order to keep the land under the ownership of his grandchildren, yet even so, it signified that women could own property in Elephantine and retain it even through divorce. As mentioned earlier, there is no evidence in the papyri of a marriage certificate for Mibtahiah and Jezaniah.

The next document that discusses her relationships is a document of wifehood listing the marital property. Again, Mibtahiah seems to have most control. If her husband Eshor "builder to the King", should die she would inherit "everything that he owns on the face of this earth". However, on his side if she should die, Eshor would

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[339] Annalisa Azzoni, "Women of Elephantine and Women of the Land of Israel" in I*n the Shadow of Bezalel,* ed. Alejandro Botta (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 4.

[340] Ibid., 5.

only inherit her goods and possessions. Again, Azzoni points out that the explicit absence of the final line for Eshor's inheritance excludes her property.[341] Furthermore, Eshor is expressly forbidden from practicing polygamy. It seems highly unusual that Mibtahiah would have a marriage contract drawn up for the second time, if this was her second marriage, with the agreement made between her father and husband. Marriage contracts in general were drawn up to protect the husband from a fraudulent marriage, particularly to do with the woman's virginity and virtue. Deuteronomic laws explicitly details that unmarried girls must remain virgins until they are married to a man of her father's choosing and if she is found without chastity, he is entitled to a divorce and the dowry. The girl in turn is shamed and quite often unable to marry again.[342] But when the bride had already been married twice, possessed considerable property and probably accumulated the dowry herself, a contract between her husband and father seems almost worthless. The tradition and practice of presenting "mohar" to the father was clearly important to the Elephantine community. All marriages in Elephantine were in accordance with Near Eastern characteristics, arranged between the groom and a person acting for the bride, normally her father. For this study, it is significant that Mahesiah accepted an Egyptian suitor for his daughter. The husband usually brought a bridal gift (mohar) to the person acting for the bride and the bride brought her own possessions to her new home.[343]

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[341] Azzoni, "Women of Elephantine," 5.

[342] Tikva Frymer-Kensky, "Virginity in the Bible" in *Gender and law in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East,* ed. Matthews, Levinson, and Frymer-Kensky (New York: T & T Clarke, 2004), 79.

[343] Kraeling, *The Brooklyn Museum,* 52.

The equality in gender is never fully addressed in relation to the Elephantine community and scholars often presume a general understanding of the social conditions for women during the persian Period. Most of the regulations on behaviour and offences of women are taken from the Middle Assyrian Laws (tablet 1), which concludes:

> In addition to the punishments for [a man's wife] that are [written] on the tablet, a man may [whip] his wife, pluck out her hair, mutilate her ears, or strike her, with impunity.[344]

While the example here seems exceptionally harsh, we must consider if these laws applied to women such as Mibtahiah in Elephantine. As far as we can tell from the papyri, no legal order was given for any husband to punish his wife; in fact Mibtahiah seems to have been an exceptionally formidable woman and most importantly, a landowner. Why then was there polarised standards of treatment within the same empire? We must bear in mind that features of the law and legal consequences differ for women and men as they differ for racial, demographic and ethnic categories.[345] Therefore, women in Elephantine were treated in the same way as other women in the general area. We need to leave Elephantine altogether in order to find evidence of legal punishments against women. This situation echoes that of the treatment of the Yahu

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[344] Martha T. Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 175-176.

[345] Martha T. Roth, "Gender and Law: A case study from Ancient Mesopotamia" in *Gender and Law in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near East*, ed. Matthews, Levinson and Frymer-Kensky (England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 173-184.

community as a whole. While the destruction of the Temple and the punishment of officials from the Judean enclave displayed an obvious aversion to the community, the general acceptance and assimilation observed through intermarriage and syncretistic acknowledgements, signifies a distinct geographical harmony. Porten questions the likelihood that Pia is, in fact, her third husband as indicated by Cowley, as Porten suggests that Eshor is still alive at this time and no divorce seems to have taken place.[346] Azzoni argues that Pia is a relative of Eshor and sued Mibtahiah after Eshor's death.[347]

Despite what may be initially assumed, such domination over women was not completely typical throughout the history of the Near East. Throughout some late third millennium archives, the role of women is radically different from the one described in the Middle Assyrian tablet. In a text from the Sargonic period (2350-2110 BCE), a husband is portrayed as displaying a form of animal husbandry while his wife, Ama-e, owned large areas of land and recorded harvests of grain expenditures.[348]In these texts, women can act independently; they buy and sell houses, act as guarantor for another person, and are involved in court procedures.[349] By the

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[346] Porten, *Elephantine*, 190.

[347] Azzoni, "Un Giuramento ebraico ad Elefantina d'Egitto," *Annali della Facolta di Lettere e Filosofia dell'Universita degli Studi di Milano* 53/2 (2009), 265-271.

[348] Marc Van De Mieroop, "Woman in the Economy of Sumer", in *Women's Earliest Records. From Ancient Egypt and Western Asia*, ed. Barbara S. Lesko (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 56.

[349] Ibid., 57.

Babylonian period, the social situation has drastically changed for women. A fragment of a letter from Sippar reports:

> There is no right to inheritance for daughters in Sippar
> Be they eldest or minors.[350]

While this is not a legal document, it appears to reflect the custom for the early Babylonian Period. Therefore, in the event of no sons to take the inheritance, the property would go to the next male relative. This evidence perhaps makes Mibtahiah's situation significantly more unique and fortunate.

According to Deut. 24:1ff, Jer. 3:8, and Is. 50:1, the husband is obliged to draw up a bill of divorce. Similarly, ten demotic divorce documents from Egypt have been recorded, however it is more likely that these were drawn up to permit the woman to re-marry rather than to legalise the separation.[351] Clearly not all divorces were followed-up by a suit, therefore it is probably that some formal/ informal way of recognising a divorce was made in Elephantine such as an announcement in front of witnesses.

All of the slaves mentioned in the Aramaic Papyri were Egyptian and Porten finds it highly unlikely that any of the Yahu community were or may have be enslaved even for debt.[352] Perhaps this is due to the fact that the Judean enclave were all connected to the garrison and so may be presumed to have employment. The Egyptian community on the other hand would

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[350] Zafrira Ben-Barak, *Inheritance by Daughters in Israel and the Ancient Near East*. (Jerusalem: Graphite Press, 2006), 119.

[351] Porten, *Archives*, 247.

[352] Porten, *Archives*, 203.

have either lived in Elephantine or travelled to the island for work, probably through the trade markets.[353] Also, although speculative, slaves might very well have been a commodity dealt with in such a trading island.[354] Slavery was a fundamental element of life throughout the Near East. A slave would be considered property to be bought or sold for money, like a house or garment, and similarly bequeathed to children and heirs. They were also bartered in pledge for debts and their owner's name was often inscribed on the slave's right arm, for example, "Belonging to Meshullam".[355] Contracts of self sale from the twenty-sixth Dynasty onwards quite often includes the present and future children in the sale.[356] Through the evidence provided it is evident that the Yahu community were slave owners and the native Egyptians became so indebted that they had to sell themselves and their families into slavery. While we may conclude this as a possible source of conflict between the two communities for the purpose of this thesis, it also represents an account of integration. The Egyptians must have traded and worked alongside the Yahu community. They also must have been placed in debt and ultimately into slavery because of interaction. It would be highly unlikely that the Egyptian slaves were forced into slavery through dominance and control, even under the Assyrian and Persian Empires. They became slaves out of necessity which quite often resulted in mixed marriages and the adoption of Hebrew-Egyptian names.

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[353] Ibid.

[354] Ibid.

[355] Hayes, *A Papyrus*, 92ff.

[356] Porten, *Archives*, 205.

Tamet's right to divorce therefore, is an even more astounding record than Mibtahiah's considering Tamet was a slave. In her documents it is expressly stated that she is not permitted to stand up in assembly, unlike Mibtahiah, and also after divorce it states that she can go wherever she pleases as Mibtahiah's does. Furthermore, Tamet can possess joint property with her husband and even inherit it should he die.

> I came to you (and asked you) to give me Tamet by name, who is your handmaiden, for wifehood. She is my wife and I am her husband from this day and forever... Tomorrow or (the) next day, should Tamet stand up and say: "I hated my husband Anani,"silver of ha(t)red is on her head. She shall give to Anani silver, 7 shekels and all that she brought in her hand she shall take out, from straw to string....[357]

> Ananiah son of Azariah, a servitor of YHW the God of Elephantine the fortress, to lady Tamet his wife saying: I gave you half of the large room, and its chamber, of the house which I bought from *'wbyl* daughter of Shatibara and from Bagazushta, Caspians of Elephantine the fortress. I, Ananiah, gave it to you in love. Yours it is from this day forever and your children's, whom you bore me, after you.[358]

Azzoni notes that while all women mentioned in the papyri (particularly Mibtahiah, Tamet and her daughter Yehoyishma) owned property, they all acquired it as a gift from a relative.[359] She also mentions that immovable property is most commonly given on the occasion of a marriage.[360] According to Eskenazi, the

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[357] Porten, *Elephantine*, B36. (p.l).

[358] Porten, *Elephantine*, B38. (p.l).

[359] Azzoni, "Women of Elephantine," 10.

[360] Ibid.

documents also confirm the fact that "daughters inherit even when there is a son.[361] Due to the fact that these circumstances are considered so rare, it is doubtful that we should use the stories of these women as a representation of conditions for women across the Near East at this time.

Conclusions of Chapter Three

The investigations undertaken in this chapter have sought to identify links and common strands of identification between the temples of Arad, Beer-Sheba and Heliopolis with the garrison of Elephantine. Arad is a fortified city that naturally displays a complete submission to the rule of Jerusalem. The altar is abolished with the reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah and later the temple, too, is abandoned. This suggests that the temples of Beer-Sheba and Arad fell under the control of the Jerusalem priesthood while Elephantine remained untouched by the religious developments, at least until they required assistance. This thesis has maintained the view that the Elephantine temple and community represented a form of Yahu worship that existed in Judah at the time of the emergence of the Judean garrison in Elephantine. Arad and Beer-Sheba represent and display a form of Yahu worship that is developing and responding to the political developments in Jerusalem. We can speculate that while Elephantine remained outside the control of Jerusalem, at least up until its initial destruction, it may have been viewed as an area

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[361] Tamara C. Eskenazi, "Out of Shadows: Biblical Women in the Post-Exilic Era," *JSOT 54* (1992), 25-43.

capable of maintaining the typical syncretistic form of worship that included Yahu.

Whether or not Beer-Sheba had a highly functional temple-altar complex or simply an altar suitable for the traveling caravans and locals to sacrifice on high days is still a topic highly debated throughout scholarship. The epigraphic evidence of Beer-Sheba to Arad may be compared to suggest some common level of cultic activity.

While the temple of Heliopolis is dated much later than Elephantine, it imitates a situation from which Elephantine may have emerged. For Heliopolis, the political situation in Jerusalem caused Onias to flee to Egypt to fulfill what he believed to be prophecy and raise a temple to Yahweh in the land of Egypt. The disorder in the priestly administration and the sacrilege of Antiochus IV made worshipping in the Jerusalem null and void as the sole sanctuary of Judaism. It may be speculated that with the desecration of the Temple in Jerusalem, the Onias group had a legitimate reason for the erection of the temple in Heliopolis and indeed had just cause to challenge to power in Jerusalem.

As we have discussed, the Gerizim temple has a significant connection to the Elephantine community, or at least the emerging temple of Gerizim had. This thesis has examined the archaeological developments of Magen and his assessments of the dating of the Samaritan temple of Mt Gerizim. His conclusions lead us to steer away from Josephus's dating and rather focus earlier to Sanballat the Horonite about the time of Nehemiah. This estimation has proven to be quite significant for this thesis. In the

light of these developments, we may conclude that at the time of the Elephantine temple's destruction, the temple of Samaria was already completed. Furthermore, the request to Jerusalem to send aid in the reconstruction of the temple was apparently left unanswered. It seems that it was not until the third request letter that also included in its recipients, the son of Sanballat, governor of Samaria, that a response was given. That is not to say that this was the reason for the reply. It seems likely that a number of letters may not have been discovered. What Delaiah's position was we do not know, however, it seems to have achieved it desired effect. A reply was issued with the names of both parties agreeing to the request for aid.

In closing, this chapter has attempted to examine the role of the altar house in Elephantine and its comparisons and contrasts to other cultic centres in the Near East. Examination of selected documents in the Aramaic papyri has brought us closer to an understanding of the conditions that surrounded this community. The legal aspects of the papyri which make up the majority of the content centred on loans and inheritance. We were able to establish for the benefit of this study that the Judean enclave seemed to conduct loans in goods more often than loans in money. The more information we can discern from the papyri, the clearer our understanding of the community. Why did they not particularly lend money and why such a wide variety of goods? The fact is that most people bartered as coinage was not widespread and also as a port town, the boats coming from Nubia or Lower Egypt provided an atmosphere for trading and selling.

The activities of royal judges had an immediate effect on the Yahu community. There certainly does not seem to have been any

discrimination or iniquitous behaviour against the Yahu community. The court immediately and without question punished Vidranga and his associates for the siege on the Temple. The "sheriff and spies" of the king also had a role to play in the Elephantine community. Most likely, the undercover "spies" would have been feeding information concerning the development of trouble in Elephantine to Arsames and the Persian Satrap.

When we examined Mibtahiah's Archive more closely we were able to note a number of things. The court accepted Mahesiah's oath to Yahu concerning ownership of a derelict piece of property even when it states he was "imposed upon" to swear. This point is hugely significant for this study as it signifies that sworn oaths could be made to both Yahu and other gods. We do not know who made the choice of deity in the oaths, however both parties would have agreed. It suggests, most importantly, that oaths sworn with Egyptian gods by the Yahu community should be considered as legitimate as the ones solely to Yahu. The further examination of the archives of Mibtahiah in respect of the status of women in Elephantine revealed that some women in Elephantine possessed more legal and inheritance rights than women in other parts of the Persian Empire. By examining sources from outside Egypt we were able to understand more fully the status of women and how their social condition is often dependent on geographical location.

Chapter Four

The Origins of the Temple and the Source of Funding.

Introduction

In this short chapter I want to address the actual structure of the temple and whether or not we can say if the temple was built specifically for the Judean garrison. I will examine the likelihood of the Judean community developing the Yahu temple from a pre-existing sacred area. This chapter will also examine the data available to us in decerning the source of funding for the temple of Yahu. If we understand that the Persians closed many state funded temples why then was the temple of Elephantine spared. I will also highlight evidence of the funding allocated to the the Yahu temple. This chapter will conclude by examining some of the social issues within the garrison.

4.1 New Temple or New Renovations

As we have already established, the Judean community at Elephantine emerged first and foremost as a military colony employed under Psammatichus I. We must now discern when the temple to Yahu was established.

The military garrison in Elephantine had been in existence sice 3000 BCE when the borders of the new state where being established. It is certain that a military presence was established

early on Elephantine island due to its location on the cataract and its proximity to Nubia. The various stages of the temples of Khnum and Satet alongside the ancient shrine of Heqaib show the strong presence of areas of cultic activity but whether or not any of these temples were built specifically as an accompaniment for the garrison troops is uncertain. What we can discern from the papyri is that the temple of Yahu when it is completed is situated right alongside the area alocatted for the burial of mummified rams associated with the temple of Khnum. Also in the request for aid letter the Judeans claim the Khnum priesthood have built a wall through the temple area.[362] I suggest that this specific piece of information suggests that the Khnum priesthood were reclaiming part of the land belonging to Khnum given over to establish the Yahu temple. There is evidence that a temple to Khnum existed on Elephantine from as early as the third dynasty approximately two thousand years at this stage, the Khnum temple complex therefore would have been a heavily built up area. We have evidence of the many subsections of the temple including various outer buildings and smaller sanctuaries alongside the large main temple.[363] When the Egyptian troops under Psammetichus I abandoned their posts and the Judean enclave were installed into the garrison a specific location for the temple of Yahu may have been given even at this early stage. As we have already suggested the Egyptians revolted against their new Saite controlled state and Psammetichus may well have wanted to reward the Judean garrison and punish the Egyptians who abandoned it by taking areas allocated for the Khnum complex and permitting a temple dedicated to the Judean god. It was certainly common place to have foreign temples

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[362] This topic will also be dealt with in detail in chapter six.

[363] As we have discussed in chapter one.

established in various locations throughout Egypt and so the permission of a temple to Yahu was not the area of conflict but rather the location was. Indeed Syene, also home to various Judeans, Carians and Syrians had established temples to Herembethel and Eshembethel. I suggest that it is very likely due to the ancient nature of the Khnum complex and the known location of the Judean temple in relation to that of Khnum that the Yahu temple was installed into a pre-existing structure, as was a common Near Eastern occurance.

The Xathus inscription states that in the future the priest of the new cult was to be chosen from the same family, the Aramaic text seems to skip this this clause.[364] As far as we are aware there is no evidence suggesting the priests of Yahu in Elephantine continued through a family line. The evidence in the papyri indicates that Jedaniah the author of the request for aid letter refers to himself and his collegues as priests of Elephantine but nothing further is mentioned.

According to the papyri when the Judean community appeal to Jerusalem for aid they mention that their temple already existed during the time of Cambyses. It may be speculated that this claim is simply rhetoric, a way to make the communites roots and importance in the area more plausable. Therefore for the Judean garrison to claim that the temple was completly established at the time of Cambyses could be in order to recieve the funding they need from Jerusalem. At the same time this draws some other questions concerning the understanding by the Jerusalem

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[364] Javier Teixidor, "The Aramaic Text in the Trilingual Stele from Xanthus" *JNES vol 37 no 2.* (April, 1978), 184

authorities pertaining to the historical context from which the Judean garrison emerged. We must bear in mind that by the time the comunity request for aid, the Judean garrison had been in existence for about two hundred years. However I find that the mention of Cambyses was not to establish the age of the temple but rather the status and importance of it. As I will discuss in chapter six, it is suggested by Herodotus that Cambyses destroyed many temples and sanctuaries throughout Egypt but evidence throughout the papyri shows that Cambyses did indeed leave the temple standing.[365] Despite the claims it is not accurate that Herodotus destroyed many temples at all but may instead have caused many to close down due to the restriction on temple funding.[366]

4.2 Private or State Funding

The development of the Yahu temple after its initial installation would have come later. Once the community began to develop and the laws governing land ownership and inheritance rights were established only then can we be certain the temple of Yahu developed and grew, perhaps both in size and prosperity. We can draw some similarities to the community described in the Xanthos inscription, were an example of Greek mercenaries are awarded the construction of a temple, most likely buily under Assyrian / Neo-Assyrian rulership. The inscription dated 358 BCE under the

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[365] Herodotus 3:30

[366] Please see chapter six for a more detailed discussion on this topic.

reign of Artaxerxes III and writte in Greek, Lycian and Aramaic was a decree for the establishment of a new cult.[367]

> "The landowners of Arnna have instituted a cult to worship the Lord god of Kaunios and ... And they made Simias son of Koddorasi priest. And there is a fief by which the landowners gave to the Lord od. Year after year the sum of a mina and a half will be given by the region. The aforesaid priest will sacrifice a sheep every new moon to the Lord god and to ... and an ox every year"[368]

It seems likely that this land and the construction and maintenance of this new temple was privately owned and run. It may well have been owned by various wealthy land owners most likely in a bid to establish a connection to the neighbouring territory. The decision to dedicate a new temple to the god of a town of Caria was approved by the existing gods of Xanthus who are invoked in the inscription.[369] Various subtle political methods are generally in play in such motivations and as we can have speculated may have also occured in the establishment of the Yahu temple in Elephantine. Unlike the temple mentioned in the Xanthos inscription I do not find that the Yahu temple of Elephantine was necessarily privately funded, certainly not initially. I find that the land allocated to the garrison was expanded into thr Khnum temple comlex in order to accomodate the Yahu temple, however the Judean community would not have done this themselves. The land/building had to have been given to them, most likely under Psammetichus I/II. If the land/building had been legitimately bought privately it seems unlikely that the Khnum priesthood

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[367] Teixidor, "The Aramaic," 181.

[368] Ibid., 182

[369] Ibid.

would build a wall through the garrison reclaiming portions of land.

When attempting to describe the financial situation of the Yahu temple in Elephantine we immediately look at the letter requesting aid in the rebuilding of the temple. Why did the community have to ask for outside aid? While initially I believe the temple of Yahu was established as part of the garrison and so paid for by the state alongside the payment of the soldiers, it is most likely that the state funding was minimal for the upkeep of the temple if it continued at all and did not stretch to rebuild the destroyed structure. We do have some record in the papyri of private donations given to various gods in Elephantine and Syene,

> On the 3rd of Phamenoth, year 5. This is the names of the Jewish garrison who gave silver to YHW theGod each person silver, 2 sheckels -
> ...
> The silver which stood that day in the hand of Jedaniah son of Gemariah in the month of Phamenoth: silver, 31 karsh, 8 shekels.
> Herein: for YHW 12k., 6sh.;
> for Eshembethel, 7 karsh;
> for Anathbethel, silver, 12 karsh[370]

Here we can see gods such as Eshem-Bethel and Anath-Bethel worshipped on Syene also earned money alongside Yahu.[371] The names of those who donated have been recorded therefore we can presume that this donation was not obligatory for every member of the community. We may speculate that the temple while partially or initially funded by the state relied on

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[370] Porten and Yardeni, *TAD*, C3.15, 228-234.

[371] Ibid., C3.15, 228-234.

donations from the community to continue. We may speculate further to suggest that after the destruction of the temple there simply was not enough state support nor private donations to help rebuild the temple. In the request for aid the author mentions that the community are now in sackcloth almost in mourning for their lost temple awaiting aid, while this is clearly an over exaggeration in order to bolster aid it perhaps does hint at the desperation of the community and the apparent lack of financial support internally. Perhaps had the letter suggested that they could raise a certain amount of money themselves we might have more of a suggestion that the temple had been entirely run on private donations. Also, as we will discuss later in this thesis it seems quite likely that if we are to believe that the destruction of the temple was a local political struggle then the state funding that I believe would have supported the temple was stopped once it was destroyed so as to avoid antagonising the Egyptian controlled local government, under governor Vidranga.

4.3 Issues of a Garrison

As discussed in chapter two of this thesis, the Judean enclave emerged as a military unit who were either conscripted into the Assyrian army by Tiglath-Pileser III, or volunteered to fight with Egypt against the growing Assyrian threat in Judah. Yet the papyri hold very little information on any military activity. In fact the main hub of activity took place around the narrowing of the Nile River at the first cataract and the subsequent need for protecting and facilitating commerce and trade. It is the opinion of Porten that Syene initially developed as a mart, and Elephantine as the fort but by the persian period each town had developed both marts and

forts.[372] I find likely that both towns also had their own wells to allow independent water supplies. Perhaps one such well was that same one the priests of Khnum stopped up before destroying the Temple. The garrison was also required to guard the river in order to protect those who had to sail through the first cataract. Herodotus tells us that the water has such fierce rapids that the boats had to be controlled by ropes on either side of the river:

> And in that part of the river, boats have to be hauled along by ropes- one rope on each side- much as one drags and ox. If the rope parts the boat is gone in a moment, carried away by the force of the stream.[373]

Strabo also commented on the danger of the water surrounding the island of Elephantine and how the boatmen perilously rode the rapids to entertain the prefects.[374] According to Egyptian myth, the rapids where created between Elephantine and Syene when the Nile rose between two sharp peaks, the Crophi and the Mophi:

> He told me that between Syene, near Thebes and Elephantine there were two mountains of conical shape called Crophi and Mophi, and that the springs of the Nile, which were of fathomless depth, flowed out from between them. Half of the water flowed northwards towards Egypt and half southwards towards Ethiopia.[375]

Apart from protecting the waterways and the market trade, the Elephantine garrison were also assigned to escort caravans

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[372] Porten, *Archives*, 36.

[373] Herodotus, 2. 29.

[374] Strabo, 17. 49.

[375] Herodotus, 2. 28.

which transported goods from Nubia and the cataract region. These caravans would have included goods such as quarrying materials; gold, ivory, ebony, animals, minerals and slaves.[376] With Persia stretching control into Nubia, this thesis is of the view that military control was certainly heightened during this time, especially when Persian officials would have been exacting tribute.[377] Therefore, despite the lack of information in the Aramaic papyri over the activities of the Yahu community as a military garrison, we may conclude that the military activities continued throughout the persian Period. During one of these occasions when a caravan arrived at Abydos, a dyed stone disappeared and reached the hands of local merchants. According to Porten, the garrison General Vidranga while leading another detail, arrived after the incident and arrested Mauziah b. Nathan accusing him of theft or negligence.[378] Arnold on the other hand assumed that Mauziah was one of the visiting traders to whom gems were displayed and that one of these traders stole the gem and Mauziah was blamed.[379] Either way the imprisonment of Mauziah caused further friction to a delicate relationship between the Yahu community and the garrison commander.

"The importation of a community's customary laws into a foreign context represents one of the ways legal transplants are

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[376] Kees, *Ancient*, 313.

[377] Ibid., 312.

[378] Porten, *Archives*, 41.

[379] W.R. Arnold, "The Passover Papyrus from Elephantine," *JBL* 31 (1912), 22.

produced."[380] For Botta the cosmopolitan character of Elephantine and Syene is exemplified by the presence of Babylonians, Caspians, Khwarezmians, Bactrians, Medes, Perisans and "Jews" all alongside the Egyptian populace and serving in various detachments.[381] This point is precisely what this thesis intends to convey, that the community within the Judean enclave was part of a multicultural one that effortlessly incorporated that of the Judeans. The Judean group themselves would have been assimilated easily into the community because they practiced a form of Judaism represented in 2 Kings and Jeremiah 44 that included the acknowledgement of other gods and cultic activities. The multicultural situation of Elephantine where bilingualism was most likely present and resulted in the blending of legal tradition. [382] Botta examines the Elephantine legal papyri in the light of Aramaic and Egyptian legal traditions in intricate detail drawing on past examinations of the legal nature of the texts.[383] He explains how the documents reflect the personal status of the parties with one another. For example, letters among equals use the term, 'to my brother',[384] a superior is addressed 'lord/lady'[385] and the the

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[380] Alejandro Botta, *Aramaic and Egyptian Legal Traditions at Elephantine*. (London: T & T Clarke, 2009), 11.

[381] Botta, *Aramaic*, 9/10.

[382] Ibid., 10.

[383] Ibid., 19-28. Botta examines many scholars from Cowley and Kraeling to Yaron, Muffs and Porten.

[384] Porten, *Elephantine*, B8, B13, B16. Porten and Yardeni, *TAD*, A2.4, A4.4, D7.35. (p.l).

[385] Porten, *Elephantine*, B14, B15, B17, B19, B20, B22, B25, B34, B37, B38, B43. Porten and Yardeni, *TAD*, A2.4, A4.2, A4.3, A7.21. (p.l).

author would describe himself in that situation as 'slave'[386] or 'servant'.[387] The scribes were a highly skilled addition to the community. In Roman Judea, scribes were available in village markets who made a living from their skill and legal knowledge.[388] As lending and borrowing was an integral part of society in the ancient Near East, it is possible to presume that the scribes at Elephantine were likewise educated in both the Aramaic and Egyptian legal traditions while also probably having the knowledge of Persian legal systems. The papyri address marriage and family law, as I have already discussed, making reference to both men and women. Botta, however, notes that despite the evidence that both sexes could divorce, there is a strong likelihood that women were not permitted to establish a marriage contract. As with the case of Mibtahiah and her three marriages, we cannot tell if she had any part in the drawing up of the contract. However, particularly in the case of her third husband whom she married when Mibtahiah was clearly a self-sufficient woman with assets to her name, she would have had some role to play in the wording of her contract.

The management of supplies was an important job and one that is well documented. We are aware of a demotic papyrus that states the Egyptian, Khnumemash and a Persian named Artaban had been instructed to seek out commodities, in particular wheat

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[386] Porten, *Elephantine*, B34.

[387] Porten, *Elephantine*, B1, B14, B15, B19, B20, B22. Porten and Yardeni, TAD: A2.4, A4.2, A4.3, D7.21. Botta, *Aramaic*, 32.

[388] M.D. Goodman, *State and Society in Roman Galilee, AD 132-212* (New Jersey: University of Michigan Press, 1983), 57-59.

in the mountainous regions.[389] The supplies were to be stored at Syene by the man who had issued the order. This man was clearly an administrator responsible for feeding the soldiers of Elephantine and Syene had employed Khnumemash who was probably a boatman.[390] According to Briant, scribes have summarised the total number of rations distributed to the soldiers of Elephantine and Syene in one year.[391] The barley most likely came from various locations and had been brought to Syene probably by boatmen.[392] Briant states that the boatmen were not boat owners but where only in charge of the boats which were the property of the administrators.[393]

Some other issues that arise throughout the papyri and the ostraca concern the more mundane situations in everyday life which provide some real insight into the personalities of the members of the community. One such character is Makkibanit who makes an appearance in a number of the papyri. All of his appearances are in letters in relation to supplies but it is the stories told through these letters that are most interesting. In the first instance he writes to his father mother and brother and assures them that he is taking care of Harudj.

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[389] James Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander, A History of the Persian Period.* (Indiana: Eisenbauns, 2002), 448

[390] Ibid.

[391] Ibid., 447.

[392] Ibid.

[393] Ibid.

> To my lord Psami, your servant Makkibanit. I have blessed you by Ptah that he may show me your face in peace. Greetings to my mother Mama. Greetings to my brother Bitia and his household and his children. Greetings to Reia. Do not be concerned about Harudj. As much as I am able, I am not leaving him alone. And now, I am doing (=providing) for him.[394]

Another text is one of the most humorous and yet potentially serious letters in the entire collection:

> To my sisters Taru and Tabi from your brother
> Nabusha and Makkibanit.
> We have blessed you by Ptah that he may show me your face in peace.
> And now, you should no that no thing is brought to us from Syene. And moreover, since I left Syene, Shail has not dispatched me a letter or anything (else). And now, let them bring us a chest and *bynbn*. And if you can bring us castor oil let em bring (it) through Harudj son of Bethelshezib who is coming to bring down ... to *Bmrsry*.
> And what is this that you have not sent a letter **VERSO** to me?! And as for me, a snake had bit me and I was dying and you did not send (to inquire) if I was alive or if I was dead. I have sent this letter (to inquire) about your welfare.
> To Taru from Nabusha son of Petekhnum. To be delivered (to) Luxor.[395]

Here, poor Makkibanit is writing in order request certain items be sent and then almost as an after thought questions the length of time since they had tried to contact him. Almost in an attempt to cause guilt in the people accused of ignoring him, he tells us that he has been bitten by a snake and almost died and not one person asked if he was okay. To make this letter even more comical, the

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[394] Porten and Yardeni, *TAD*, A2.4. (p.l).

[395] Ibid., A2.5. (p.l).

very next statement asks after their welfare in a way highlighting his good manners over their lack of consideration.

Conclusions of Chapter Four

In this chapter we have established that the temple structure was most likely a pre existing building or highly developed plot of land that was given over to the Judean community after the Egyptian soldiers abandoned their posts under Psammetichus I. It is most likely that this land was taken from the Khnum cultic complex and given over to the garrison, due to the location of the temple being directly alongside the Khnumeum and also the fact that during the dispute the Khnum priests were accused of building a wall straight through the garrison where the temple had been situated.

We also examined the Xanthos inscription and the appeal of that community to build a privately funded temple and to maintain it through the wealthy members of the community as well as continuing the priesthood withing the same family. By comparing this community with what we can draw from the Elephantine papyri about the posibility of private funding we can speculate that there were both similarities and differences. In particular it is unlikely that the Yahu temple was soely reliant on private funding due to the evidence in the papyri concerning the amount of donations recorded by various wealthy members of the community. While this alone may suggest private funding if we consider that the community were unable to rebuild the temple after its destruction and never mentioned even the possibility of being able to contribute to the reconstruction it seems unlikely that they had the private income required to keep it running. It seems

more likely that the community had a combination of donations from wealthy members and state funding. Then with the destruction of the temple in a politically charged dispute there would have been no possibility of the state rebuilding the temple and going against the local government, whom the Judean community blame on the destructio of the temple.

Finally, we examined the role of the garrison in Elephantine and what the Judean enclave brought to the area in terms of labour. The Persian control in Nubia and the constant streams of caravans to and from the border meant that the garrison was steadily active despite the meagre references to activity in the papyri. The dangers of the cataract region at certain times of the year certainly provided further opportunities for military control and protection. Throughout all of this activity, it is surprising to note that there is no mention of Yahu soldiers refusing to accompany a caravan, or control trade on the Sabbath. As we will discuss later in this thesis, there was evidence that Sabbath was a festival celebrated in Elephantine. Although due to the lack of evidence, we cannot be sure of the extent to which is was celebrated. If we are to assume that the Yahu community took part in Sabbath, then there would certainly have been evidence of some disruptions to the everyday workings of the garrison during the festival.

Chapter Five

Yahu Worship in the Persian Period

Introduction

The Judean community of Elephantine has been addressed at length by a number of scholars seeking to present accurate evaluations of the community's religious and social conditions. These examinations have, thus far, centered around the greater understanding of Judaism at this time and how the Elephantine community fit into that understanding. By understanding the term Yehudi as Judean, a geographical category, instead of the term Jew, which associated the community with so much more than the evidence presents, we can re-examine the community as a whole and present them in the light of current scholarship. By doing this many aspects of life in the community can be interpreted without an association with Judaism. For example, what have been suggested as acts of anti-semitism against the community may now be evaluated as politically charged attacks and the accounts of devotion to other gods changes from Porten's overall theory of local sympathies on the part of the Yahu community towards the Egyptian community[396], to evidence of a syncretistic Near Eastern community.

One of the most challenging aspects of this research into the Elephantine community has been the identification and understanding of the cultural and ethnic identity of the garrison.

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[396] Porten, *Archives*, 151ff.

This thesis intends to re-examine the understanding of previous scholars by viewing the Judean garrison as just that, Judean and not "Jewish".[397] This chapter will aim to examine elements of current scholarship on the subject and seek to apply these new theories to our study of Elephantine.

5.1 Yehudi

As this examination intends to understand the term Judean as a solely geographical term which includes elements of cultic inheritance, how much 'Jewishness' should we attribute to the people of Elephantine at this time, if any? We should, in fact, view Judeans much like we do the Egyptians or Greeks. They are from Judah or have some Judean ancestry and they may also practice many or none of the traditions from their home country. We must constantly remind ourselves that orthodoxy did not exist at this time. Religion was an essential element of life associated with the ethnicity and culture of each region. There is much consensus

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[397] Shaye Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness. Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties.* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 69-106. Steve Mason, *Josephus, Judea and Christian Origins: Methods and Categories* (Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 2009), 141- 184. At times scholars such as Cohen and Mason revert back to using Judean as a religious term in phrases such as, "Judean in the religious sense." Mason, however, discusses at length how the term Judean should incorporate both meanings in certain contexts. I will examine Mason's understanding of the word Judean later in this chapter. Whereas scholars such as Porten, *Archives, 3ff* and Kraeling, *The Brooklyn Museum.* 10ff, will almost always refer to Judean in the religious sense. Therefore, if we are to adopt this new understanding of Judeans during this period, the language we use must remain consistent and clear, despite the obvious difficulties in interpretation.

among scholars such as Mason[398], Schwartz[399] and Cohen[400], that some ethnic-geographic terms changed meaning over time. This is particularly true of the term Judean. According to Strabo for example, to be a Judean was much like belonging to any other ethnos, simply being an Egyptian, Lybian or Judean was not only a matter of geography but represented an entire local culture, no matter where one currently lived.[401]

> As for Judaea, it's western extremities towards Casius are occupied by the Idumaeans and by the lake. The Idumaeans are Nabataeans, but owing to a sedition they were banished from there, joined the Judeans, and shared in the same customs with them..... But though the inhabitants are mixed up thus, the most prevalent of the accredited reports in regard to the temple at Jerusalem represents the ancestors of the present Judeans, as they are called, as Aegyptians. Strabo 16.2.34

Smith, in the *Cambridge History Of Judaism, Volume 1,* broaches the very question of "Jewishness" during the persian period.[402] Smith discusses "Jewishness" during this period under three categories, those Judeans who live in the territory of Judah, the

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[398] Cohen, *The Beginnings,* 141-184.

[399] Daniel Schwartz, "Judean or Jew? How should we translate ioudaios in Josephus" in *Jewish Identity in the Greco-Roman World,* ed. Jörg Frey, Daniel Schwartz and Stephanie Gripentrog (Leiden: Brill, 2007) 3-27.

[400] Cohen, *The Beginnings,* 69-106.

[401] Strabo *The Geography of Strabo.* 16. 2. 34.

[402] Morten Smith, "Jewish Religious Life in the Persian Period" in *The Cambridge History of Judaism,* ed. Davies and Finkelstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

descendants of Judeans (outside the land), [403] and the final group as described in Ezra (4: 12; 5: 4-5) which equate the Jews with those returning from exile and excluding those who had remained in Palestine. According to both Smith and Porten, the identity of the community of Elephantine seems to be focused on the catogorisation of the community as Jewish, even when considering they were referred to as Arameans and Syenes as well as Judean.[404] Yet in both of these studies, the discussion is devoted to the "Jewishness" of the religious practice of the Yahu community. A number of ostraca have been found that mention Sabbath and the Passover, according to Smith,[405] but not exactly how it was practiced.[406] Anybody in the ancient world might appeal to a god for help and protection but such an appeal does not necessarily require worship in that cult. For Smith, local traditions led on to naming children after gods who seem to help religious requests or who are popular at the place or time, and these acts form part of the gradual dissemination of names compounded with Yahweh through pagan populations.[407] Such dedication names arise in particular times, for example, Baniyah (Yahweh built), Banael (God built), Padiyah (Yahweh redeemed), and Menahem (comforter) all

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[403] Smith adds the Elephantine Jews to this category. It is a plausible description that the Elephantine Jews display "Jewishness" out of some tradition and respect held on to from their emergence and transition from Judeans to Egyptian/Persian life.

[404] Smith, "Jewish Religious Life," 223. Porten, *Archives*, 33.

[405] Porten, *Archives*, 126. While Smith seems confident that these ostraca refer to Sabbath Porten disagrees.

[406] Smith, "Jewish Religious Life," 230.

[407] Ibid.

appear popular at the time after the return from exile and the reconstruction of the Temple.[408] Also the name Shabbetai, which first appears in the exilic period, has perhaps been chosen in remembrance of the Sabbath.[409]

Schwartz examines the identity of the Judeans during the persian period with reference to sources including biblical literature and Josephus in order to uncover the 'Jewishness' or 'non-Jewishness' of the people.[410] [411] Interestingly, *Judean* in the English dictionary is solely "of or pertaining to Judea, a native or inhabitant of Judea". However, the meaning of *Jew* has a number of definitions, "one of a scattering group of people that traces its decent from Biblical Hebrews, a person whose religion is Judaism, a subject of the ancient kingdom of Judah" and again, it is here described from the original word, Yehudi.[412] For Schwartz, rather than seek to revise the English language we must understand the term Judean as just that, a person according to his/her residence or origin.[413] For the purpose of this thesis we must ask, what did the

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[408] Smith, "Jewish Religious Life," 220.

[409] Ibid., 230.

[410] Schwartz, "Judean or Jew." 3-27.

[411] Ibid., 5.

[412] *Collins English Dictionary* (Glasgow: 2011).

[413] Ibid., 7.

Judean members of the community mean when they referred to themselves as Yehudi of Elephantine?[414]

Schwartz argues that the difficulty in the definition of the term Yehudi is that Jew can mean both someones religion and someones descent.[415] After the return from exile, self definition meant more than national heritage due in part to the fact that many returning may have been born outside the land. It is also difficult to suggest a specific time from which Judean becomes Jewish. Mason, for example, refers to Judeans as late as the Roman period.

As we know, the community requested the dates of the Passover festival[416] indicating that they were not traveling anywhere to celebrate it. Sabbath too, as indicated in some fragmented letters and ostraca[417] was never linked with any travel to Jerusalem. I believe that the Yahu community had very little to do with Jerusalem and remained an independent temple, at least until its need for assistance.

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[414] Porten, *The Elephantine Papyri,* B13. "To my brothers Jedanaiah and his colleagues the Jewish (Judean) Troop, your brother Hananiah." B19, "Now, your servants Jedaniah and his colleagues and the Jews, all (of them) citizens of Elephantine." B20, "...his colleagues the priests who are in Elephantine the fortress *and the Jews, all (of them).*" "and the Jews, all of them citizens of Elephantine." B24, "a Jew who is in the fortress of Elephantine." B31, "Jews of Elephantine the fortress." (p.l).

[415] Schwartz, "Judean or Jew," 8.

[416] To be examined in detail in chapter six. Porten, *Elephantine,* B13. (p.l).

[417] To be discussed fully in chapter six.

There is, ultimately, no conclusive understanding of religion in ancient times. Essentially as Mason indicates, if we are to understand ancient worship in its correct context we must set aside the notion of religion. "Jewishness", which is essentially the form Yahu-worship began to develop into after the return from exile, quite simply did not exist particularly within the Elephantine community, at least during the formative years of the Judean garrison. This would lead on to suggest that scholarship translating the term, Yehudi as "Jew" rather than Judean, is misinterpreting a form of religion that was not yet established. Of course in essence the Elephantine community worshipped Yahu, sacrificed to Yahu[418], celebrated Passover[419] and sabbath too.[420] However, all these traits do not make the community fundamentally "Jewish" but rather Judean. These aspects are inherited cultural expressions carried with the community from their place of origin and assimilated into the culture of Elephantine. I agree that the form of Yahu-worship that was carried with them from their ethnic origins was one that was being abandoned at this time in Jerusalem and across Israel and Judah for a developing form of Jerusalem Temple centered Yahu worship. "To begin within the persian period, descent was simply an index of territory: those who descended from Judeans were Jews".[421] According to Schwartz, attempting to identify Judeans during the

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[418] Porten, *Elephantine*, B22, 151. (p.l).

[419] Ibid., B13. Porten and Yardeni, *TAD*, D7.6, D7.24. (p.l).

[420] Porten and Yardeni, *TAD*, D7.10, D7.16, D7.18, D7.35, D7.38. Franz Rosenthal, eds, *An Aramaic Handbook*, (Germany: Eisenbauns, 1967), 1, 12f.

[421] Daniel. R. Schwartz, *Studies in the Jewish Background of Christianity*. (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1992), 9.

persian period requires careful examination of the biblical texts.[422] In general, this thesis finds that the biblical texts are at best a poor source of actual cult practice, but certainly some hints may be found. The understanding of the term, Yehudi as 'from Judaea' in the geographical sense, continues to function in Esther 2:-6, indicating that the list of returning families to Jerusalem after the exile includes groups defined by family ties and blood connections rather than by birth within the land.[423] Therefore to be Judean in the geographical sense, even for the author of Esther, is to have some family connection with Judah without the need of any personal connection to the geographical region itself. It is quite legitimate therefore for the Elephantine Judeans to be associated with Judah through heritage rather than any physical link. That is to say while the community emerged from Judah and Israel, those born in Elephantine would still be considered Judean rather than Egyptian.

As Mason states, "each ancient *ethnos* clearly had its own distinctive culture expressed through ancestral traditions".[424] An ancient *ethnos* naturally had a national cult, but this national cult was incorporated into their so-called ethnicity.[425] Regional variations on worship and the gods associated with geographical areas were naturally passed down from generations and family traditions continued forms of cultic worship. For Mason, cultures may have a specific regional form of national cult but at this time

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[422] Schwartz, *Studies*, 5-15.

[423] Ibid., 8.

[424] Mason, *Josephus*, 162.

[425] Ibid.

cult practice, ritual and various forms of oaths and greetings by gods, were common throughout the Near East and local cult was open to integration with regional developments. Again, regional variations may include the cultic worship or awareness of neighbouring gods. Also, dispersal of peoples causes the assimilation of variations of local traditions, especially through intermarriage between different peoples. Ultimately, the Elephantine community origins in Judah and Israel cannot be overlooked or denied through the evidence in the papyri that links them back to Jerusalem, and also their cult practice which too links them back to Judean and Israelite origins.[426] Moreover, areas tended to integrate many aspects of what we see as religion from familial and ancestral traditions, therefore local religious traditions are formed by the changing local communities and this trend ultimately develops traditional cultic practice specific to regions.[427]

According to Walter Burkert, the lack of serious 'religious' boundaries and conscious group identity means the absence of any

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[426] The papyri and ostraca offers us evidence of the celebration of passover, sabbath and a degree of communication with Jerusalem and in the case of Samaria, at least an awareness of a possible connection. We may also speculate that while groups were recruited into the garrison as soldiers, there were others as described in Jeremiah that followed on in order to continue a form of worship that was being frowned upon in Jerusalem."Why are you doing such great harm to yourselves, to cut off man and woman child and infant, from the midst of Judah, leaving yourselves without a remnant? Why do you provoke me to anger with the works of your hands making offerings to the other gods in the land of Egypt where you have come to settle?" Jer 44: 7-9.

[427] Schwartz, *Studies*, 164.

barriers against competing cults.[428] It is not surprising as most other scholars seem to think, that the Elephantine community worshipped and accepted other gods. For Burkert, " . . . the pagan gods, even the gods of the mystery cults, are not jealous of one another; they form, as it were, an open society."[429] In fact, it is quite common in the sanctuaries of Sarapis and Isis, as well as Meter and Mithras, to dedicate statues of other gods.[430] How then do we connect these theories with Elephantine and with the portrayal of Yahweh as a jealous God? As we will address in later chapters, the community celebrated the Passover festival and they showed an awareness of Sabbath, although the extent to which they observed it is unknown.[431] We do know that they sacrificed and offered both meal and burnt offerings to Yahu. However, Yahu was not worshipped here alone, he was worshipped alongside AnathYHW and Herembethel.[432] Oaths sworn in the legal texts are by Egyptian and Canaanite gods as well as Yahu. Again, we will discuss this in more detail later, however, if Yahu is the jealous god as portrayed, how does he connect with his portrayal here in Elephantine? As far as we can speculate from the limited evidence, we have the god Yahu presented similar to other Egyptian city-gods. While the

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[428] Walter Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults*, (London: Harvard University Press, 1987) 48.

[429] Ibid.

[430] Ibid., 49.

[431] Porten and Yardeni, *TAD*, D7.10, D7.16, D7.28, D7.35, D.7.48. (p.l).

[432] Porten *Elephantine*, B50. "I was interrogated and the call to the gods came upon me in the suit. I, Malchiah, shall call for you to Herembethel the god among." B52, "...will-swear to Meshullam son of Nathan by Herem *the god* in the place of prostration and by AnathYHW." (p.l).

temple is dedicated to him, there is an awareness and acceptance of other gods by the Yahu worshipping community as indicated through greetings and oaths.[433] In fact, Porten suggests that rather than being separate gods these were in fact other forms of Yahu.[434] For Grabbe however, this conclusion seems apologetic and the addition of names linked with the god Bethel as well as the names of various deities most likely concludes that the community worshipped other gods besides Yahu.[435] We have evidence that gods such as Eshem-Bethel and Anath-Bethel earned money alongside the god Yahu.[436] For Grabbe, this seems surprising and suggests that Porten was correct in connecting the Bethel triad (Bethel, Eshem-Bethel and Anath-Bethel) with aspects of Yahu.[437] I believe that the community did in fact worship multiple gods and that although Yahu earned less than the two Bethel goddesses combined, it is most likely because Sehel island is far larger than Elephantine itself and that there were simply more worshippers.

From the outset Cohen states that in antiquity Yehudi was primarily a geographic term to designate those from the land of

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[433] Porten, *Elephantine*, B30. "Then, the oath came upon you and you swore to me about them by Sati the goddess." B52, "...will-swear to Meshullam son of Nathan by Herem *the god* in the place of prostration and by AnathYHW." B13, "The welfare of my brothers may the gods seek after at all times." B14, "The welfare of my lords may the gods, all (of them)], seek after at all times." B16, "Greetings, your house and your children until the gods let me behold your face in peace." (p.l).

[434] Porten, *Archives*, 173-179.

[435] Grabbe, "Elephantine and Torah", 127.

[436] Porten and Yardeni, *TAD*, C3.15, 126-128.

[437] Ibid., 128. Porten and Yardeni, *TAD*, C3.15, 126-128.

Judah and similar to geographic terms like Egyptian, Edomite and Syrian.[438] For him the shift from the geographical self-definition to the religious and cultural definition occurred in the Maccabean period, when Judean ethnicity opened itself to incorporate outsiders.[439] In fact, it must be understood as incorrect to translate the term as 'Jew' before the middle of the second century BCE. This thesis is certainly in concurrence with Cohen at least during the persian Period. The definition becomes less apparent, however, if we are to consider the inclusion of the preposition, "of" into the phrase. The Elephantine troop (hayla yehudaya) quite often defined themselves in the papyri as "a Judean of Elephantine", were as others defined themselves as, "Aramean of Syene".(...*Now your servants Jedaniah and his colleagues and the Judeans all of them citizens of Elephantine...*,[440] and also, ...*and the house of Konaiah son of Zadak, a Judean of the detachment of Atropharna... and the house of Jezaniah son of Uriah, a Judean of the detachment of Varyazata...*"[441] For many translators, the phrase 'Judean of Elephantine" clearly indicates that they are defining themselves as Jewish. If this is so, how are we to understand the translation of "Aramean of Syene"? It is obvious that this is a geographical term, therefore we must also award the same understanding to the "Judeans of Elephantine". It may be suggested that the self definition of the Yahu community as 'Judeans of Elephantine" was intended to suggest their geographical origins. For Mason, during this period,

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[438] Ibid., 69.

[439] Ibid., 70.

[440] Porten, *Archives*, B19, 143. Note that Porten uses the term Jew instead of Judean. (p.l).

[441] Porten, *Archives*, B24, 160. Note that Porten uses the term Jew instead of Judean. (p.l).

ethnicity was a culmination of many elements with religion as only one element, and more importantly for this study, "Jewishness" at this time included a form of worship that incorporated regional variations as well as ethnical.[442] For Schwartz the development from geographical to religious associations for the term Judean began in the Babylonian period.[443] The length of time that the term meant both religion and ethnicity is still debated but certainly Yehudi meant Judean (of Judah) during the persian period.

Some of the Judeans in Elephantine have names compounded with YHW, but many others present themselves with Egyptian names compounded with Egyptian gods while still identifying themselves as, "a Judean of Elephantine." References to Hebrew names, and names compounded with YHW throughout the Elephantine papyri have been overlooked or misinterpreted as identifications of "Jewishness" in past scholarship. It is also important to note that since the Judean enclave emerged as the major community in the Elephantine garrison, the community and indeed the entire garrison were referred to as the 'Judean garrison' right up until its final destruction.[444]

This examination is in agreement with Mason's assessment of the ancient religion and use of the word Judean when discussing people of Judah. It seems apparent that Mason's understanding of the terms relates Judeans with any other ethnos. They are, as he

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[442] Mason, *Josephus*, 159.

[443] Schwartz, "Judean or Jew," 8.

[444] Porten, *Archives*, 3-28.

says, much like the Egyptians and Greeks.[445] How then does this effect our understanding of the Judean community of Elephantine? While Mason does not address the community of Elephantine, his theories allow us to re-examine the papyri and ostraca in order to re-assess the overall relationship the Judeans held with the Egyptians.

Lester Grabbe addresses the subject of "Elephantine and Torah."[446] From the title alone, this chapter suggests a certain amount of speculation about the position of the Yahu worshippers in Elephantine as Jews, and one of the opening lines state, "Whereas many Jewish texts were or could be fictitious or idealised... there are perhaps no Jewish texts as such from Elephantine, there are quite a number that are concerned with or talk about religion."[447] Torah, as the title suggests, is one such phrase that does not appear. Furthermore, Grabbe asks if the absence of the word Levite is because the priests of Elephantine were not considered Levites.[448] He also notes that there is no reference to Moses and Aaron and asks: "Is this sheer accident?"[449] Surely not, the terms Passover and Sabbath are the only phrases

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[445] Mason, *Josephus*, 159ff.

[446] Grabbe, "Elephantine and Torah," 125. This chapter by Grabbe, in particular, is an example of how much can be presumed and speculated about the community when we consider them fundamentally Jewish.

[447] Ibid., 125.

[448] Ibid, 126. Grabbe continues to question here the absence of common sacrificial terms from Leviticus such as sin offering, guilt offering, well-being offering, free-will offering, votive offering and daily offering.

[449] Ibid.

used in the papyri to suggest what cultic activity the community practiced and even then we cannot be sure to what extent they were practiced.

The aim of this chapter is to provide significant evidence to concur with the theory that to be described as Judean at the time of the Elephantine community was to be considered currently or formerly connected to the land of Judah and not to solely or to significantly display any form of religious expression. Simply, during the persian period, Judaism as we understand it today and as a religion did not exist but was a changing and developing element of ethnicity that formed only one element of what it was to be Judean.

While this thesis is attempting to identify the term Yehudi as solely geographical during this period, the use of both interpretations of the terms Judean (geographical) and the term Jew (religious) was beginning to be used by authors certainly by the time 2 Maccabees was being composed (134-104 BCE). Certainly during this late stage, it becomes difficult to understand which meaning the authors wish to establish. Certainly 2 Maccabees would be very late for us to continue with the solely geographically definition. While it may be debated, there was significant development of Judaism at this time, where the religious identity became more important than the geographical identity, which ultimately began to define and separate them from other peoples. To be Judean at this time is now understood in two ways; to be of Judah and also to be Jewish. In fact we see increasing examples at this time of phrases such as 'of Judah' or 'from Judah' being used to explicitly describe people from Judah

rather than simply using 'Judean' as previously seen. To be described as Judean during the time after the return from exile is still too early to totally separate the religious and geographical nature of the term. During the second temple period (530 BCE to 70 CE), one Temple in Jerusalem was considered legitimate for the correct worship of YHW and so while Jews from throughout the Near East no longer associated themselves with Judah or Israel as a form of self definition but with the Temple, this development could not have changed the understanding of the term Judean, at least not at this stage. Ultimately changing the definition of Yehudi from geographical to a temple centered identity was a process that lasted well after the return from exile.

Conclusions of Chapter Five

In closing, the aim of this chapter was to review and examine scholarship on the subject of identity and the term 'Judean' particularly during the persian period. By bringing together various theories concerning the identity of the Elephantine community this research aims to discover the condition of the community during the persian period. Even more significantly, we may speculate that this community could represent the internal, social and cultural (inclusive of 'religion') identity of Judah and Israel during the persian period.

Firstly, we had to establish what is meant in scholarship when we speak of Jew and Judean especially for this period. Both Mason and Cohen have made it explicitly clear that the term Jew should not be used for translating the term Yehudi at any time at least

before the return from exile.[450] Therefore this thesis had to examine the role of cult in the ethnos and how much 'Jewishness', if any, must we presuppose upon the term, Judean. It is clear that this is a difficult question. For Mason, any attempt at applying the category of 'religion' in any sense to ancient culture is a mistake. Instead we are to view ancient societies in terms of their ethnicity, this includes all aspects of their culture (language, tradition and cult). The geographical origins from which worship developed was only one of a number of elements within this ethnos. It is therefore acceptable for numerous traditions and cultures to co-exist together. Elephantine must certainly have fallen into this category. The Judean enclave developed and incorporated much of the Egyptian culture as well as what we perceive as the typical near eastern culture into the Elephantine community. This thesis aims to show that what seems as a clash of cultures was in fact typical of the general near eastern world, including Judah and Samaria.

As discussed above, the Yahu community certainly present many "Jewish" traits and traditions such as the worship of Yahu, an obvious observance of Passover and Sabbath as indicated in ostraca inscriptions, certain Judean names and finally the appeal for aid to Jerusalem and Samaria after the destruction of the Elephantine temple. Yet we cannot underestimate the overwhelming evidence of the non-"Jewishness" of the community as well: the worship of other gods alongside Yahu, and also the swearing of oaths by other gods. The designation of the term "Jew" in relation to the Yahu community is certainly not restricted to Cowley and Porten. According to Dunand and Zivie-Coche, the

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[450] Cohen, *The Beginnings*, 69. Mason, *Josephus, 165.*

Jews of Elephantine had a temple of their own "contrary to the Law, which forbade temples other than Jerusalem."[451] They do recognise that the god Yahu is the principle deity and also indicate that there was an association with the goddess known as "queen of the sky (heaven)".[452]

Cohen's definition and examination of the terms, Yehudi help to progress the goal of this study. He goes further to say that the term Judean should be used in the geographical sense long after the persian period. When examining some of the literary evidence for the term 'Judean', we were able to argue the fact that the geographical identification of this term is the only truly accurate one for this time. It has been established that the clear misinterpretation and translation of the term Judean into Jew causes difficulties when attempting to examine accurately, the lives and relationships of a community such as Elephantine. Effectively, the incorrect translation of Judean into Jew, especially with regards to the Elephantine community, has led some scholars such as Porten and Modrzejewski to debate over the level of "Jewishness" associated with the garrison. While indeed the type of cult worship is an important and essential element to our understanding of the community, the categorising of the community as "Jewish" changes the focus of our attention drastically. It is the aim of this thesis, therefore, to re-establish our focus on the community in lieu of the new and developing interpretations of the term Yehudi.

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[451] Francoise Dunand and Christiane Zivie-Coche, *Gods and Men in Egypt. 3000 BCE to 395 CE* (London: Cornell University Press, 2004), 253.

[452] Dunand and Zivie-Coche, *Gods and Men*, 253.

Chapter Six

Conflict and Destruction

Introduction

We have thus far examined the emergence, social and cultic surroundings of the Yahu community in order to establish a context for understanding the Aramaic papyri. This chapter will deal specifically with the relationships of this community with the Egyptians as well as with the Persians/Assyrians and Judeans. The view will be taken that there was a significant political development that had caused this Yahu community to call for the aid of the governor of Judah, Bagohi and also to Delaiah and Shelemiah sons of Sanballat, the governor of Samaria.[453] It is the goal of this chapter therefore, to examine the fragmentary primary sources and scholarly discussions of the primary texts and to arrive at an accurate understanding of the social conditions of the Yahu community and its relationships with other communities referred to in the papyri.

During the end of the Saite period (dynasty 26, 664-525 BCE) and the beginning of the persian period (from dynasty 27), Egypt was struggling to maintain national security and identity. This was primarily due to the constant state of flux within the ruling class. The Third Intermediate Period (1069-664 BCE) saw the Egyptians, Nubians, Assyrians and Persians each hold the title of Pharaoh. The kingdoms of Upper and Lower Egypt, too, were made separate kingdoms and then united again under Assyria. There were also quite a number of wars and minor internal rebellions

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[453] Porten, *Elephantine*, B19, B20, B21, 139-149. (p.l).

during this period. In this chapter we will also examine the conditions elsewhere in Egypt in particular with reference to attitudes towards foreign groups and the rebellions from the local Egyptians against such groups.

The development of the relationship with the Egyptian community is difficult to describe. We need to examine the papyri and primary sources such as Assyrian inscriptions and documents in order to denote such changes in mood and tone to be able to discuss how the communities co-existed. The very nature of primary sources as a medium implies that only powerful feelings of conflict or appeasement are often described as well as complete fabrication of facts to present rulers and communities in a positive or negative light while everyday life is rarely mentioned. The view will be taken that despite the major conflict and the obvious account of temple destruction, the relationship as a whole between the Judean garrison and the local Egyptian community was mainly peaceful and that what animosity that did exist stemmed from the diminished political position of the Khnum priesthood.[454] Writing a history of the persian period in general has its own particular problems and considerations. There are very few remaining primary sources to rely on. Those documents that are available are usually limited and do not lend themselves to constructing an in-depth historical narrative. This section will critically analyse the papyri and various accounts of Persian control and aim to create an accurate account of the degrees of integration and separation evident in Elephantine during the persian period. We must bear in mind that we cannot hope to achieve an accurate account if we consider this community as fundamentally Jewish and must think

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[454] Schäfer, *Judeophobia,* 124.

in terms of the earlier discussion of Judean/Jew as indicating that Judean is the only appropriate translation for this time. Judaism at this time was not an organised or established religion. The Yahu community, while maintaining many typical "Jewish" traits was ultimately more closely related to typical Near Eastern polytheistic culture.

6.1 Contact between Egyptians and the Yahu Community of Egypt

There is significant evidence of interaction and social integration between the Yahu community and the Egyptians which is evident throughout the Aramaic Papyri. In fact, temple records list offerings made to many gods alongside Yahu.[455] Similarly, oaths in marriage, divorce and other contracts were made in the name of Yahu as well as a number of Egyptian gods including Sati and Herembethel.[456] Money collected for Yahu was distributed to Him as well as to Eshembethel and Anathbethel. There is no doubt that the majority of the texts discussing the Yahu community addresses them as "Jews" according to Porten's translations or as "Judeans" according to Cowley's.[457] As we have seen, there is a significant difference of meaning in these terms. There is also some debate over the significance of community using the salutations in letters from members of the Yahu community to each other that often invoke the "gods". Porten accredits this to Egyptian scribes

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[455] Kraeling, *The Brooklyn Museum*, 87.

[456] Porten, *Elephantine*, B10, B12, B14, B16 "all the gods", B30 "Sati", B50 HeremBethel, B52, AnathYahu. (p.l).

[457] Porten, *Elephantine*, 18. Cowley, *Papyri*, 10.

not knowing any better.[458] An Egyptian scribe might stick to a standard set of salutations unless explicitly instructed. According to the Elephantine papyri, the family ties between the witnesses and some scribes display a complex relationships between the members of the community.[459] Members of such a small community as Elephantine sometimes display different roles, in several cases witnesses figure in several documents were they also appear as scribes.[460] Porten does not believe that any member of the Yahu community would write "gods" in any correspondence to each other and likens this situation in today's terms of a Jew sending another Jew a Christmas card.[461] The comparison of our modern concept of religion and worship to the ancient concept of god and gods is simply invalid, particularly in the Elephantine setting.

We need to ask the question, can one be both a Yahu worshipper and a worshipper of other gods? According to the evidence of the papyri, the answer has to be yes. I have already addressed briefly the worship of other gods alongside Yahu at Elephantine. Such worship most likely occurred in Syene were a temple was erected to the Queen of Heaven under the name Bethel (also connected with Herembethel and AnathYahu).[462] The

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[458] Porten, *Archives*, 174.

[459] Eleonora Cussini, "The Career of Some Elephantine and Murašû Scribes and Witnesses," in *In the Shadow of Bezalel. Aramaic, Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honor of Bezalel Porten,* ed. Alejandro Botta (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 39- 52.

[460] Ibid., 49.

[461] Ibid.

[462] Porten, *Elephantine,* B1. (p.l).

community clearly practiced an assimilated syncretistic form of worship, one that presents them as Yahu worshippers but also as members of an Egyptian garrison. This definition ultimately describes the typical form of religion and cult throughout the Near East at this time. A document drawn up by Pia b. Pahi made against Mibtahiah, discusses her dowry and the oath made for it:

> Then an oath came upon you and you swore to me about them by Sati the goddess. I am satisfied with that oath which you made to me about those goods of yours and I withdraw from you from this day and forever.[463]

When discussing these legal documents and the gods the claimant must swear by, we must ask did the court or the participant make the choice of deity? By its nature the condition of an oath rests upon the strength of the divine retribution of the deity(ies) concerned.[464] It is therefore unlikely that Pia or Mibtahiah, for example, would accept an oath from the other unless there was a known reverence to that deity. Mibtahiah instead provides us with evidence that as a member of the Yahu community, she not only married an Egyptian but also swore oaths by Egyptian deities. The evidence of her integration into the Egyptian community is further attested after her divorce when she married another Egyptian and their children took on Judean names.[465] Surely had she not portrayed some respect and reverence to the goddess Sati, her former husband would not have accepted the oath and would have demanded she swear by Yahu? The inclusion of gods from both communities is therefore evident at least in this example.

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[463] Ibid., B30, 188ff. (p.l).

[464] Ibid., B30, B52. (p.l).

[465] Ibid., B24, 174ff. (p.l). I will discuss Mibtahiah in more detail below and address the debate surrounding her marital status.

Furthermore according to Haran, "...in the biblical concept, a vow could be paid only in a temple..."[466], therefore if we are to agree with current scholarship and state that the community are Jews then it must follow that vows made between the Judean community and the Egyptians had to be made within the Yahu temple. Again, this can only be speculation as we have no evidence. Would the Egyptian parties have agreed to this and would such an oath have been considered legitimate?[467] What becomes apparent from this example, is that we must conclude that the community are simply Judean.[468]

Another character who appears in the papyri is Ananiah b. Azariah who is introduced to us as a servant/official of the temple of Yahu in Elephantine.[469] As Temple official, he was responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the temple building and for the care of the jewellery and garments of the gods.[470] Dressing the

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[466] Haran, "Temples", 34.

[467] If we are to believe that the Judean community were solely Jewish, then blessings by Ptah and oaths by other gods would not have been accepted by the Egyptians as a legitimate oath, however these oaths were made according to the papyri. Porten, *Elephantine*, B24, B50, B52. Porten and Yardeni, *TAD*, A2.3. (p.l).

[468] We must still be aware, however that while such temple vows are not mentioned in the Elephantine papyri, that is not to say they absolutely did not happen. It could be very likely that based on cultural heritage, vows between two Yahu worshippers may indeed have been performed in the temple. It is also possible that vows which incorporated other deities would have been performed in the Yahu temple, due to the fact that they clearly worshipped other deities alongside Yahu.

[469] Porten, *Elephantine*, B36, 208. (p.l).

[470] Porten, *Archives*, 200.

statue of the god, as we have addressed in chapter one, was a practice that took place in most temples throughout the Near East and may very well have taken place at Elephantine also. Gold, silk, silver and semi-precious jewels adorned the material that covered the statue. Although we know very little about cult practice in the Yahu Temple or of the priesthood in Elephantine, we have been left with some evidence on some ostraca, that has been interpreted to read:

> Behold my tunic which I left at the house of the House of YHW. Tell Uriah to dedicate it. [Addressed to] to Salluah[471]

Was this tunic to be dedicated to Yahu? The house of the Temple may well be a storehouse in which items for sacrificial and daily cultic ceremonies were kept.

6.1.1 The Conflict with "Foreigners" throughout Egypt

For the purpose of this chapter, it is particularly interesting to note that when Psammetichus I took control of Egypt. He divided the country into at least twenty districts (Nomes) ruled over by separate officials/governors.[472] Many such governors would have been local officials and high priests who most likely maintained local law and tradition. We have two reports in the papyri of the imprisonment of some of the Judean leaders from Elephantine.

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[471] Aimé-Giron, "Trois ostraca," 27ff.

[472] D. Redford, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt Vol. 2.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 404.

> ...Behold, these are the names of the men wh]o were imprisoned in [Ele]phantine: Berechia, Hose[a... ...] Pakhnum.
> Behold, this is the names of the women who were f[ound at the gate and in Thebes seized as p]risoners: Rami wife of Hodo, Esereshut wife of Hosea, Pallul wife of Islah, Reia [wife/daughter of...] ...

We may speculate during the rebellions members of the Judean community were taken to prison at Abydos. Furthermore, the tensions were caused by the forced relationship of foreign troops (the Judean garrison) into a locally ruled nome (the Khnum priesthood would have controlled the area).[473]

For generations Egypt had been the sought-after prize of nations eager to claim the expanse of riches this vast country held. Dynasty 25 had been a succession of Nubian and Kushite kings who failed to maintain a united Egypt. Instead, the kingdoms of Upper and Lower Egypt were separated and the various nomes were ruled by high priests and officials installed as kings by the local people. The Nubian and Saite kings often employed foreign mercenaries to control and monitor the public, this may suggest an atmosphere of tension and suspicion of foreign groups. Egypt's long history as a powerful and proud kingdom that struggled to maintain internal power, particularly at this time, may explain the bitter feelings towards foreign groups, especially individuals who emerged as officials in positions of dominance. Some Egyptian groups, particularly the priesthood and upper class who ultimately ruled Egypt and would now have lost a great deal of power, would most certainly have been agitated by such foreign groups.[474]

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[473] Porten, *Elephantine,* B15, 131.

[474] Harring, "Administration and Law," 226.

Typically however, the Saite Kings allowed the locally elected kings to remain in control but to act as vassal kings to their authority.[475] Yet some of the larger nomes such as Thebes, remained solely in Egyptian control.[476] Most significantly for this period, this was actually a time of great prosperity throughout Egypt despite the devastation caused by the numerous military raids. Archaeological remains show that, starting with the 25th dynasty, various kings were permitted to commission building projects and artwork on a scale not seen since New Kingdom times.[477] The Nubian kings actually embellished the temples that existed in Memphis and Thebes and attempted to recreate earlier Egyptian styles in art. Clearly in an attempt to unify Egypt and claim legitimacy as Egyptian Pharaohs, the Nubian and Saite Kings succeeded in producing a renaissance in ancient Egyptian art, religion and culture.

The multiple lines of fortification in the eastern Delta indicate a significant awareness of the threats of Babylonia and Assyria, but it was Egypt's defence on its southern borders that this chapter wishes to examine initially.[478] Nubia's long relationship with Egypt in the positions of both power and threat is demonstrated most significantly in the form of the monuments at Abu Simbel.[479] Built by Ramses II, they were meant to signify the

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[475] Ibid.

[476] Ibid.

[477] Van De Mieroop, *A History of the Ancient Near East*, 300.

[478] Ibid.

[479] Ibid.

strength and power of Egypt and keep Nubia's forces at bay.[480] On the contrary, however, Nubian Pharaohs approached Egyptian artistic and cultural traditions with enthusiasm and continued customs and improved building works while developing and introducing Nubian elements to the Egyptian convention. It was also traditional for Egyptian rulers to employ foreign mercenaries in the various garrisons throughout Egypt.[481] As we have discussed in chapter one, the presence of foreign mercenaries included soldiers from mainland Greece, the Aegean Islands, Caria, Lydia, Libya, Kush (modern Ethiopia), Phoenicia, Aram, Israel and Judah.[482] These are attested for in various stelae, legal papyri and biblical and classical sources.

6.1.2 *Conflict between the Egyptians and the Yahu Community*

The garrison of Elephantine was used at this time as a border fortress even though the actual political border lay further south where Lower Nubia was included in the Persian Empire.[483] Despite this, the Aramaic documents contain very little reference to any actual military activity. Garrisons were theoretically under the control of the King. In practice, however, the governor (normally a member of the local aristocracy or priesthood) of the province, controlled all aspects of political life in the garrison.[484] There is no reference to a "governor" in the Elephantine papyri, instead there

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[480] Ibid.

[481] Ibid.

[482] Kahn, "Judean Auxiliaries," 507.

[483] Ibid., 35.

[484] Ibid., 43.

were references to a "general or "commander of the garrison", three of whom are named Ravaka, Nephaian and Vidranga.[485] According to the papyri, it was general Vidranga who is documented most in the account of conflict in Elephantine.[486] The archive of Jedaniah b. Gemariah contains ten documents that describe the tension and communal affairs with the Egyptians. These papyri indicate that general conflict and tension developing in Elephantine at this time was also mirrored in Thebes and Memphis[487] as I will discuss in more detail below. In short, there was a national feeling of discontent with non-Egyptian communities by rebellious groups of Egyptians. According to Herodotus, relations at this time were strained and difficult, the Egyptians having revolted several times since 525 BCE.[488] Herodotus (III.14ff) describes the punishment of those Egyptians who murdered the herald sent by Cambyses to Memphis; "their mouths bridled and a rope round their necks", were led to their execution. It is not surprising therefore, that there are reports of rebellions and attacks against foreign groups such as the Judeans. While Cambyses restored some revenues to different estates, many he left without as suggested by the absence of stelas that mark royal generosity to temples that had previously been numerous up as far as 525 BCE.[489]

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[485] Porten, *Elephantine*, C1:3, 38:3, 54:14. (p.l).

[486] Porten, *Elephantine*, B15, B17, B19, B20, B21, B31, B32. Porten and Yardeni, *TAD*, A4.3. (p.l).

[487] Porten, *Aramaic*, 278.

[488] Herodotus, account on Cambyses.

[489] Briant, *From Cyrus*, 60.

The main debate among scholars concerning the Yahu community is the cause and reason for the destruction of the Temple. For many, it was due to religious upheaval and antagonism between the Khnum and Yahu cult, specifically in relation to animal sacrifice, but for others, there is more emphasis on the political reasonings behind the destruction.[490]

As discussed we have already discussed, it is highly likely that the Elephantine community emerged at a time when the local Egyptian garrison had abandoned their posts and rebelled against their Assyrian rulers. We may speculate that the contempt felt by the Egyptian priesthood over the erection of the Yahu Temple and the division of Egyptian land given to these Judean soldiers, may be a reason behind the destruction of the Temple. The first letter referring to building animosity over construction is dated to the fifth year of Darius sent from PN to Jedaniah, Mauziah and Uriah. An extract reads:

> To my lords Jedaniah, Mauziah, Uriah and the Troop, [yo]ur servant [PN.
> The welfare of my lords may the gods, all (of them)], seek after all times.
> It is well for us here.
> Now, every day that [...] he complained to the investigators. One Zivaka, he complained to our investigator ...[...] we have since the Egyptians a bribe to them give. And from (the time) that [...] of the Egyptians before Arsames, but Moreover, [...] the province of Thebes and thus say: Mazdayasna/A Mazdean is an official of the province[...] we are afraid because we are fewer by 2...[491]

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[490] Cowley, Porten, and Modrzejewski.

[491] Porten, *Elephantine*, B14, 127ff.

The officials Mauziah and Uriah also report that they were falsely arrested in Abydos by Vidranga and had only been released thanks to the assistance of Seho (Djeho) and Hor, servants of Anani.[492] While there is clear tension and animosity between members of the community and the Egyptians, it is still evident that despite this, there are degrees of assimilation and cooperation that exist between the two communities especially as Djeho and Hor, servants of Anani, were the ones who fought for the release of the Yahu leaders.[493] Scholars most often connect the extreme and malicious antagonism to the historical or religious background of the Yahu community.[494] This presumption, that the Judean background of the community is the reason behind any antagonism, generally leads on to suggest that both communities, the Judeans and the Egyptians, were segregated and any acts of intermarriage and cooperation were exceptional circumstances. However I find that there was successful assimilation and cooperation between the Yahu community and the Egyptians but in spite of this, resentment developed from some members and whether this was rooted in politics or religion, this resentment grew and culminated in the destruction of the Yahu Temple.

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[492] Porten, *Archives*, 280.

[493] Porten, *Elephantine*, B15. (p.l).

[494] While it is clear this thesis does not support the view that this group is fundamentally "Jewish", that does not suggest that the community were any less likely to have been targeted as outsiders. They clearly were at odds with some members of the Egyptian community, this does not mean it was because they were "Jewish", rather that they were a foreign group given substantial positions and privileges and existed in an important region at a time when widespread antagonism was growing against foreign groups.

6.1.3 *The Wall, the Well and the Sacrificial Lamb.*

One account in the papyri discusses the attack on the Judean garrison by a group of Egyptians, and specifically mentions the construction of a wall through the fortress and the blocking of the well.

> And now that wall (stands) built in the midst of the fortress.There is a well which is built with[in] the f[or]tress and water it does not lack to give the troop drink so that whenever they would be garrisoned (there) in [th]at well they would drink. Those priests of Khnub, that well they stopped up.[495]

In the time leading up to the destruction of the Yahu temple, resentment towards foreign groups seemed widespread and tensions across Egypt came to a climax as indicated in a letter sent to a Persian official Arsames addressed as "Our Lord":

> In the year 14 of Darius the king when our lord Arsames went to the king, this is the crime which the priests of the god Khnub committed in the fortress of Elephantine in concert with Vidranga who was 'frataraka' here, having given him silver and goods; there is part of the royal stores which is in Elephantine the fortress-they destroyed.
> And now the wall stands built in the midst of fortress.
> There is a well which is built within the fortress and water it does not lack to give the troop drink so whenever they would be GARRISONED (there) in [th]at well the water they would drink. Those priests of Khnub that well they stopped up.[496]

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[495] Porten, *Elephantine*, B17, 136.

[496] Ibid., B17, 135ff.

The wall mentioned in this extract is also mentioned in two documents in the Ananiah archive.[497] The construction of a wall through the Judean garrison and the blocking of the well can both be viewed as sources of severe anxiety between the two temples. The Khnum priests and the commander, in an attempt to separate and segregate the communities, built a border which the documents suggest cut into the Yahu community's land. As discussed above, when the Judean enclave settled in Elephantine, many were enrolled to replace those Egyptian soldiers who had abandoned their post and fled to Nubia. It could be suggested that land was taken from the temple of Khnum and from the "way of the god" and given to this new group of settlers, who alongside houses and commercial buildings, built a Temple to the god Yahu. This theory could certainly add to the animosity towards the Yahu community from the Khnum priesthood and by building a wall through the fortress and stopping up the well, perhaps they were merely taking back what they believed was theirs. According to the documents, the wall is described as a "protecting wall," but to protect what? The treasury of the king is recorded as having been built on the Egyptian side of the wall as well as part of a road leading to the temple of Khnum.

Within the same year (last decade of the fifth century BCE) as the erection of the wall, the papyri describes the events of the destruction of the temple:

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[497] Ibid., B43, 237ff. "And behold the boundaries of the house which I Anani, gave Jeroishma my daughter: east of it is the protecting wall which the Egyptians built, that is the way of the god..." B44, 242ff. "And this is its boundaries: east of it the treasury of the king adjoins wall to wall the protecting (wall) which the Egyptians built. . ."

> Arsames departed and went to the king. The priests of the god Khnub, who was in the fortress of Elephantine, conspired with Vidranga, who was "frataraka" here, to wipe out the Temple of the God YHW from the fortress of Elephantine. So the wretch Vidranga sent to his son Nefayan, who was garrison commander in the fortress of Syene, this order: 'the Temple of the God YHW in the fortress of Elephantine is to be destroyed.' Nefayan there-upon led the Egyptians with the other troops. Coming with their weapons to the fortress of Elephantine [they plundered and razed the Temple][498]

The erection of the wall and the destruction of the temple certainly seem to be connected, both due to the dissatisfaction of Vidranga with the Yahu community. It is highly likely judging from the substantial amount of evidence for peaceful interaction between the two communities, that this significant act of violence was directly associated with the revolts of the Egyptians taking place throughout Egypt at this time against the Persians. The complaint of the Yahu community did not go unanswered and Persia held all those who rebelled against direct orders accountable. Although the political situation in Elephantine cannot be made clear due to the lack of evidence, Vidranga did not escape punishment by his superiors.[499] According to Porten, his property would have been confiscated and although not certain, it is possible he was executed for the crimes against the Yahu community.[500] It is thought he was executed because the others responsible were also punished.

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[498] Porten, *Elephantine*, B19, 139ff.

[499] Porten, *Archives*, 287.

[500] Ibid., 288. Based on the line in the papyri "..that Vidranga the cur. They removed the fetter (anklets) from his feet and all the goods which he had acquired were lost." Porten, *Elephantine*, B19, 142.

> And all persons who sought evil for that Temple, all (of them), were killed and we gazed upon them.[501]

It is interesting to consider why the Egyptians would have blocked up the well belonging to the Yahu colony during the skirmish. Did this have anything to do with the source of the inundation or was it simply a tactic in driving out the Yahu community? I could suggest that the blasphemous acts of sacrifice on the part of the Yahu community made them unworthy to use the gift of Khnum, i.e. the water, from the point of view of the Khnum priests. Perhaps for the priests the permission for the Yahu community to use the well could provoke Khnum into refusing the inundation. While it is unlikely that the Yahu community would, in fact, sacrifice sheep when the option to sacrifice goats was available, we cannot overlook the fact that the papyri reference the animals the community are willing to sacrifice in order to celebrate the rebuilding of the temple which include both sheep and goats! [502] As far as we can tell from the papyri, a well existed close to the temple of Yahu, specifically built for the garrison to use.

> And now, that wall (stands) built in the midst of the fortress.
> There is a well which is built with[in] the f[or]tress and water it does not lack to give the troop drink so that whenever they would be GARRISONED (there), in [th]at well the water they would drink. Those priests of Khnub, that well they stopped up.[503]

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[501] Ibid., B19, 139ff.

[502] Ibid., B22, 151.

[503] Porten, *Elephantine*, B17. (p.l).

I think one of the most important things about this piece of the letter is that the Judeans state that this well supplied water for "the troop" to drink, not specifically the Yahu worshippers. We may speculate that the Khnum priesthoods aim in blocking the well was not to protest the sacrificing of the Paschal lamb or the worship of Yahu, but instead to show discontent with the troop, the garrison and the Persians. Stopping the well that was supplying the entire garrison was a problem for the Persian administration and may have been a non-violent prelude to the destruction of the temple.

When examining the Yahu community's relationship with the Egyptians, it seems that for most scholars the Passover sacrifice was the most obvious source for contention between the two groups.[504] According to Schäfer, the sacrifice of the Paschal lamb in Elephantine was going to be a serious source of resentment on the part of the Egyptians. As discussed in chapter two, the priests of the temple of Khnum that also dwelt on Elephantine and held the ram sacred would never have approved of the Passover sacrifice. However as indicated in Exodus 12:5, the Paschal sacrifice need not be taken from sheep, it is just as legitimate to offer goats[505] and with this choice, it is unlikely given the good relations, that the Yahu community would have chosen to offend the Khnum priests (and their Egyptian neighbours, family and friends), at least to begin with. There is the possibility that as animosity grew between the heads of the Judean garrison and the Khnum priesthood, that

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[504] Porten, Modrzejewski, Kraeling, Cowley.

[505] Exod, 12: 5, " Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year old male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats."

good will was abandoned. While only speculation, it would explain the issue that arises in papyrus B22:

> Your servants- Jedaniah son of Gem[ariah] ...
> all (told) 5 persons, Syenians who in Elephantine the fortress are heredi[tary-property-hold]ers -- thus say: If our lord [...] and the Temple-of-YHW-the-God of ours be (re)built in Elephantine the fortress as former[ly] it was [bu]ilt -- and sheep, ox and goat (as) burnt offerings are [n]ot made there but (only) incense (and) meal offering...[506]

This papyrus highlights the list of animals used for sacrifice in Elephantine. Were the Yahu worshippers then sacrificing both sheep and goats despite their significance to the Khnum temple? This letter certainly suggests so. It may be somewhat speculative to suggest, but for the purpose of this thesis perhaps the community only sacrificed goats so as not to offend the Khnum temple but only up until the time that tensions and divisions began to cause consternation and segregation between the communities. After the blocking of the well and the construction of the wall[507], it may be suggested that the Yahu community then sacrificed both sheep and goats, ultimately deepening the tension between the two temples. While this is clearly a hypothetical suggestion, the fact remains that both sheep and goats are listed in the papyrus while other accounts of interaction and assimilation also exist throughout the papyri.

We must consider the Egyptian reaction towards the celebration of the Passover and its significance to them. According

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[506] Porten, *Elephantine*, B22, 150-151.

[507] Ibid., B17, 135-137.

to Josephus, during the Hellenistic period negative reactions during the Passover concerning the Jewish account of the Exodus story and the ultimate victory of the Israelites are well documented, however, we would strive to find much reference to this before the Ptolemaic era.[508] It is then fair for us to presume that in Elephantine too, the celebration of the Passover was a source of offence on the part of the Egyptian communities.[509] The conflicts that arose throughout Egypt during the time after the death of Artaxerxes I may have meant that steps were taken to prevent the Yahu Temple from celebrating Passover. The conflicts that I will discuss in more detail below may have echoed somewhat in the minds of the Egyptians, the very celebration of Passover. The ten papyri from the Jedaniah archive discuss the Yahu community's appeal to the Judeans in Jerusalem to intercede on their behalf with the Persian officials. This thesis agrees with Porten that the separation of religious and political motivations to hinder Passover and destroy the Temple is artificial.[510] The cultic festival of Passover is in part a celebration of political victory. Any resentment felt on the part of the Egyptians would only have been heightened with this distinct festival.

For Schäfer, the Passover letter is crucial in examining the relationship between the Egyptians and what he terms as the "Jews

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[508] Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 1. 14, 73: 26-31.

[509] Porten, *Elephantine,* B13, 125.

[510] Reinhard Kratz, "The Second Temple of Jeb" in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period,* ed. Obed Lipschits and Manfred Oeming (Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 282.

of Elephantine".[511] His interpretation of the text leads him to state "the rather enigmatic phrase in line 3 ("keep away from the *Jewish* garrison") and seems to hint at a conflict between the *Jews* and the local Persian governor which in a puzzling way is connected to Passover".[512] Porten includes the line in his 1968 translations but does not include this line in his translation of the text published in 1996, dropping the line without explanation. It seems most likely due to the degree of damage and reconstruction required.[513] Surely, however, such a line would have remained in the later translation should it have proved legitimate enough a translation, particularly from one as familiar with the texts as Porten. In outlining some of the suggestions behind the creation of the Passover letter, Schäfer suggests that older studies assumed that the decree was initiated by the Yahu worshippers in Jerusalem who wanted the correct implementation of the festival throughout the diaspora.[514] If this is so, then as Schäfer suggests, this letter is but one version of a decree sent throughout the Near East in order to instruct this *Jews* in the diaspora on the correct dates for Passover according to Jerusalem. As discussed, the level of *Jewishness* within the community of Elephantine mirrored that which was evident in Judah and Samaria before the destruction of the Elephantine temple, one reflected in Jeremiah (44) and 2 Kings, where we have

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[511] Schäfer, *Judeophobia,* 124. I will discuss the Passover letter in detail later in this chapter.

[512] Ibid., 125.

[513] Porten, *Archives, 129.* Porten, *Elephantine,* B12, 123. Again as I mentioned in the introduction, Porten's 1996 translations are described by him as being closest to the literal meaning of the Aramaic and therefore no significant interpretation was included.

[514] Schäfer, *Judeophobia,* 124.

accounts of the typical syncretistic type of worship of the Near East present in Judah and Samaria.

Should the Yahu community in Egypt be referred to as a diaspora? Schäfer holds the view that the Yahu community are already a segregated and separated community from the Egyptians.[515] For example, when examining "Jewish" life in Elephantine under Persian supremacy, Schäfer discusses how the Persian authorities were well disposed towards the "Jews", evident through a papyrus that boasts that Cambyses, when he conquered Egypt, destroyed all the temples of Egypt and certainly the Khnum temple of Elephantine, but did not harm the Yahu temple.[516]

> And from the days of the king(s) of Egypt our fathers had built that Temple in Elephantine the fortress and when Cambyses entered Egypt —that Temple, built he found it. And the temples of the gods of Egypt, all (of them), they overthrew, but anything in that Temple one did not damage.[517]

There is no evidence that the Khnum temple was destroyed during this period, in fact very few temples are reported as being destroyed during this time.[518] As I discussed in chapter one, the Egyptian priesthood, in essence, ruled Egypt up until the Persian

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[515] Ibid., 122ff.

[516] Ibid., 122.

[517] Porten, *Elephantine*, B19. (p.l).

[518] Thomas Bolin, "The Temple of Yahu at Elephantine and Persian Religious Policy", in *The Triumph of Elohim From Yahwisms to Judaisms*, ed. Diana Edelman (Grand rapids: Peeters, 1996), 130. According to Bolin archaeological evidence does not show widespread evidence of destruction of Egyptian temples by Cambyses, who most likely limited their revenue.

dominance. Herodotus reports that Cambyses killed the Apis bull of Memphis after losing battles in Nubia and then proceeded to destroy temples throughout Egypt.[519] The threat made by Cambyses to destroy the temples was not a physical threat against the actual structures but against the political control of the priesthood. By tearing down all the temples of Egypt, Cambyses was rather destroying the control and dominance of the priesthood. While it is likely that Cambyses destroyed some temples, he did not cause the degree of physical destruction attributed to him, instead it may be suggested that the great disaster caused by Cambyses on the Egyptian people was the removal of power of the priesthood.

Cambyses certainly seems to have caused some friction either in his time or in the minds of those recording his power. It has been discussed at length that Cambyses's rise to the throne brought destruction to temples throughout Egypt and yet we cannot prove such a display of power actually happened, at least not on as wide a scale as suggested. The story of Cambyses and the Apis Bull is another story attributed to Cambyses but may be debated. According to Herodotus:

> Cambyses ordered the priests to be whipped by the men whose business it was to carry out such punishments, and any Egyptian who was found still keeping holiday to be put to death. In this way the festival was broken up, the priests punished, and Apis, who lay in the temple for a time wasting away from the wound in his thigh, finally died and was buried by the priests without the knowledge of Cambyses. Even before this Cambyses had been far from sound in his mind; but the Egyptians are convinced that the

[519] Herodotus, 3: 30.

> complete loss of his reason was the direct result of this crime. Herodotus III. 29

According to Briant, the story of Cambyses and the Apis bull must be re-interpreted in light of discoveries made in Memphis in the location of the sarcophogi for the Apis bull. [520] Here the epitaph of the Apis bull interred at the time of Cambyses attack (524 BCE) has been discovered, and in it Cambyses is described as being dressed as an Egyptian and on his knees after creating a place for the god in the necropolis.[521] Therefore instead of killing the Apis bull, Cambyses, according to Briant, participated in its embalming and funerary rites.[522] Cambyses's notoriety however, is addressed by Strabo and also Diodorus when he states:

> The silver and gold and costly works of ivory and rare stone (that the temples of Thebes contained) were carried off by the Persians when Cambyses burned the temples of Egypt; and it was at this time, they say, that the Persians, by transferring all this wealth to Asia and taking artizans along from Egypt, constructed their famous palaces in Persepolis and Susa and throughout Media.... (The circle of gold crowning the tomb of Ozymandias), they said, had been plundered by Cambyses and the Persians when he conquered Egypt. Diodorus Siculus I. 46 4, 49. 5

We are therefore led to believe, despite the discoveries in Memphis, that Cambyses's control of Egypt led to much suffering by the Egyptian people. Cambyses was surely aware of the significant role played by the priestly families whose administration over the

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[520] Briant, *From Cyrus*, 57.

[521] Ibid.

[522] Ibid.

temples was, in fact, the backbone of local administration.[523] We may speculate that if Cambyses was indeed a cruel king towards the Egyptians and that in their place promoted foreign groups and Persians into places of power, then that would bring the case for a legitimate cause for the Khnum priesthood to despise the Yahu community. It could also be speculated that the power of the garrison was transferred under Cambyses from the Khnum priesthood to the Judean mercenaries, although we cannot be sure how much power, if any, the Khnum priesthood would have had over it to begin with.[524] This could certainly have been a catalyst in developing tensions between the priesthood of Khnum and the priesthood of Yahu.

Schäfer also discusses some of the building restrictions that I have previously mentioned, and proposes that the Egyptians erected on the border of the "Jewish quarter" a shrine, probably a Khnumeum (burial place for rams), then destroying part of the garrison, built a wall in order to connect the cemetery with the Khnum temple.[525] Unlike the suggestion that the Khnum priesthood invaded the "Jewish quarter", this was essentially an incident about land and the control of certain areas, rather than a dispute about the cultic practice in the Yahu temple. The Judean garrison was developed under Psammetichus I to replace that led by the Egyptians who abandoned their posts and left for Nubia.

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[523] Briant, *From Cyrus*, 56.

[524] As discussed in chapter one, the Khnum priesthood, similar to the priesthood throughout Egypt, would have controlled the local district through the rights of the city-god. Elephantine was considered the territory of the god, Khnum.

[525] Schäfer, *Judeophobia*, 130. Referring to Porten.

The Yahu temple therefore, may very well have been built on land that had belonged to the Khnum complex. Given that we have so much evidence for good relations between the Yahu community and the Egyptians, the likelihood is that the tensions between the groups that led to the ultimate destruction of the Yahu temple, in fact was based more on land disputes than religious segregation. Certainly the argument may have developed to include the fact that the Judeans had the opportunity to sacrifice goats (as indicated in papyrus, B22) [526], but this was clearly a development that came about much later in the lifetime of the community.

Schäfer goes further in his section on "anti-Semitism in Elephantine" where the two communities of Judeans and Egyptians are viewed as separate entities.[527] This simply was not true. The community intermarried, lived together, bought and sold food and land among each other, shared law courts and shared greetings which included all deities.[528] Schäfer also argues for disharmony between the Egyptians and the Judean community through the evidence of the Passover letter.[529] He discusses the connection with the Passover letter written by Hananiah in an undated letter (both addressed to Jedaniah among others) which he claims indicates that Hananiah's request for Passover dates did not escape the notice of the Khnum priesthood.

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[526] Porten, *Elephantine*, 150.

[527] Schäfer, *Judeophobia*, 133.

[528] Porten, *Elephantine*, B1, B8, B36. Porten and Yardeni, *TAD*, A2.4, A3.3, D1.7, D7.6. The interaction between the communities will be examined later in this chapter.

[529] Schäfer, *Judeophobia*, 123.

> To you it is known that Khnum is against us since Hananiah has been in Egypt until now.[530]

This papyrus, despite being undated is estimated to have been written in the late fifth century BCE around the same time as the Passover letter which was written in 419 BCE. The letter also deals with the attacks and conspiracy of the Commander Vidranga against the Judean community who would eventually lead the conflict that destroyed the Yahu temple. The issue comes when we consider that this letter written by Mauziah to Jedaniah and the priests of YHW was requesting payments for two Egyptians, Djeho and Hor, who had helped to rescue him from imprisonment in Abydos.[531] While it is clear from the text that indeed there was resentment and agitation between the Khnum priesthood and the Yahu community, Schäfer's examination leads us to believe that this antagonism existed throughout the lifetime of the Yahu temple and between the wider community of the Judeans and the Egyptians. This was not the case. This thesis certainly agrees with Schäfer that there was significant division between the Khnum and Yahu priesthoods that culminated in the destruction of the Yahu temple. However, this thesis is of the view that this division was the result of political antagonism rather than religious animosity, as Schäfer suggests. I have discussed how the emergence of the Yahu community coincided with the punishment of the Egyptian garrison for their abandonment of their posts under Psammetichus

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[530] Porten, *Elephantine*, B15, 132. If we continue the quote however, we will also see that Hananiah had an Egyptian slave and one with whom he seemed to be on friendly terms with, as he is described by Porten to have gone to great lengths to save Mauziah. "and whatever you will do for Hor, for your[...y]ou are doing. Hor is a servant of Hananiah . . ." The full text is available in the appendix.

[531] Porten, *Elephantine*, B15, 130-132.

I and suggested that the division of land under this re-establishment took land away from the Khnum priesthood in order to develop the Yahu temple. While tensions indeed existed even under the decrees of Cambyses when political power was taken from the priesthood of Khnum, and while the Yahu temple was left alone, the wider populace, the everyday communities of Judeans and Egyptians co-existed as any other multicultural town/city existed at this time.

Had the Aramaic papyri remained undiscovered, we would have very little evidence to conclude that anything about the Judean community of Elephantine, however, the exceptional nature of the papyri does not make the community itself exceptional. The Judean community in Elephantine may well represent a picture of similar Judean communities that most likely existed throughout the Near East at this time.

6.2 The Yahu Community of Egypt and Jerusalem

This investigation is of the view that the Yahu community in Elephantine was not fundamentally "Jewish" but shared a distinct Judean heritage while still maintaining documented links with Jerusalem.[532] These fragmentary documents that illustrate some form of relationship between the Yahu community and Jerusalem

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[532] The Aramaic Papyri outlines clearly at least three instances of contact with Jerusalem. First of all the significant Passover papyrus which describes advise given by Jerusalem on how Elephantine should participate in Passover (and the feast of Unleavened Bread) and also the two letters that where sent to Jerusalem requesting assistance in the rebuilding of the Elephantine temple.

naturally lead most scholars to the conclusion that the community was "Jewish", as they consider the community of Jerusalem in the persian period "Jewish". With this somewhat inhibiting view comes the presumption that any contact with the Egyptian community was one of disparity and segregation, that the so-called "Jewish" community of Elephantine were constantly at odds with the Egyptian community because of the sensitivities between the temples of Yahu and Khnum. This section will address the relationship between Elephantine and Jerusalem and answer specific questions particularly, why would the Yahu community request aid from Jerusalem?

6.2.1 Passover, Sabbath and Contact between Jerusalem and Elephantine

The first significant piece of evidence for contact between Elephantine and Jerusalem is the famous Passover letter,

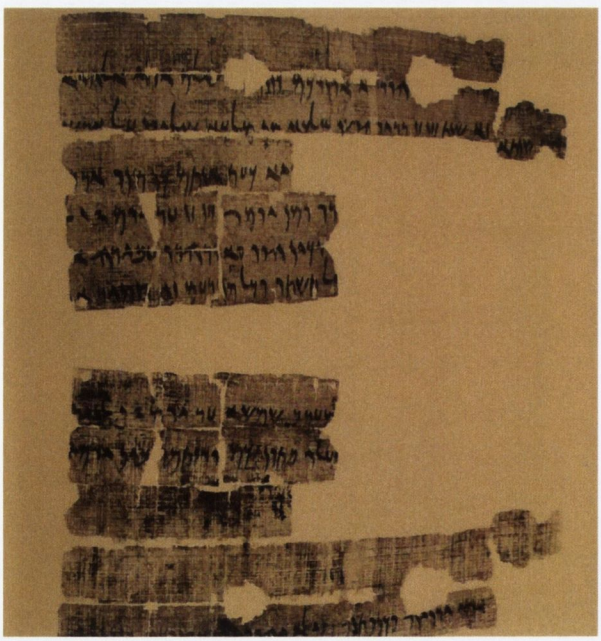

Fig. 10 Porten. "The Passover Papyrus (Plate 9) in *Archives from Elephantine* (California: Berkeley, 1968).

RECTO [To my brothers Je]daniah and his colleagues the Jewish T[roop], your brother Hananiah.
The welfare of my brothers may the gods [seek after at all times].
And now, this year, year 5 of Darius the king, from the king it has been sent to Arsa[mes...]
[...]... Now, you, thus count four[teen days of Nisan and on the 14th at twilight the Passover ob]serve and from day 15 until day 21 of [Nisan the Festival of Unleavened Bread observe. Seven days unleavened bread eat.
Now], be pure and take heed. Work [do] n[ot do] [on day 15 and on day 21 of Nisan. Any fermented drink] do not drink. And anything of leaven do not [eat **VERSO** and do not let it be seen in your houses from day 14 of Nisan at] sunset until day 21 of Nisa[n at sunset. And any leaven which you have in your houses b]ring into your chambers and seal (them) up during [these] days.
[...]...
[To] my brothers Jedaniah and his colleagues the Jewish Troop, your brother Hananiah s[on of PN].[533]

The Judeans of Jerusalem sent Hananiah to present their plea to Darius who finally issued a decree that the Elephantine soldiers were to be allowed to observe Passover, Hananiah apparently remained in Egypt attached to Arsames's court.[534] It is difficult to understand what kind of relationship existed between Elephantine and Jerusalem, but from the evidence of this papyrus in particular, it appears to have been a co-operative one. The dates seem to imply the festival of Passover despite that fact that the term is never used. We cannot even be sure who Hananiah was, except that he represented Judean interests in Egypt for a time.[535] We also

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[533] Porten, *Elephantine*, B13, 125f .

[534] Porten, *Archives*, 281.

[535] Kratz, "Second Temple", 253.

have no evidence of the command from Darius to Arsames. Hananiah clearly arrived from outside Egypt, probably as a response to a petition from the Yahu community over the dates to which they should celebrate Passover. It could also be the case that Jerusalem sent Hananiah to Elephantine to view, first hand, the structure of the cult of Elephantine and offer advise for the successful observance of Passover.

Some other shorter letters also reference Passover to some extent:

> To Hoshaiah.
> Your welfare (may DN seek after at all times).
> Now, singly (= alone) look after the children until Ahutab comes. Do not entrust them to others. **CONVEX** If their bread is ground, knead for them 1 *qab* before their mother comes.
> Send (word) to me when you make (= observe) the Passover.
> Do send greetings (= news) of the child[536]

This charming letter discusses passover in a way that is private and subtle. It is portrayed as a private and family centred event.

> Now, lo, this I sent you this letter by the boat of *Pmhn*, saying: "I shall enter Syene this day."
> Now, lo, on account of the Sukkeins/sharp implements [...]...this day. If you can d[o (OR: pas[sover]) ...]...on the Passover then stand w[ith (= by) ...](just) as I would have you stand with [...]...,and his vessels examine [...]*ask* **CONVEX** [...]... You/I have to him/her [... *if*] you can do (OR: pass over) [...].
> Now, regard *what* (OR: we 2 saw) [...*P*]*mhn* son of *snd*, saying: "[*What is the*]epistle which Mic[*aiah*] sent you?"
> Lo, the word (OR: matter) of a document (OR: scribe) it is which Rauk sent to me and I sent to him to explain (OR: translate) for me the word (OR: matter).

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[536] Porten and Yardeni, *TAD*, *D*7.6.

Moreover, I sent to him to show the order to Hosea.[537]

This letter, although damaged, demonstrates a number of areas for speculation. Firstly, we suggest that Yahu worshippers existed in the Syene garrison as well as within the Elephantine troop, or that at least members of the troop travelled back and forth between the two. Secondly, it is evident that the Passover was not a festival that restricted movement or business. This person has been asked to take care of a boat or to meet a boat and has stated that this should take place on Passover. This may indicate the day in which the boat must be inspected rather than suggesting that the boat must be inspected despite it being Passover.

The evidence we have for the celebration of Sabbath is even more speculative than the evidence for Passover, however we do have a number of references. References to other festivals associated with the cultic heritage of the Yahu community are scanty but certainly should not be dismissed. Reference to the Sabbath is only found on ostraca and not in any of the papyrus records.[538] One ostracon addressed to Jedaniah discusses his incarceration and the starvation diet that made reference to "the day of the Sabbath" [539] A second ostracon was addressed to a woman, Islah:

> I am sending you vegetables tomorrow. Meet the boat tomorrow on Sabbath lest they get lost/spoiled. By the

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[537] Ibid., D7.24.

[538] Porten and Yardeni, *TAD*, D7.10, D7.16, D7.28, D7.35, D7.48.

[539] Dupont-Sommer, "Un Ostracon", 65-75.

> life of YHW, if not, I shall take your life. Do not reply on Meshullemeth or upon Shemaiah...[540]

This message, while isolated, is particularly important for our understanding of religious observance in Elephantine. The threat of her life to collect the vegetables on the Sabbath may imply some extraordinary situation and may indirectly attest to the regular observance of the Sabbath as there is the element of doubt that she will collect them. Perhaps then despite the distinct separation, we should not be so surprised that Elephantine appealed to Jerusalem for negotiations to rebuild the Temple. In the opinion of this thesis, it is significant to look on this episode in relation to the military activity of the garrison. Leading on from the observance of Sabbath, no text survives to indicate if the Yahu group carried out military duty on the Passover. Without evidence it is merely speculation to suggest that the troop did not work during Passover or Sabbath, however one would presume that if the military colony were abandoning their posts on Passover, then there would be some suggestion of it, particularly from the Egyptian or Persian sources. It is more likely therefore that the community despite celebrating Passover, did not abandon their posts.

> Greetings, Jedaniah.
> Now, we're I put [in] the stocks/confinement, then it would be commanded. "[Let] them [*not*] withhold from him bread and water."
> [*Now*, ... let] Ahutab [take] out for (= supply) me. But, [... d]ay of the Sabbath

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[540] Bezalel Porten, "The Religion of the Jews of Elephantine in light of the Hermopolis Papyri," *JNES* 28 (1969), 116.

In this letter someone requesting provisions is likening their situation to being in the stocks. They suggest that if they had been in the stocks they would have at least given him water and bread and something further on the Sabbath. While this letter does not specifically discuss Sabbath practice it does suggest that the festival was celebrated with food, and that even prisoners or those in confinement were offered something more to celebrate.

6.2.2. *The Reconstruction of the Temple and the Request for aid to Jerusalem and Samaria*

For Knoppers, the appeal of the Elephantine community to both Jerusalem and Samaria is most interesting. Certainly the Judeans in Elephantine must have felt some affinity with the community of Samaria:[541]

> Moreover, all] the(se) things, (in) a letter in our name we sent to Delaiah and Shelemiah s[ons of Sanballat governor of Samaria.
> Moreover about this], all (of it) which was done to us, Arsames did not know.[542]

However, in the light of the evidence concerning the construction of the temple in Mount Gerizim and the creating of the priesthood in Samaria, how can we connect this letter which is from 407 BCE? Magen has concluded that the temple of Mount Gerizim was constructed during the fifth century BCE during the reign of Nehemiah who is believed to have been in power the second half

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[541] Gary Knoppers, "Revisiting the Samaritan Question in the Persian Period" in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period,* O. Lipschits (Indiana: Eisenbauns, 2006), 278.

[542] Porten, *Elephantine,* B20, 147.

of the 5th century. From the archaeological evidence therefore, and the conclusions of Magen, we must deduce that the Samaritan temple of Gerizim did in fact exist at the time the request for assistance letter was compiled and sent.[543] In writing to the governor of Samaria and announcing that they had done so in a letter to Jerusalem might have been to broadcast the acknowledgment of the significant rift between Jerusalem and Samaria. The Elephantine temple, in my view, represented the form of cultic activity that was no longer acceptable in Jerusalem, by writing to both Jerusalem and Samaria we must acknowledge that Elephantine were appealing to the central authority of their ethnic cult. They were also clearly recognising the developing authority of Samaria, whether or not they believed Samaria would even have the financial capabilities to assist them is unknown.

While we do not know what prompted the officials, Bagavahya and Delaiah to allow the rebuilding of the temple, we can presume that including the names of the sons of Sanballat in this letter seems to have achieved some response.[544] However, this included the request to reduce the types of sacrifice permitted in the Elephantine temple. The Yahu community was left without its temple and as the appeals in the letters show, they where desperate to rebuild, and perhaps after receiving no reply from Jerusalem, the main centre of Yahu worship at the time, they attempted some

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[543] See chapter three for an examination of the temple of Mount Gerizim.

[544] We know that an initial letter sent to Jerusalem but did not receive a response, and then a second letter sent to Jerusalem including Sanballat's sons did. And while the response is issued in the names of Bagavahya and Delaiah, we do not have evidence of any letter being sent to Samaria.

political extortion. It may be suggested that due to the urgency of their situation, the letter challenged Jerusalem by suggesting they had also requested aid from Samaria. For Knoppers, the joint reply from the governor of Judah and Delaiah, the son of Sanballat is significant, particularly when addressing the question of diplomatic relations between Jerusalem and Samaria at this time 407 BCE.[545] The letter allowing the rebuilding of the temple of Elephantine is issued on behalf of both Jerusalem and Sanballat's son, Delaiah, a highly unusual sign of cooperation between Jerusalem and Samaria. In spite of this, we have very little evidence to conclude any form of contact between the two. We may only speculate that Elephantine seemed to initially prefer the assistance of Jerusalem over Samaria. Did the Judeans of Elephantine believe they were more likely to get financial support from Jerusalem? It has been argued throughout this thesis that Elephantine was primarily independent of Jerusalem and yet they requested assistance from Jerusalem over Samaria. Jerusalem was the centre of the Yahweh cult and because the Persian officials were unable to assist them and Samaria had recently had extensive building projects of its own, Jerusalem may have seemed like the most likely option. [546] Perhaps the extension of the request to include Samaria was in order to cause some reaction from Jerusalem. Certainly the most unusual aspect of this was that the reply was issued from both the governor of Judah and Delaiah.[547]

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[545] Porten, *Elephantine*, B21. Knoppers, "Revisiting", 278.

[546] Magen, *Mount Gerizim*, 158.

[547] See appendix for the full text.

The reconstruction of the Yahu Temple was certainly not going to be achievable by the Yahu community. Elephantine appealed initially to Jerusalem and did not receive a response and then appealed later to Jerusalem, Samaria and Persian officials. If it were to be rebuilt as it is described in the papyri, then it would require cedars from Lebanon for the roof and many professionals to build it to the previous specifications.[548] After the destruction of the Temple, the Yahu community went into mourning as recorded in the following extract:

> ...Moreover, from the month of Tammuz, year 14 of Darius the King and until this day, we, sackcloth wearing and are fasting; the wives of ours as widow(s) are made, (with) oil (we) do not anoint ourselves), and wine do not drink.
> Moreover from that (time) and until (this) day, year 17 of Darius the king, meal-offering and ince[n]se and burnt offering they do not make in that Temple.[549]

Two draft copies of the request for reconstruction to Bagohi have been preserved and they contain probably the most elaborate and well-structured content of all the Aramaic papyri. After a long-winded salutation and the recount of the destruction of the Temple the letter then describes the historical legitimacy of the colony.

> Now our forefathers built this temple back in the days of the kingdom of Egypt and when Cambyses came to

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[548] Porten, *Elephantine*, B19, 139ff. "They came to the fortress of Elephantine with their implements, broke into that Temple, demolished it to the ground, and the pillars of stone which were there- they smashed them. Moreover, it happened (that the) gateways of stone built of hewn stone they demolished...and the hinges of those big doors, (of) bronze and the roof of wood of cedar- all (of these) ...with fire they burned".

[549] Ibid., B19, 143.

> Egypt he found it built, They (the Persians) knocked down all the temples of the gods of the Egyptians but no one did any damage to this Temple.[550]

The letters were most likely delivered by hand and probably were accompanied with a gift, and according to Porten, Delaiah and Bagohi replied through an oral communication delivered by Arsames.[551] However, and most importantly, the temple can be rebuilt with the condition that there shall not be any burnt offerings performed any longer in the temple. While the reply was no doubt significant, we must examine the fact that the sons of Sanballat of Samaria were also mentioned as receiving a copy of the letter. The Jerusalem community had not responded, therefore had the Elephantine community felt that the only way to get a response was to include the names of the sons of Sanballat?

> ...in a letter in our name we sent to Delaiah and Shelemiah s[ons of Sanballat governor of Samaria[552]

I find that the request for aid to Samaria was in actual fact more a way to entice Jerusalem to make a move. We could speculate that the failure of Jerusalem to reply to the first petition was due to the practice of burnt offerings to Yahu in opposition to Jerusalem. Nothing is expressed in any of the papyri to indicate that there was ever a problem with Elephantine sacrificing until this letter. It seems that burnt offerings were to be made in Judah and meal-

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[550] Kratz, "Second Temple," 253.

[551] Porten, *Archives*, 291.

[552] Porten, *Elephantine*, B20, 147.

offerings and incense were all that was permitted elsewhere.[553] It is clear that through the decrees of Ezra and Nehemiah, burnt offerings could only be offered legitimately in Jerusalem. Burnt offering and incense could be permitted elsewhere as they could in other shrines and sanctuaries across Judah.[554]

Obviously the clearest evidence that this community is linked to Judah and Israel is the worship of Yahu who is also referred to as "the God" and "the God of heaven similar to the 'Lord of heaven' being used by Phoenicians at this time.[555] According to Bolin, Persian imperial policy at the time named no other god than *Ahura-Mazda,* therefore permission on Bagohi's part for the rebuilding of the temple must have been linked with the specific connection made between Yahu and the god of heaven. [556] According to the response from the appeal, an "altar-house" is to be rebuilt, not necessarily a temple, the building is to be dedicated to the god of Heaven, while Yahu's name is not mentioned at all in the text.[557] Bolin believes that in the light of recent studies of Persian religious policies, the papyri of Elephantine requires re-examination, particularly when examining the connections of the

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[553] As we have examined in chapter three, according to the archaeological evidence, Judean temples and sanctuaries elsewhere during this period have begun to abolish physical structures within the temples that were used for animal sacrifice, suggesting an end to such activities in temples and sanctuaries outside Jerusalem.

[554] As indicated in chapter three.

[555] Ibid., 127.

[556] Bolin, "The Temple of Yahu," 127-142.

[557] Porten, *Elephantine,* B21. Bolin, "The Temple of Yahu," 133.

Judean community with Yahu and the Lord of heaven.[558] For Bolin, it has already been established that the identification of Yahu as the god of heaven has been evidence of the Israelite deity absorbing elements of other gods in an attempt to equate their god with the Persian, *Ahura Mazda* in order to have the reconstruction request better received.[559] For Bolin, Persian religious policy at the time was inclined towards an inclusive monotheism, belief in a single god but with regional variations.[560] The Yahu community in Elephantine were attempting to connect with Persian religious policy by having their "regional god" identified with the one true god of Persia, *Ahura Mazda.*[561] Since all known economic affairs at Elephantine involved either silver or goods, any offer of gold as there was in Jedaniah's letter to Bagohi, would have been lavish.[562] One point of interest from the memorandum from Bagohi and Delaiah is that there is a hole in the papyrus that was apparently there before it was used, since the scribe has written around it. It calls for a house of offering and not specifically a temple. The building is to be dedicated to the god of heaven and there was no mention of Yahu.

> Memorandum. What Bagavahya and Delaiah said to me. Memorandum. Saying, "Let it be for you in Egypt to say before Arsames about the Altar-house of the God of Heaven which in Elephantine the fortress built was formerly before Cambyses (and) which Vidranga, that

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[558] Ibid., 127.

[559] Ibid., 128.

[560] Ibid.

[561] Ibid.

[562] Ibid., 132.

> wicked (man) demolished in year 14 of Darius the King: to (re)build it on its site as it was formerly and the meal-offering and the incense they shall offer upon that altar just as formerly was done'"[563]

The building is to be used for meal and incense offerings but not for sacrifices. What is of further interest is that there is an erasure in the text where the permission to sacrifice would have occurred. Other scholars see the destruction of the Yahu temple as purely political and tie it to the continued loyalty of the Judean community to Persia in the face of Egyptian unrest. This thesis agrees that the destruction of the temple was connected to the political background at the time and that the question of sacrifices and Passover was only an exacerbating element that contributed to the unrest between the Judean and Elephantine communities.

Conclusions of Chapter Six

Through the careful examination of the papyri we can reconstruct many aspects of life in Elephantine for the Yahu community. The relationship between the Yahu community and Egypt has been examined and evaluated as one that was largely peaceful. The Yahu community accepted life within its multicultural context. They integrated into the local culture as well as bringing with them

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[563] Porten, *Elephantine,* B21. (p.l).

a polytheistic form of Yahu-worship.[564] With the papyri as our only significant source of evidence, we can see the development of the community and their acceptance into the Egyptian garrison. They married Egyptians and also married and owned Egyptian slaves. The salutations and oaths sworn throughout the papyri refer to gods more often than God.

There does not seem to be any legitimate reason why this community would not have accepted multiple gods. The instance of Mibtahiah swearing an oath by Sati to her Egyptian husband is a prime example. There is very little probability that an Egyptian would have accepted a sworn oath knowing that it meant nothing to the participant. Of course we also must consider the orthodoxy of the community as a whole when judging the legitimacy of oaths. Temple listings also mention sacrifices to not just Yahu, but to gods from other areas of the Near East also, including Yahu and the Queen of Heaven, Yahu and Anath and Yahu and Anathbethel.

Elements of conflict were also significant, none more so than the evidence brought forth through the destruction of the temple and the imprisonment of members of the Yahu community. The destruction of the Temple was argued to have occurred at a time when general political unrest was rife throughout Egypt. Egyptian rebels and members of the priesthood were rising against the Persian rulers in Memphis and Thebes. The Yahu community

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[564] Not that this would have been a conscious decision, the community were more likely simply living according to the traditions that had been adapted to Elephantine. The cultic system in Judah before the Elephantine group emerged in Egypt was one which included the public worship of Queen of Heaven (Jer 44) and therefore was one which acknowledged other cults.

proved to be a point of offence for certain members of the Egyptian priesthood particularly with reference to the celebration of Passover. The Passover letter sheds light upon aspects of religious practice in Elephantine, but also is the most likely element to have caused antagonism with the Egyptians. The Passover could be seen to represent both a political and religious festival and Jerusalem sent word for the Elephantine community to celebrate it for at least seven days, causing obvious disruption for the Egyptians. It was certainly not a difficult task for the priests to convince the general Vidranga to attack the Yahu community to reduce their boundaries and land and to destroy their Temple.

It was with the destruction of the Temple that significant contact was made with Jerusalem and a relationship of sorts appears. This thesis is of the view that the political issues surrounding the development of land and the allocation of power under the Persian rulers led to the social conflict that ultimately caused the destruction of the temple. Other scholars such as Schäfer argues that the celebration of the Passover was the catalyst in the destruction of the temple. While I do agree that the Passover celebration exacerbated the situation, I do not believe that it was the deciding factor. The Passover letter indicates some contact before the destruction and certainly indicates that a common cultural heritage was accepted between Judah and Elephantine. It is uncertain how Jerusalem felt about the Yahu temple in Egypt especially after the Yahu community appealed to Jerusalem for help in rebuilding the Temple with no response. In a clever political move, the Yahu community then requested the aid of Jerusalem and Persian officials. Jerusalem answered by way of an oral message and was sure to assert power over Elephantine in

response, and although permission and funds were granted to rebuild the Temple of Elephantine, it was under the condition that no animal sacrifice was made there. This, ultimately changed Elephantine to a Yahu sanctuary and similar to the temples of Arad, Gerizim and Heliopolis, most likely lost its position as a fully operational temple. However, we cannot be sure if this ever happened as our sources for the community come to an abrupt end.

Chapter Seven

The Fate of the Community

Introduction

I wish to end this thesis with a chapter speculating the fate of the community. We have very little evidence over what actually occurred within the community after the temple was destroyed and all but one speculated reference that it was ever rebuilt. As for the Judean community there is very little mention of them in any sources after the persian period.

7.1 The Evidence

While we have a memorandum issued that permits the rebuilding of the temple or as it is now suggested in this letter, an altar-house for the Judeans of Elephantine, there is no further mention of it in the texts. The temple is mentioned indirectly in a letter dating from 404 BCE regarding property:

> On the (side) below and above windows are open there;
> east of it is the Temple of YHW the God and the road of the king is
> between them;
> west of it the house of Mibtahiah daughter of Mahseiah, which Mahseiah
> her father gave her, adjoins it.[565]

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[565] Porten, *Elephantine*, B32. (p.l).

After this we may only speculate what happened, perhaps the temple was never rebuilt and this statement is referring to what ever remains were left after the initial destruction. We could also speculate that this reference is in relation to the rebuilt temple but that similar to the Onias temple, the Yahu temple was closed down. As the Judean community of Elephantine dispersed, so too did any connection to Yahu worship in the area. Furthermore, we cannot conclude how long the Judean members remained in the garrison, if they left or if they abandoned Yahu cult practice. It may be suggesting that with the control of the Hellenes, the shift in development and trade shifting to Syene and the expansion of the borders, the role of Elephantine as a garrison was no longer required.

According to Rosenberg, the temple was indeed rebuilt and continued to exist until about 399 BCE.[566] According to the book of Ezra, after the destruction of the Temple, the people had set up a form of altar in order to offer burnt offerings until the time the Temple was rebuilt. (Ezra 3: 3) We know that the Elephantine community stopped offering sacrifices altogether with the destruction of their temple which made it a matter of urgency to rebuild. We may presume that the Judeans of Elephantine, ultimately, accepted the conditions, and the process of rebuilding began:

> ...If our lord [...} and the Temple of YHW the god of ours be rebuilt in Elephantine the fortress as formerly it was built- and sheep, ox and goats (as) burnt-offering are [n]ot made there but (only) incense (and) meal-offering [they offer there]- and should our lord a

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[566] Rosenberg, "The Jewish Temple," 10.

> statement mak[e about this, afterwards] we shall give to the house of our lord si[lver... and] barley a thousa[nd] ardabs.[567]

After this, we do not have conclusive evidence that the Temple was ever rebuilt. Yet it is more likely that some structure was erected after the initial destruction to prevent the Khnum priests from claiming the land and perhaps this temporary structure is what is mentioned here. It is unlikely that eight years after the destruction of the Temple, when the permission for reconstruction was finally approved, that no temporary structure was in place in the designated area. No documents have been found dated past 399 BCE and whether or not the garrison came to an end at this time or not, is unknown.

Conclusions of Chapter Seven

This chapter though full of speculation has developed a number of possible solutions as to the fate of the Judean community of Elephantine and the possibility that that the temple was rebuilt. According to Rosenberg and the archaeology this seems quite likely but that it ceased to function shortly after it was rebuilt. It seems possible that in destroying the temple the Khnum priesthood and indeed the Egyptian controlled local government succeeded in eradicating the entire Judean community. As I have mentioned previously, it is apparent when examining Elephantine research, that the boundaries and categories placed upon the Judean community have limited the way in which the Elephantine community has been examined. For example when referring to

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[567] Porten, *Elephantine*, B22, 151.

Elephantine in Egyptological studies there are many references to Khnum, Heqaib, trade and the developments and decline of the island, however when it is time to refer to the persian period Egyptologists generally make the point that the garrison was controlled by a Jewish troop that had their own temple to Yahu. On the other hand biblical scholars make specific point to avoid associating the Judean troop in Elephantine with Egypt and the Egyptians. In this thesis I have attempted to incorporate both points of view and reviewed the evidence apart from any preconditioned associations. Again as we have seen so often in this study had we not discovered these papyri we would have no description of this community, therefore it is ultimately impossible to find the information from the evidence concerning the fate of the community.

Conclusions

We have come a long way in our journey in elucidating the history of the community in Elephantine. The goal of this survey is to examine a social context for the Judean community in Elephantine by examining the emergence of the Judean community, their relationships and the destruction of the temple. Also, to examine the way in which the Judean community assimilated into the Egyptian and Persian culture for a period of time before the political pressure created rifts and lead to conflict.

It was important to begin this thesis by examining the history of the island. From the shrine of Heqaib to the temple of Khnum, Elephantine's role in Egypt's history has been one of cultic and cultural significance right from the formation of the state. We sought to establish a context for the Judean community within Egyptian culture. Through the examination of Egyptian religion and practice, we were able to establish the importance of the role played by Khnum for the communities on Elephantine. This survey examined cult practice and the importance of religion for the Egyptians. The god Khnum holds a significant place in the Egyptian pantheon and it may be speculated that the priests of Khnum used that position to reclaim land that had been taken from Khnum and allocated to the Yahu temple. As we have observed, the city-god was one of the most important aspects of cult worship for the Egyptians. Some scholars speculate that the violent actions on the part of the Khnum priesthood towards the Yahu temple signified the offence taken at the disrespect shown through the practice of Passover. By examining the role of the city-god and temple practice in Egypt, this thesis has aimed to show

that many idealogical clashes would have taken place throughout Egypt. There are many accounts of "foreign" temples in Egypt. Therefore, to say that Passover alone was the cause of conflict between the Judean community and the Egyptians is inaccurate. We have established through this examination that land was most likely taken from the temple of Khnum for the Yahu Temple and this in combination with political pressure, loss of dominance and the sacrificial lamb was enough to cause serious and devastating antagonism.

We have examined the possible dates for the emergence of this community into Egypt. This thesis is of the view that the Yahu community emerged from Judah during a time of social unrest. The community most likely emerged through the conscription of military personnel under Psamtik I. With an established Judean garrison in Elephantine, it may be speculated that more Judeans joined the community in Egypt as indicated by the account in Jeremiah.

In chapter three we have examined the difference between temples and shrines and their development in this period. We have examined the deities mentioned on Elephantine and Syene and their role in the development of the cultural context of the Yahu community. We may speculate that the cultic areas of Arad and Beer-Sheba were under the control and development of Jerusalem. This is evident when both sacrificial altars seem to have been abolished around the time of Hezekiah's reforms.[568] From the point of view of this thesis, Elephantine's independence from Jerusalem

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[568] Although the dates of both sanctuaries are highly disputed.

was not something unusual or something definitive. According to the papyri, Elephantine requested the dates of the Passover from Jerusalem, and even more surprisingly, Jerusalem responded by giving them the correct dates in order to allow them to sacrifice at the proper time. We may suggest that, initially at least, there was little or no antagonism between the Judeans and the Egyptians. It is possible that the social and cultic image presented to us by the Judean community reflected Judean culture as a whole at this time. We examined the type of lifestyle and cult worship that existed in Arad and Beer-Sheba and while the dating of these temples is debated, we may speculate that they, too, functioned like Elephantine. We also examined the temple of Gerizim in order to establish any possible connections between the two communities. Our study sought to examine further examples of garrison-temples dedicated to Yahweh outside of Jerusalem. This examination proved both difficult and fragmentary. While examining these other cultic centres, we established the developments of the temple structure to the sanctuary.

We have examined the origins of the temple on Elephantine. It is my view that the practice of installing a cult into a pre-existing temple structure or sacred area was most likely used in the case of the Yahu temple. We have debated that the antagonism felt between the Khnum priesthood and the Yahu community was not over religious separation but rather by the physical segregation of the Khnum complex with the arrival of the Judean troops. By examining the Xanthus inscription and comparing its request to the situation in Elephantine we can suggest that the Yahu temple was partly supported through private donations but that there was not a secure financial source from the wealthy citizens of the

community. Instead a combination of state funding and private donations kept the temple running. With the destruction of the temple it is most likely that the private donations ended and the state would not fund the rebuilding of the temple.

Chapter five set about examining the term, Judean and its meaning for a Judean community in the persian period. By examining various theories put forth by scholars in discussions for and against the terminology, chapter five has sought to conclude that "Judeans" during this period is a term linked more with nationality and culture than with religion. It may be speculated therefore, that while Jerusalem sought to achieve a strict monotheistic authority after the return from exile, this religious development was not reflected in those that worshipped in Elephantine. In fact many of the theories examined suggest that we cannot speak of a typically religious based Judaism until the Roman period.

This thesis is of the view that due to the rebellions of the Egyptians in Elephantine who fled their posts for life in Nubia, the Judean enclave were given a garrison to settle in and a place to build their temple. This study does not suggest that this group were Jewish. The Judean garrison were most definitely a syncretistic group that seemed to easily adopt a typical Near Eastern tradition. That is to say if they did not already express this type of view before they settled in Elephantine. The Yahu community, while possessing many Near Eastern qualities, still maintained elements of Judean heritage and culture. They continued to use Judean names, they worshipped Yahu and they practiced the Sabbath and the Passover.

Throughout this thesis we have examined the papyri in order to survey the methods of social trade and political standing for the Judean enclave. The examination of the Mibtahiah Archive has led us to conclusions about women in the Near East. Mibtahiah was indeed a prosperous woman owning three plots of land (as well has having at least three husbands in her lifetime). She provided us with evidence that women were entitled to both inheritance and minimally partial settlement in the cases of divorce. We saw through the examination of general Near Eastern women's rights that although officially, women outside Elephantine were not as successful.

The destruction of the Temple allowed us the opportunity to discern the relationship of Elephantine with Jerusalem, a much-documented subject. As most examinations of the papyri view the Yahu community as fundamentally Jewish, the study often becomes littered with expectations and presumptions of an affiliation with Jerusalem. This study has successfully examined the papyri in the light of the community's Judean heritage, but with the understanding that the community represented the wider Near Eastern culture. The requests sent to Jerusalem that remained unanswered were reinforced with a further letter, this time with a line at the end which suggested a copy was also sent to Delaiah son of Sanballat. This subtle political play received a response from both Delaiah and Judah and permitted the Yahu temple to be rebuilt on condition that certain burnt offerings cease. What significance this has on the diplomatic relationship between Jerusalem and Samaria at this time is significant and would require further investigation. However for this thesis, the request for aid sent to both parties indicates perhaps a desperation from the part

of the Yahu community to reach out to common temples for aid. Moreover it is more likely that the Elephantine community sought to stir a reaction from Jerusalem and so included the names of adversaries (to Jerusalem) in order to receive what they so desperately needed.

Chapter six examined that while dissatisfaction was rife between the Judean enclave and the Khnum priesthood, the overall situation in Elephantine seemed to be a settled one. The Yahu community remained integrated and assimilated with the Egyptians through marriage and religious based oaths. However, they also managed to maintain their own traits through, not just through religious practice, but through social elements as well. The Yahu community was stringent in the naming of their children after ancestors and continuing the line of names from their Judean past.

The conclusions of this survey of research has enabled us to view Elephantine in a new light, and structurally build a new image of the Yahu community in Egypt. The depth of research on Elephantine is testament to what analysis can do with such limited sources. We have speculated that the fate of the community was to decline with the fading importance of the island. This thesis has intended to combine in-depth Egyptological examination with Near Eastern and biblical studies view points in order to present the underlying reasons behind the destruction of the Yahu temple and the social context within which this Judean/Egyptian community existed.

Appendix:

Primary Literature

Selected Elephantine Papyri- Bezalel Porten, *The Elephantine Papyri in English*. (New York: Brill, 1996).

B1

Subject: Letter re Garments and Oil

Date: Late 6th - early 5th Century BCE

RECTO

Greetings, Temple of Bethel and Temple of the Queen of Heaven.

To my sister Nanaihem from your brother Nabusha.

I blessed you by Ptah that he may let me behold your face in peace.

Greetings, Bethelnathan. Greetings, *Nky* and Ashah and Tashai and Anathi and Ati and Re(ia).

And now, there reached me the tunic which you dispatched to me and I found it FRAYED completely and my heart was not attached to it. If I saw what You had in abundance, I would give it (in exchange) for 1 vessel for Ati. And now, the garment which you brought for me (to) Syene - it I am wearing. And now, let them bring us castor oil and we shall give it (in exchange) for oil.

And now, do not worry about us, me and Makkibanit; we worry about it. Take care of Bethelnathan from Habib.

And now, if I find a trustworthy man, I shall bring something to you. Greetings, Shabbethai son of Shug. Greetings, Pasai. **VERSO** Greetings, Eder son of Pasai. Greetings, Sheil son of Ptahertais and Ashah son of Petekhnum. Greetings, the whole NEIGHBORHOOD.

For your welfare I sent this letter.

Greetings (to) my father Psami from your servant Nabusha. Greetings, my mother Mama (ERASURE: *and*). Greetings, my brother Bitia and his household.

Greetings, Wahpre.

To (*sealing*) Nanaihem from Nabushezib son of Petekhnum.

(To) Syene.

B8

Subject: Letter RE Salary, Garments and Journey

Date: First quarter of 5th century BCE

RECTO

[Greetings], the [T]emple of YHW in Elephantine.

To my son Shelomam [fr]om your brother Osea.

(Blessings) of welfare and strength [I sent you.

And now], from the day that you went on that way, my heart is not good.

Likewise, your mother.

Now, blessed be you [by YHW the God that He may let] me [be] hold your face in peace.

Now, from the day that you went out from Egypt, allotment has not been g[iven *to us/you here.* And when] we complained to the OFFICIALS about your allotment here in Migdol, thus was said to us, saying: "About this, [*you complain* before] the scribes and it will be given to you."

Now, when you will come to (Lower) Egypt ...[... ...] your [al]lotment which has been withheld, all of it.

Now, how is the household doing and how was your leaving? If [...] will be [... w]ell/p]eace and there is no damage. Be a man. Do not WEEP until you come [...]

VERSO

[...]

(*confirming what you wrote)* in the letter of yours about a tunic and a garment, your tunic and your garment are made [... ...] for your mother I made. Do not be full of anger because I did not bring them to Memphis. When you will c[ome *there* I shall bring] them before you.

Now, I brought for me, I, a tunic of linen.

Now, [... ...]... and a garment until you come.

Your mother and the children, all (of them), are well.

Now, here we have been [...].

[On the *x* day] of Melcheir I wrote this letter when thus we heard, saying: "You will be released [...].

(*sealing*) To my brother Shelomam son of Osea, your brother Osea son of (*cord*) Pete[...].

B13

Subject: The Passover Letter

Date: 419/418 BCE

RECTO

[To my brothers Je]danaiah and his colleagues the Jewish T[roop], your brother Hanan[i]ah.

The welfare of my brothers may the gods [seek after at all times].

And now, this year, year 5 of Darius the king, from the king it has been sent to Arsa[mes...]

[...] ... Now, you, thus count four[teen days of Nisan *and on the 14th at twilight the Passover ob*]*serve* and from day 15 until day 21 of [Nisan *the festival of Unleavened Bread observe. Seven days unleavened bread eat.*

Now], be pure and take heed. Work [do] n[ot do] [*on day 15 and on day 21 Nisan. Any fermented drink*] do not drink. And anything of leaven do not [eat **VERSO** *and do not let it be seen in your houses* from day 14 of Nisan at] sunset until day 21 of Nisa[n at sunset. *And any leaven which you have in your houses* b]ring into your chambers and seal (them) up during [these] days.

[...] ...

[To] (*sealing*) my brothers Jedaniah and his colleagues the Jewish Troop, your brother Hananiah s[on of PN].

B14

Subject: Report of conflict and request for assistance

Date: late 5th century BCE

RECTO

To my lords Jedaniah, Mauziah, Uriah, and the Troop, [yo]ur servant [PN. The welfare of my lords may the gods, all (of them)], seek after at all times. It is well for us here.

Now, every day that [...] he complained to the investigators. One Zivaka, he complained to an investigator ...[...] we have since the Egyptians a bribe to them give. And from (the time) that [...] of the Egyptians before Arsames, but thievishly act.

Moreover, [...] the province of Thebes and thus say: Mazdayasna/ A Mazdean is an official of the province [...] we are afraid because we are fewer by 2.

Now, behold, they favoured [...]. Had we revealed our presence to Arsames to this, this(!) wou[ld] not [*have been done to us* ...] he will report our affairs before Arsames. Pisina pacifies us [... *So whatever*] you will find — honey, castor oil, string, rope, leather skins, BOARDS [... – *send us since*] **VERSO** they are full of anger at you.

Pasu son of Mannuki came to Memphis and ...[...] and the investigator. And he gave me silver, 12 staters and happy with it [*am I* ...] Hori gave me when they detained him because of the pitcher. Tiri... said... "[...] at the order of the king and they detain them. And the damage of Arsames and the compensation of Djeh[o...] and Hori whom they detained."

To (*sealing*) my lords Jaadaniah, Mauziah, y[our] se[rvant PN].

B15

Subject: Recommendation to aid two benefactors

Date: late 5th century BCE

RECTO

To my lords Jedaniah, Uriah and the priests of YHW the god, Mattan son of Jashobiah (and) Berechiah son of [...]; your servant Mauziah.

The welfare of [my] lords [may the God of Heaven seek after abundantly at all times and] in favour may you be before the God of Heaven.

And now when Vidranga the Troop Commander arrived at Abydos he imprisoned me on account of a dyer's stone which they found stolen in the hand of the merchants. Finally, Djeho and Hor, servants of Anani, intervened with Vidranga and Harnufi, with the protection of the God of Heaven until they rescued me.

Now, behold, they are coming there to you. You, look after them. Whatever desire and thing that Djeho shall seek from you — you, stand before them so that a bad thing they shall not find about you.

To you it is known that Khnum is against us since Hananiah has been in Egypt until now. And whatever you will do for Hor, for your[... y]ou are doing. Hor is a servant of Hananiah. You, lavish

from our houses VERSO goods. As much as your hand finds give him. It is not a loss for you. For that (reason) I send (word) to you. He said to me, "Send a letter ahead of me." [...] if there is much loss, there is backing for it in the house of Anani. Whatever you do of him shall not be hidden from Anani.

B16

Subject: Report of imprisonment of Judean leaders.

Date: Last decade of 5th century BCE

RECTO

[To my brother PN, your brother Islah.

It is well for me here]. May the gods seek after your welfare at all times. And now, [... ...] PN son of PN went to Syene and did/made ...[... ...

Behold, these are the names of the men wh]o were imprisoned in [Ele]phantine: Berechia, Hose[a, ...], Pakhnum.

Behold, this is the names of the women who were f[ound at the gate in Thebes and seized as p]risoners:

Rami wife of Hodo,

Esereshut wife of Hosea,

Pallul wife of Islah,

Reia [wife/daughter of PN],

Tubia daughter of Meshullam (and) Kavla her sister,

Greetings, your house and your children until the gods let [me] behold [your face in peace].

VERSO

[To (*sealing*) my brother PN son of] Gaddul, your broth[er] Islah son of Nathan.

B17

Subject: Draft petition for the reconstruction of the temple (?)

Date: Last decade of the 5th century BCE

RECTO

... *we grew/increased,* detachments of the Egyptians rebelled. We, our posts did not leave (ERASURE: and anything of) damage was not found in us.

In year 14 of Darius the [ki]ng, when our lord Arsames had gone to the king, this is the evil act which the priests of Khnub the god [di]d in Elephantine the fortress in agreement with Vidranga who was Chief here: They gave him silver and goods.

(AT LEAST THREE LINES MISSING)

Column 2

And now, that wall (stands) built in the midst of the fortress.

There is a well which is built with[in] the f[or]tress and water it does not lack to give the troop drink so that whenever they would be GARRISONED (there), in [th]at well the water they would drink. Those priests of Khnub, that well they stopped up.

If inquiry be made from the judges, police and hearers who are appointed in the province of Tshetres, it will be [*known*] to our lord in accordance with this which we say.

Moreover, we are separated ...

(CA 3 LINES MISSING)

VERSO

[...] which are in Elephantine [the] fo[rtress ... ...] we grew/ increased [... ...] was not found in [... ...] to bring meal-offer[ings ... ...] to make there for YHW [the] G[od ... ...]*herein* ... [... ...]but a BRAZIER [... ...] the FITTINGS they took (and) [made (them) their] own [...].

[I]f to our lord it is abundantly ... [... ...] we from/of the troop [...]

[If to] our lord it is good, may [an order] be issued [... ...] we.
If to [our] l[ord it is good, ...] they [*pro*]tect the things which [... ...] the [*Temp*]le of ours which they demolished to [*build* ...].

B19

Subject: Request for letter of recommendation (first draft)

Date: 25 November, 407 BCE

RECTO

To our lord Bagavahya governor of Judah, your servants Jedaniah and his colleagues the priests who are in Elephantine the fortress.
The welfare of our lord may the God of Heaven seek after abundantly at all times, and favour may He grant you before Darius the king and the princes more than now a thousand times, and long life may He give you, and happy and strong may you be at all times.
Now, your servant Jedaniah and his colleagues thus say:
In the month of Tammuz, year 14 of Darius the king, when Arsames had departed and gone to the king, the priests of Khnub who are in Elephantine the fortress, in agreement with Vidranga who was Chief here, (said), saying:
"The Temple of YHW the God which is in Elephantine the fortress let them remove from there."
Afterwards, that Vidranga, the wicked, a letter sent to Naphaina his son, who was Troop Commander in Syene the fortress, saying:
"The Temple which is in Elephantine the fortress let them demolish."
Afterwards, Naphaina led the Egyptians with the other troops. They came to the fortress of Elephantine with their implements, broke into that Temple, demolished it to the ground, and the pillars

of stone which were there — they smashed. Moreover, it happened (that the) gateways of stone, built of hewn stone, which were in that Temple, they demolished. And their standing doors, and the hinges of those doors, (of) bronze, and the roof of wood of cedar — all (of these) which, with the rest of the FITTINGS and other (things), which were there — all (of these) with fire they burned. But the basins of gold and silver and the (other) things which were in that Temple — all (of these) took and made their own.

And from the days of the king(s) of Egypt our fathers had built that Temple in Elephantine the fortress and when Cambyses entered Egypt — that Temple, built he found it. And the temples of the gods of Egypt, all (of them), they overthrew, but anything in that Temple one did not damage.

And when this had been done (to us), we with our wives and our children sackcloth were wearing and fasting and praying to YHW the Lord of Heaven who let us gloat over that Vidranga, the cur. They removed the fetter from his feet and all goods which he had acquired were lost. And all persons who sought evil for that temple, (all of them), we're killed and we gazed upon them.

Moreover, before this, at the time that this ev **VERSO** was done to us, a letter we sent (to) our lord, and to Jehohanan the High Priest and his colleagues that priests who are in Jerusalem, and to Ostanes brother of Anani and the nobles of the Jews. A letter they did not send us.

Moreover, from the month of Tammuz, year 14 of Darius the king and until this day, we, sackcloth are wearing and are fasting; the wives of ours as widow(s) are made; (with) oil (we) do not anoint (ourselves), and wine do not drink.

Moreover, from that (time) and until (this) day, year 17 of Darius the king, meal-offering and ince[n]se and burnt-offering they did not make in that Temple.

Now, your servants Jedaniah and his colleagues and the Jews, all (of them) citizens of Elephantine, thus say:

If to our lord it is good, take thought of that Temple to (re)build (it) since since they do not let us (re)build it. Regard your obligees and your friends who are here in Egypt. May a letter from you be sent to them about the Temple of YHW the God to (re)build it in Elephantine the fortress just as it had been built formerly.

And the meal-offering and the incense and the burnt-offering they will offer on the altar of YHW the God in your name and we shall pray for you at all times — we and our wives and our children and the Jews, all (of them) who are here. If thus they do until that Temple be (re)built, a merit you will have before YHW the God of Heaven more than a person who will offer him burnt-offerings and sacrifices (whose) worth is as the worth of silver, 1 thousand talents and about gold.

About this we have sent (and) informed (you).

Moreover, about all (th)ese things in a letters sent in our name to Delaiah and Shelemiah sons of Sanballat governor of Samaria.

Moreover, about this which was done to us Arsames did not know.

On the 20th of Marcheshvan, year 17 of Dariusthe king.

B20

Subject: Request for Letter of Recommendation (Second Draft)

Date: 25 of November, 407 BCE

RECTO

To [our] l[ord Bagavahya {governor of Judah}, your servants Jedania]h [*the*] *pri*[*est* and his colleagues the priests who are in Elephantine the fortress *and the Jews, all (of them).*

The welfare of our lord] may the God of Heav[en] seek after {abundantly} at all times, {and} favor may He g[ra]nt [you before Da]rius the king [and the princes more than now {a thousand times}, and] long {life} may He give you, and happy and strong may you be at all times.

Now, your ser[va]nt Jedaniah [and his colleagues *the priests and the Jews thus say:*

In the month of Tammuz], year 14 of Darius the king, when Arsames had departed and gone [to] the king, [*then* the priests of Khnub the god who are in Elephantine] the fortress *silver and goods gave to* Vidranga the Chief who was here say[ing:

"The Temple of YHW the God which is in Elephantine the fortress] let them remove from there."

Afterwards that Vidranga, the wicked, a letter sent to Na[phai]na his son, w[ho was Troop Commander in Syene the fortress, saying:

"The Temple] *of YHW the God* which is in Elephantine the fortress let them demolish."

Afterwards, *that* Naphaina led [the] Egypt[ians with the other troops. They came to the fortress of Elephantine with] their *weapons* broke into that Temple, demolished it to the ground, and [the] pillars of s[tone which were there — they smashed them. Moreover, it happened (that the) *great* gateways, built of hewn

stone, which were in that Temple, [they demolished. And their standing doors, and the hinges of] those [doors] (of) bronze, and the roof of *that temple, all (of it)* wood o[f] cedar, [which] with the r[est of the FITTINGS and other (things) which were there — all (of these) with *the* fire they burned. But the basins of gold and silver and the (other) t[h]ings w[hich were in hat Temple — all (of these) they took (and)] made [their own].

And from the day(s) of the kings of Egypt our fathers had built that Temple in Elephantine [the] fo[rtress and when Cambyses entered Egypt] that [Temple] built he found. And the temples of the god[s] of the Egyptians, [a]ll (of [them), they overthrew], but any[thing in that Temple] one [did not damage.

And when this] had been done (to us), we with our wives and our children sackcloth wear wearing, [and] fas[ting, and praying to YHW the Lord of heaven who] let us gloat over that Vidranga, the cur. They removed *his* fetters from his feet and a[ll goods which he had acquired were lost. And *every person* who] sought evil for that Temple, all (of them), were killed and we gazed upon them.

Moreover, [before this, at the time that this evil was done] to us, a letters *about this* we sent. *We sent* to our lord, ev[en to Jehohanan the High Priest and his colleagues the priests who are in Jerusalem], and to Ostanes the brother of Anani and the nobles of *Judah.* A let[t]er [they did not send us.

Moreover, from the month of Tammuz], year 14 of Darius the king and until this day we, sackclot[h are wearing and are fasting; the wives of ours as widow(s) are made], (with) oil (we) do not anoint(ourselves) and wine do not drink.

[Moreover, fr]om that *t[im]e* and until t[his day, year 17 of Darius the king], meal-offering, [and] incense, and burnt-offering they do not make in that Temple.

Now, [your servants Jedaniah and his colleagues *the priests of YHW*] and the Jews, all of them citizens of Elephantine, thus say:
If to our l[o]rd it it is good, take [thought of that Temple to (re)build it since they did not] let us (re)build it. Regard your obligees and your friends who are here [in Egypt. May a letter from you be sent to them] about the Temple of YHW the God to (re)build it in Elephantine the fortress just [as it had been formerly built.

And the meal-offering, {and} the incense] and the burnt-offerings *we* shall offer on the altar of YHW the God in your name and shall pr[ay for you at all times — we and our wives and our children] and the Jews, (all of them) who are here. If thus *you* do until that Temple be (re)bu[ilt, a merit you will have before YHW the God] **VERSO** of Heaven more than a person who will offer hum burnt-offering and sacrifices [(whose) worth is as the] worth [of] silver, one thousand talents [and about gold].
About [this, we have sent (and) informed *our lord.*

Moreover, all] the(se) things, (in) a letter in our name we sent to Delaiah and Shelemiah s[ons of Sanballat governor of Samaria.
Moreover, about this], all (of it) which was done to us, Arsames did not know.
On the 20th of Marcheshvan, year 14 [+3 (= 17) of Darius the king].

B21

Subject: Recommendation for Reconstruction of Temple

Date: Aft 407 BCE

Memorandum. What Bagavahya and Delaiah said to me. Memorandum. Saying, "Let it be for you in Egypt to say (ERASURE: bef)

(ERASURE: to me about) before Arsames about the Altar-house of the God of (ERASURE: Heav)

Heaven which in Elephantine the fortress built

was formerly before Cambyses (and)

which Vidranga, that wicked (man) demolished

in year 14 of Darius the King:

to (re)build it on its site as it was formerly

and the meal-offering and the incense they shall offer upon

that altar just as formerly was done'"

B22

Subject: Offer of Payment For Reconstruction of Temple (draft)

Date: After 407 BCE

RECTO

Your servants —

Jedaniah son of Gem[ariah] by name,

Mauzi son of Nathan by name,

Shemaiah son of Haggai by name,

Hosea son of Jathom by name,

Hosea son Nattum by name,

all (told) 5 persons, Syenians who in Elephantine the fortress are herdi[tary-property-hold]ers — thus say:

If our lord [...] and the Temple-of-YWH-the-God of ours be (re)built in Elephantine the fortress as former[ly] it was [bu]ilt — and sheep, ox, and goat (as) burnt-offering are [n]ot made there but (only) in census (and) meal-offering [*they offer there*] — and should our Lorca statement mak[e *about this afterwards*] we shall give to the house of our lord si[*lver* ... and] barley, thousa[nd] ardabs.

B23

Subject: Grant of a Built Wall

Date: 12 of September, 471 BCE

RECTO

On the 18th of Elul, that is day 28 of Pachons, year 15 of Xerxes the king, said Konaiah son if Zadok, an Aramean of Syene of the detachment of Varyazata, to Mahseiah son if Jenadiah, an Aramean of Syene of the detachment of Varyazata, saying:

I came to you and you gave me the gateway of the house of yours to build a wall there.

The wall is yours — (the wall) which adjoins the house of mine at its corner which is above. That wall shall adjoin the side of my house from the ground upwards, from the corner of my house which is above to the house of Zechariah.

Tomorrow or the next day, I shall not be able to restrain you from building upon that wall of yours.

If I restrain you, I shall give you silver, 5 karsh by the stone(-weight) of the king, pure silver,

and that wall is likewise (yours).

And if Konaiah die tomorrow or the next day, son or daughter, brother or sister, near or far, member of a detachment or town shall not be able to restrain Mahsah or a sonic is from building upon that wall of his.

Whoever shall restrain (one) of them shall give him the silver which is written above
and the wall is yours likewise and you have right to build upon it upwards.

And I, Konaiah, shall it be able to say to Mahsah, saying: "(ERASURE: Not) That gateway is not yours and you shall not go out into the street which is between us and between the house of Peftuanueit the boatman.

If I restrain you, I shall give you the silver which is written above and you have right to open that gateway and to go out into the street which is between us (and Peftuaneit).
Wrote Pelatiah son of Ahio this document at the instruction of Konaiah.

The witnesses herein:
(2nd hand) witness Mahsah son of Isaiah;
(3rd hand) witness Shatibarzana son of *'trly;*
(4th hand) witness Shemaiah son of Hosea;
(5th hand) witness Phrathanjana son of Artakarana;
(6th hand) witness Bagadata son of Nabukudurri;
(7th hand) *Ynbwly* son of Darga;
(8th hand) witness Baniteresh son of Wahpre;
(9th hand) witness Shillem son of Hoshaiah.

Document (*sealing*) of the wall which is built which Konaiah wrote for Mahsah.

B24

Subject: Withdrawal From Land

Date: 2 January, 464 BCE

RECTO

On the 18th of Kislev, that is d[ay 13 +]4 (= 17) of Thoth, year 21 (of Xerxes the king), the beginning of e reign when Artaxerxes the king sat on his throne,

Said Dargamana son of Khvarshaina, a Khwarezmian whose place is made in Elephantine the fortress of the detachment of Artabanu, to Mahseiah son of Jedaniah, a Jew who is in the fortress of Elephantine of the detachment of Varyazata, saying:

You swore to me by YHW the God in Elephantine the fortress, you and your wife and your son, all (told) about the land of mine on account of which I complained before Damidata and his colleagues the judges,

and they imposed upon you for me the oath to swear by YHW on account of that land, that it was not land of Dargamana, mine, behold I.

Moreover, behold the boundaries of that land which you swore to me on account of it:

my house, Dargamana is to the east, of it;

and the house of Konaiah son of Zadak, a Jew of the detachment of Atropharna, is to the west of it;

and the house of [Jeza]niah son of Uriah, a Jew of e detachment of Varyazata, is below it;

and the house of Espemet son of Peftuauneit, a boatman of the rough waters, is above it.

You swore to me by YHW

and satisfied my heart about that land.

I shall not be able to institute against you suit or process - I, or son of mine or daughter of mine about that land (against) you, or son of yours or daughter of yours, brother or sister of yours, near or far.

Whoever shall institute against you (suit) in my name that land shall give

You silver, 20, that is twenty, karsh by the stone (-weight)s of the king, silver 2 q(uarters) to the ten, and that land is likewise yours and you are withdrawn from any suit (in) which they shall complain against you on account of that land.

Wrote Itu son of Abah this document in Syene the fortress at the instruction of Dargamana.

(2nd hand) Witness Hosea son of Petekhnum;

(3rd hand) witness Gaddul son of Igdal;

(4th hand) witness Gemariah son of Ahio;

(5th hand) Meshullam son of Hosea;

(6th hand) Sinkishir son of Nabusumiskun;

(7th hand) witness Hadadnuri the Babylonian;

(8th hand) witness Gedaliah son of Ananiah;

(9th hand) witness Aryaicha son of Arvastahmara.

VERSO

Document (*sealing*) of withdrawal which [Dargama]na son of Khvarshaina

wrote for Mahseiah.

B25

Subject: Bequest of House To Daughter

Date: 1 December, 459 BCE

RECTO

Length, 13 and a handbreadth.

On the 21st of Kislev, that is day 20+1 (= 21) of Mesore, year 6 of Artaxerxes the king,

said Mahseiah son of Jedaniah, a Jew, hereditary-property-holder in Elephantine the fortress of the detachment of Haumadata, to lady Mibtahiah his daughter, saying:

I gave you in my lifetime and at my death

a house, land, of mine.

Its measurements was:

Its length from below to above, 13 cubits and 1 handbreadth;

(its) width from east to west, 11 cubits by the measuring rod.

Its boundaries:

above it the house of Dargamana son of Khvarshaina adjoins;

below it is the house of Konaiah son of Zadak;

east of it is the house of Jezan son of Uriah your husband and

the house of Zecharaiah son of Nathan;

west of it is the house of Espemet son of Peftuauneit, a boatman of the rough waters.

That house, land - I gave it to you in my lifetime and at my death.

You have right to it from this day and forever and (so do) your children

after you. To whomever you love you may give (it). I have no other son or daughter, brother or sister, or woman or other man (who) has right to that land but you and your children forever.

Whoever shall bring against you suit or process, (against) you, or son or
daughter of yours, or man of yours, in the name of that land which I gave
you or shall complain against you (to) prefect or judge shall give you or your
children silver, 10, that is ten, karsh by the stone (-weight)s of the king, silver 2 q(uarters) to the ten, without suit or without process, and the house is your house likewise and your children's after you.
And they shall not be able to take out against you a new or old document in
my name about that land to give (it) to another man. That document which they shall take out against you will be false. I did not write it and it shall not be taken in suit while document is in your hand.
And moreover, I, Mahseiah, tomorrow or the next day, shall not reclaim (it)
from you to give to others.
That land is yours. Build and/or give (it) to whomever you love.
If tomorrow or the next day I bring against you suit or process and say:
"I did not give (it) to you,"
I shall give you silver, 10 karsh by the stone (-weight)s of the king, silver 2, q(uarters) to the ten, without suit and without process,
and the house is your house likewise.
And should I go into a suit, I shall not prevail while this document is in your hand.
Moreover, there is a document of withdrawal which Dargamana son of Khvarshaina, the Khwarezmian, wrote for me about that

land when he brought (suit) about it before the judges and an oath was imposed (upon me) for him and I swore to him that it was mine, and he wrote a document of withdrawal and gave (it) to me. That document - I gave it to you. You, hold-it-as-heir. If tomorrow or the next day Dargamana or son of his bring (suit) about that house, that document take out and in accordance with it make suit with him.

Wrote Attarshuri son of Nabuzeribni this document in Syene the fortress at the instruction of Mahseiah.

The witnesses herein:

(2nd hand) witness Gemariah son of Mahseiah;

(3rd hand) witness Zexhariah son of Nathan;

(4th hand) witness Hosea son of Pelaliah;

(5th hand) witness Zechariah son of Meshullam;

(6th hand) witness Maaziah son of Malchiah;

(7th hand) witness Shemaiah son of Jedaniah;

(8th hand) witness Jedaniah son of Mahseiah;

VERSO (9th hand) witness Nathan son of Ananiah;

(10th hand) Zaccur son of Zephaniah;

(11th hand) witness Hosea son of Deuiah/Reuiah;

(12th hand) witness Mahsah son of Isaiah;

(13th hand) witness Hosea son of Igdal.

Document (*sealing*) of a house [which] Mahsah son of Jedaniah wrote for

Mibtah daughter of Mahsah.

B26

Subject: Grant of Usufruct To Son-In-Law

Date: 1 December, 459 BCE

RECTO

On the 20[+1] (=21st) of [Kis]le[v, that is da]y [20+]1 (= 21) of [Mes]ore, year

6 of Artaxerxes the king,

said Mahseiah son of Jedaniah a Je[w o]f Elephantine of the detachment of Haumadata, to Jezaniah son of Uriah in the same detachment, saying: There is land of a house of mine, west of the house of yours, which I gave to Mibtahiah my daughter, your wife, and a document I wrote for her concerning it.

The measurements of that house:

13 cubits and a handbreadth by 11 by the measuring rod.

Now, I, Mahseiah, said to you: That land built (up) and ENRICH IT (OR: PREPARE IN IT HER HOUSE) and dwell herein with your wife.

But that house - you do not have right to sell it or give (it) lovingly to others but it is your children from Mibtahiah my daughter (who) have right to it after you (both).

If tomorrow or the next day that land you built (up and) afterwards my daughter hate you and go out from you, she does not have right to take it and give it to others but it is your children from Mibtahiah (who) have right to it in exchange for the work which you did.

If she shall reclaim from you, half the house [s]h[al]l be hers to take but the other half - you have right to it in exchange for **VERSO** the building (improvement)s which you have built into that house. And furthermore, that half - it is your children from Mibtahiah (who) have right to it after you.

If tomorrow or the next day I bring against you suit or process and say:
"I did not give you that land to build (up) and I did not write for you this document,"
I shall give you silver, 10 karsh by the stone(-weight)s of the king, silver 2 q(uarters) to the ten, without suit or without process.
Wrote Attarshuri son of Nabuzeribni this document in Syene the fortress at the instruction of Mahseiah.

The witnesses herein:
(2nd hand) witness Hosea son of Pelaliah;
(3rd hand) witness Zechariah son of Nathan;
(4th hand) witness Gemariah son of Mahseiah;
(5th hand) witness Zecharaiah son of Meshullam;
(6th hand) witness Maaziah son of Malchiah;
(7th hand) witness Shemaiah son of Jedaniah;
(8th hand) witness Jedaniah son of Mahseiah;
(9th hand) witness Nathan son of Ananiah;
(10th hand) witness Zaccur son of Zephaniah;
(11th hand) witness Hosea so[n of] Deuiah/Reuiah;
(12 hand) witness Mahsah son of Isaiah;
(13th hand) witness Hose[a son of I]gdal.

B30

Subject: Withdrawal From Goods

Date: 26 August, 440 BCE

RECTO

On the 14th day of Ab, that is day 19 of Pachons, year 25 of Artaxerxes the king, said Peu son of Pahe/Pakhoi, a builder of

Syene the fortress, to Mibtahiah daughter of Mahseiah son of Jedaniah, an Aramean of Syene of the detachment of Varyazata,
about the suit which we made in Syene, a LITIGATION about silver and grain and clothing and bronze and iron - all goods and property - and (the) document.
Then, the oath came upon you and you swore to me about them by Sati the goddess.
And my heart was satisfied with that oath which you made to me about those goods
and I withdrew from you from this day and forever.
I shall not be able to institute against you suit or process - (against) you or son or daughter of yours - in the name of those goods about which you swore to me.
If I institute against you suit or process, or a son of mine or a daughter of mine institute against you (suit) in the name of that oath, I, Peu - or my children - shall give to Mi(b)tahiah silver, 5 karsh by the stone (-weight)s of the king, without suit or without process,
and I am withdrawn from every suit or process.
Wrote Peteese son of Nabunathan this document in Syene the fortress at the instruction of Peu son of Pahe/Pakhoi.

The witnesses herein:
(2nd hand) Naburai son of Nabunathan;
(3rd hand) Luhi son of Mannuki;
(4th hand) Ausnahar son of Duma/Ruma;
(5th hand) Naburai son of Vishtana.

VERSO

Document (*sealing*) of withdrawal which Peu wrote for Miptah[ia]*h*.

B31

Subject: Withdrawal From Goods

Date: 2-30 September, 420 BCE

RECTO

In the month of Elul, that is Pay[ni], year 4 of Darius the king,
then in Elephantine the fortress,
said Menahem and Ananiah, all (told) 2, sons of Meshullam son of Shelomam, Jews of Elephantine the fortress of the detachment of Iddinnabu, to Jedaniah and Mahseiah, all (told) 2, sons of Eshor son of Djeho from Mibtahiah daughter of Mahseiah, Jews of the same detachment, saying:
We brought suit of *np* against you before Ramnadaina, Chief (and) Vidranga, the Troop Commander, saying:
"There [are] the(se) goods- woolen and linen garments, bronze and iron utensils, wooden and palm-leaf utensils, grain and other (things).
Saying:
"Goods Eshor your father took from Shelomam son of Azariah.
Moreover, he said,
'There are (these goods) which on depos[it] were placed.'
But he took hereditary possession and did not return (them) to him."
And consequently, we brought (suit) against you.
Afterwards, you were interrogated
And you, Jedaniah and Mahseiah sons of Eshor, satisfied our heart in (regard to) those goods and our heart was satisfied herein rom this d[a]y forever.
I, Menahem and Ananiah, we are withdrawn from you from this day forever.

We shall no[t] be able - we, or our sons or our daughters, or our brothers, or a man who is ours, near (or far), or member of (a detachment or) town - they shall not be able to br[i]ng against [yo]u, you, Jedaniah and Mahseiah, suit or

process. And they shall not be able to bring (suit) against your children or your brothers, or a man of yours in the [na]me of (the) goods and silver, grain and other (things) of Shelomam son of Azariah.

And if we, or our sons or our daughters, or a man who is ours, or the sons of Shelomam son of Azariah, bring (suit) against you or bring (suit) against your sons or your daughters, or a man who is yours, then whoever shall bring su[it] about it shall give you, or your sons or whomever they bring (suit) against, the penalty of silver, ten karsh by the stone(-weight)s of the king, silver 2 q(uarters) to 1 karsh,

and he is likewise withdrawn from these goods about which we brought (suit), without suit or without process.

Wrote Mauziah son of Nathan this document at the instruction of Menahem

and Ananiah, all (told) 2, sons of Meshullam son of Shelomam.

(2nd hand) Menahem son of Gaddul;

(3rd hand) Gaddul son of Berechiah;

(4th hand) Menahem son of Azariah;

(5th hand) witness Hodaviah son of Zaccur son of Oshaiah.

VERSO

Document (*sealing*) of [withdrawal] which Menahem and Ananiah, all (told) 2,

sons of Menahem son of Shelomam wrote [for Jedania]h and Mahseiah, all

(told) 2, sons of Eshor son of Djebo.

B32

Subject: Withdrawal From House

Date: 16 December, 416 BCE

RECTO

On the 3rd of Kislev, year 8, that is day 12 of Thoth, year 9 of Darius the king,

then in Elephantine the fortress,

Said Jedaniah son of Hoshaiah son of Uriah, an Aramean of Elephantine the fortress, before Vidranga the Troop Commander of Syene, to Jedaniah son of Nathan and Mahseiah son of Nathan his brother, their mother (being) Mibtahiah daughter of Mahseiah son of Jedaniah, (said) before Vidranga the Troop Commander of Syene, saying:

I withdrew from you

from the house of Jezaniah son of Uriah.

Behold its boundaries:

above (it) the house of Hosea son of Uriah adjoins it;

below it the house of Hazzul son of Zecharaiah adjoins it;

On the (side) below and above windows are open there;

east of it is the Temple of YHW the God and the road of the king is between them;

west of it the house of Mibtahiah daughter of Mahseiah, which Mahseiah

her father gave her, adjoins it.

That house, whose boundaries are written above, is yours - you, Jedaniah

and Mahseiah, all (told) 2, sons of Nathan - forever and your children's after

you and to whomever you love you may give it.

I shall not be able - I, Jedaniah or my children, or woman or man of mine

- I shall not be able to institute against you suit or process. Moreover, we shall not be able to bring (suit) against son or daughter of yours, brother or sister, woman or man of yours, or a person to whose you sell that house or to whom in love you give (it) - (to bring [suit]) in my name, I, Jedaniah, or in the name of children or woman or man of mine. And if I, Jedaniah, bring (suit) bring (suit) against you, or son of mine or daughter, woman or man bring (suit) against you in my name or in the name of my children - excluding son or daughter of Jezaniah son of Uriah - or they bring (suit) against son or daughter, or woman or man of yours, or persons to whom you sell or to whom in love you give that house, then whoever shall bring suit against you shall give you the penalty of silver, ten karsh, that is 10 karsh, silver 2 q(uarters) to 1 karsh, by the stone(-weight)s of the king.

and the house is likewise yours forever and your children's after you - excluding children of Jezan son of Uriah - without suit.

Wrote Mauziah son of Nathan at the instruction of Jedaniah son of Hosea.

And the witnesses herein:

(2nd hand) Menahem son of Shallum;

(3rd hand) Mahseiah son of Jedaniah;

(4th hand) Menahem son of Gaddul son of Baadiah;

(5th hand) Jedaniah son of Meshullam;

(6th hand) Islah son of Gaddul;

(7th hand) Gaddul son of Berechiah;

(8th hand) Jezaniah son of Penuliah;

(9th hand) Ahio son of Nathan.

VERSO

Document (*sealing*) of withdrawal which Jedaniah son of Hosea wrote about

the house of Jezaniah son of Uriah for Jedaniah son of Nathan and Mahseiah his brother, all (told) 2.

B34

Subject: Loan of Silver

Date: 13 December 456 BCE

RECTO

On the 7th of Kislev, that is day 4 of the month of Thoth, year 9 of Artaxerxes the king, said Jehohen daughter of Meshullach, a lady of Elephantine the fortress, to Meshullam son of Zaccur, a Jew of Elephantine the fortress, saying:

You gave me a loan of silver, 4, that is four, shekels by the stone(-weight)s of the king, at its interest.

It will increase upon me (at the rate of) silver, 2 hallurs for 1 shekel for 1 month. (That) was silver, 8 hallurs for one month. If the interest (be)come the capital, the interest shall increase like the capital, one like one. And if a second year come and I have not paid you your silver and its interest, which is written in this document, you Meshullam or your children have right to take for yourself any security which you will see (belonging) to me - house of bricks, silver or gold, bronze or iron, slave or handmaiden, barley, emmer - or any food which you will find (belonging) to me until you have full (payment) of your silver and its interest.

And I shall not be able to say to you

"I paid you your silver and its interest"

while this document is in your hand. And I shall not be able to complain
against you before prefect or judge, saying:
"You took from me a security"
while this document is in your hand.
And if I die and have not paid you this silver and interest it will be my children (who) shall pay you for this silver and its interest.
And if they not pay this silver and its interest, you, Meshullam, have right to take for yourself any food or security which you will find (belonging) to them until you have full (payment) of your silver and its interest. And they shall not be able to complain against you before prefect or judge while this document is in your hand. Moreover, should they go into a suit, they shall not prevail while this document is in your hand.
Wrote Nathan son of Anani this document at the instruction of Jehohen.
And the witnesses herein:
(2nd hand) witness Osea son of Galgul:
(3rd) hand) Hodaviah son of Gedaliah;
(4th hand) Ahio son of Pelatiah;
(5th hand) Agur son of Ahio.

VERSO

Document (*sealing*) of silver of the debt which Jehohen daughter of Meshul-
lach wrote for Meshullam son of Zaccur.

B36

Subject: Document of Wifehood

Date: 9 August 449 BCE

RECTO

[On] the 18th of [A]b, [that is day 30] of the month of Pharmouthi, year 16 of Artaxer(xes) the king,

said Ananiah son of Azariah, a servitor of YHW the God who is in Elephantine the fortress, to Meshullam son of Zaccur, an Aramean of Syene of the detachment of Varyazata, saying:

I came to you (and asked you) to give me Tamet by name, who is your handmaiden, for wifehood.

She is my wife and I am her husband from this day and forever.

Tamet brought into me in her hand:

1 garment of wool, worth (in) silver 7 shekels;

1 mirror, worth (in) silver 7 (and a) half hallurs;

1 PAIR of sandals;

(ERASURE: 1 handful of) one-half handful of balsam oil;

6 handfuls of castor oil;

1 TRAY

All the silver and the value of the goods: (in) silver {silver}, 7 shekels, 7 (and a) half hallurs.

Tomorrow or (the) next day, should Anani stand up in an assembly and say:

"I hated Tamet my wife,"

silver of hatre(d) is on his head. He shall give Tamet silver, 7 shekels and all that she brought in her hand she shall take out, from straw to string.

Tomorrow or (the) next day, should Tamet stand up and say:

"I hated my husband Anani,"

silver of ha(t)red is on her head. She shall give to Anani silver, 7 shekels and all that she brought in her hand she shall take out, from straw to string.

Tomorrow or (the) next day, should Ananiah die (ERASURE: [It is Me-

shullam son of Zaccur (who)] has right to half), it is Tamet (who) has right to all goods which will be between Anani and Tamet.

Tomorrow or (the) next day, should Tamet die, it is Anani, he, (who) has right (ERASURE: to half) to all goods which will be between (ERASURE: between) Tamet and between Anani.

And I, Meshullam, tomorrow or (the) next day, shall not be able to reclaim Pilti from under your heart unless you expel his mother Tamet.

Wrote Nathan son of Ananiah this document.

And the witnesses herein:

witness Nathan son of Gaddul;

Menahem son of Zaccur;

Gemariah son of Mahseiah.

VERSO

Tamet brought in to Anani in her hand silver, 1 karsh, 5 shekels.

Document (*sealing*) of wi[fehood which Anani wrote for Ta]met.

B37

Subject: Sale of Abandoned Property

Date: 14 September, 437 BCE

RECTO

On the 7th of Elul, that is day 9 of the month of Payni, year 28 of Artaxerxes the king, said Bagazushta son of Bazu, a Caspian of the detachment of Namasava, and lady *W bl* daughter of Shatibara, a Caspian of Syene of the detachment of Namasava, all (told) 1 (ERASURE: 1) lady to Ananiah son of Azariah, a servitor to YHW the God, saying:

We sold and gave you

the house

of *'pwly* son of Misdaya

which is in Elephantine the fortress,

whose walls are standing but (who)se courtyard is (barren) land and not built;

and windows are in it but beams it does not contain.

We sold it to you

and you gave us its payment (in) silver, 1 karsh, 4 (ERASURE: [+]1) shekels by the stone(-weight)s of the king, silver zuz to 1 karsh,

and our heart was satisfied with the payment which you gave us.

And behold these are the boundaries of that house which we sold you:

above it is the house of Shatibara;

below it is the town of Khnum the god and the street of the king is between them;

east of it the treasury of the king adjoins it;

to the west is the Temple of YHW and the street of the king is between them.

I, Bagazushta and *'wbl*, all (told) 2, we sold and gave (it) to you
and withdrew from it from this day and forever.
You, Ananiah son of Azariah, have right to house and (so do) your children
after you and anyone whomever you desire to give (it) to.
We shall not be able to institute against you suit or process in the name of this house which we sold and gave you and from which we withdrew. And
(ERASURE : he) we shall not be able to institute (suit) against son of yours or daughter or anyone whom you desire to give (it) to.
If we institute against you suit or process or institute (suit) against son in/with (SCRIBAL ERROR FOR: or) daughter of yours or anyone whom you desire to give (it) to, we shall give you silver, 20 karsh, silver zuz to the ten,
and the house is yours likewise and your children's after you and anyone whom you desire to give (it) to.
And son or daughter of ours shall not be able to institute against you suit or process in the name of this house whose boundaries are written above.
If they institute (suit) against you or institute (suit) against son or daughter of yours, they shall give you silver, 20 karsh, silver zuz to the 10, and the house is yours likewise and your children's after you. And if another person institute (suit) against you or institute (suit) against son or daughter of yours, we shall stand up and cleanse (it) and give (it) to you within 30 days. And if we do not cleanse (it), we or our children shall give you a house in the likeness of your house and its measurements, unless a son of *'pwly* or a daughter and we not be able to cleanse (it. Then) we shall give you your silver, 1 karsh, 4 shekels and (the value of) the building

(improvements) which you will have built in it and all the FITTINGS that will have gone into that house.

Haggai son of Shemaiah wrote at the instruction of Bagazushta and *'bl*.

And witnesses herein:

(2nd hand) Mithradata son of Mithrayazna;

(3rd hand) witness *Hyh/Hyrw* son of *'trly*, a Caspian;

(4th hand) house of *Vyzbl*, a Caspian;

(5th hand) witness Aisaka son of Zamaspa.

VERSO

Document (*sealing)* of a house which Bagazushta and *Ybl* sold to Ananiah, a

servitor to YHW in Elephantine.

B38

Subject: Bequest of Apartment to Wife

Date: 30 October, 434 BCE

RECTO

On the 25th of Tishri, that is day 25 of the month of Epeiph, year 31 of Artaxerxes the king,

said Ananiah son of Azariah, a servitor of YHW the God of Elephantine the

fortress, to lady Tamet his wife saying:

I gave you

half of the large room, and its chamber, of the house

which I bought from *'wbyl* daughter of Shatibara and from Bagazushta,

Caspians of Elephantine the fortress.

I, Ananiah, gave it to you in love.

Yours it is from this day forever and your children's, whom you bore me, after you.

And behold the measurements of that house which I, Ananiah, gave you, Tamet, from half of the large room and its chamber was:
from above to below, 11 cubits by the measuring rod;
in width, cubits from east to west, 7 cubits 1 h(and) by the measuring rod;
IN AREA, 81 cubits.
Built is (the) lower house, new, containing beams and windows.
And behold this is the boundaries of that house which I gave you:
above it the portion of mine, I, Ananiah, adjoins it;
below it is the Temple of YHW the God and the street of the king is between them;
east of it is the town of Khnum the god and the street of the king is between them;
west of it the house of Shatibara, a Caspian, adjoins it.
This share of the house who(se) measurements are written and whose boun-
daries (are written above) - I, Ananiah, gave it to you in love.
I shall not be able, I, Ananiah, to bring (suit) against you on account of it.
Moreover, son of mine or daughter, brother or sister shall not be able to institute (suit) against you in the name of that house.
And if I institute suit against you in the name of that house, I shall be obligated and I shall give you silver, 5 karsh, that is five, by the stone(- weight)s of the king, silver 2 q(uarters) to 1 karsh, without suit. And if another person institute against you suit, he shall give you silver, 20 karsh, and the house likewise is yours.
But if you die at the age of 100 years, it is my children whom you bore me
(that) have the right to it after your death. And moreover, if I, Anani, die at the age of 100 years, it is Pilti and Jehoishma, all

(told) 2, my children, (who) have right to my other portion, I, Anani. Another person - my mother or my father,
brother or sister, or another man - shall not have right to the whole house,
but (only) my children whom you bore me.
And the person who shall reclaim my house after my death from Pilti and Jehoishma
shall give them silver, 10 karsh by the stone(-weight)s of the king, silver 2 q(uarters) to 1 karsh,
and my house is theirs likewise, without suit.
Wrote Mauziah son of Nathan at the instruction of Ananiah son of Azariah the servitor.
And the witnesses herein:
(1st hand) Gemariah son of Mahseiah;
(2nd hand) Hoshaiah son of Jathom;
(3rd hand) Mithrasarab the Magian;
(4th hand) Tata the Magian.

VERSO

(*sealing*) Document of a house which Ananiah wrote for Tamet his wife.

B43

Subject: Bequest in Contemplation of Death

Date: 25 November, 404 BCE

RECTO

On the 24th of Marcheshvan, that is day 29 of Mesore, year 1 of Artaxerxes the king, then said Anani son of Azariah, a servitor to YHW the god in Elephantine the
fortress, to lady Jeshoisma his daughter, saying:

I thought of you in my lifetime and gave you
part of my house which I bought for money and its value I gave.
I gave it to you -
that is the southern room, east of the large room of mine, and half the courtyard that is half the *hyt* (as it is called in) Egyptian; and half the stairway which is the *peras*(-sized) STORAGE AREA.
This is the measurements of the house which I gave Jeshoisma my daughter in love; this is the measurements of the house which I, Anani, gave Jeshoisma my daughter:
from below to above, and one-half cubits by the measuring rod;
and from east to west, 7 cubits by the measuring rod;
IN AREA , 98 cubits by the measuring rod and half the courtyard
and half the stairway and the STORAGE AREA its half.
And behold the boundaries of the house which I, Anani, gave Jeshoisma my daughter: east of it is the protecting wall which the Egyptians built, that is the way of the god;
above it the house of the shrine of the god adjoins it wall to wall;
below it is the wall of the stairway and the house of Hor son of Peteese, a gardener of Khnum the god, adjoins that stairway;
west of it is the wall of the large room.
Yours it is; you have right to it.
This house measurements and boundaries are written in this document - I, Anani son of Azariah, gave it to you in love.
Renovated is (the) lower house. It contains beams and 3 windows are in it. One door is in it, shutting and opening.
Moreover, you have right to the *hy*, that is the courtyard, right to prop up (what is) knocked down and its beam in the half of yours.
Moreover, you have right to go out through the gateway of the *hyt*, that is the courtyard. Moreover, you have right to half the stairway to ascend and descend. This {this} house whose boundaries and

measurements are written and whose words are written in document - I, Anani, gave it to Jeshoisma my daughter at my death in love. Just as she supported me while I was old of days - I was unable (to use) my hands and she supported me - also I gave (it) to her at my death. Son of mine or daughter of mine, partner-in-chattel who is mine or partner-in-land or guarantor who is mine shall not be able to bring against you suit or process, or bring (suit) against your children after you, or complain against you to prefect or lord, or against your children after you. Whoever shall bring against you suit or process or complain against you or
against your children shall give you a penalty of silver, 30 karsh by the stone(- weight)s of the king, pure silver,
and you, Jeshoisma, likewise have right and your children have right after you and you may give (it) to whomever you love.
Moreover, they shall not be able to take out against you a new or old
document, but is this document which I made for you (that) is valid.
Wrote Haggai son of Shemaiah this document in Elephantine the fortress at the instruction of Anani son of Azariah, the servitor of YHW the God.
The witnesses herein:
(2nd hand) witness Hoshaiah son of Jathom;
(3rd hand) Zaccur son of Shillem;
(4th hand) witness Nathan son of Jehour;
(5th hand) witness Hoshaiah son of Nathan;
(6th hand) witness Meshullem son of Mauzi;
(7th hand) Pilti son of Jaush (ERASURE: s[on] of]);
(8th hand) Jashobiah son of Jedaniah;
(9th hand) witness Haggai son of Mardu.

VERSO

Document (*sealing*) of a house which Anani son of Azariah the servitor wrote

for Jeshoisma his daughter.

B50

Subject: Obligation To Make Judicial Declaration

Date: 18 January, 401 BCE

RECTO

On the 18th of Phaophi, year 4 of Artaxerxes [the] king

in [Elephan]tine the fortress,

said Malchiah son of Jashobiah, an Aramean, hereditary-property-holder in

Elephantine [the] for[tress of the detach]ment of Nabukudu[rri], [to Ar]tafrada son of A[*rvastah*]mara of the detachme[nt of] Marya, [say]ing:

[Y]ou com[plained against me] in *Np*.

"Yo[u brok]e [into my bouse] by force and you assaulted my wife and

goods by force you took out from my house and you took (and) made (them) your own."

[I] was interrogated and the call to (the) gods came upon me in the suit. I, Malchiah, shall call for you to Herembethel the god among

4 [OF]FICIALS/ /[-

SUP]PORTERS ... [...].

(BOTTOM MISSING)

B52

Subject: Oath Text

Date: Late 5th Century BCE

RECTO

[The] oa[th whic]ch Menahem son of Shallum son of Ho[shaiah/daviah]
swore/will-swear to Meshullam son of Nathan by H[*erem*] *the* [*god*] in/by the
place of prostration an by AnathYHW.
And[he swore/will-swear to him], saying:
The she-ass which is in the hand of Pa[mise son of Pa]met which you are bringing (suit) against me a[bout it], [saying]:
"Half of it is mine,"
entitled [am] I [to] bestow it on Pamise. Your father did not give me a he-ass in exchange for half of it and [he did no]t [gi]ve me silver or the value of silver in exchange for h[alf of it].

PALIMPSEST (PERPENDICULAR TO TEXT ALONG RIGHT MARGIN):

]by the work of your hands ... all silver and goods which will be found after my death.

Selected Egyptian Papyri and Ostraca from Elephantine and Syene- Bezalel Porten and Ada Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt Vol. 1-4* (Indiana: Hebrew University Press, 1968-1999)

A2.3

Subject: Letter re 6 1/2 Shekels, Wool, Oil, Beams, etc.

Date: Late 6th — early 5th century BCE

RECTO

Greetings to the Temple of Banit in Syene.

To my sister Tashi from your brother Makkibanit.

I have blessed you by Ptah that he may show me your face in peace.

Nabusha is well here. Do not be concerned about him. I am not making him leave Memphis.

Greetings to Psami (and) Yake. Greetings to Nanaihem.

And now behold, an AMOUNT of money that is in my hand(s) I gave as *wpdt* to Banitsar son of Tabi sister of Nabusha - silver, 6 sh(ekels) and a zuz, silver zuz (to the ten). And now, send (word) to Tabi that she dispatch to you wool from part of the silver 1 sh(ekel's worth).

And now, if you be given a lamb and its wool, send (word) to me; and if you be given the wool owed by Makki, send (word) to me. And if you not be given (anything), send (word) to me and I will complain against them here.

And now, I bought olive oil and a tunic for Yake, and also 1 pretty vessel for you, and also perfumed oil for the Temple of Banit. But I have not yet found a man to dispatch them to you.

And now, dispatch 5 handfuls of castor oil. And do give grain to Wahpre; and let him buy beams and leave (them) in his house. Do not stand in his way; every beam which he finds he should buy.

And if the shepherd (O R : Reia) gives you wool, send (word) to me.

Greetings to Tetosiri; take care of her. I have sent this letter (to inquire) about your welfare.

VERSO

To Tashi from Makkibanit son of Psami. To be delivered (to) Syene.

(ADDRESS)

A2.4

Subject: Letter re Skins, Beams, and Oil

Date: Late 6th - early 5th Century BCE

RECTO

Greetings to the Temple of Banit in Syene.

To my lord Psami, your servant Makkibanit.

I have blessed you by Ptah that he may show me your face in peace.

Greetings to my mother Mama. Greetings to my brother Bitia and his household and his children. Greetings to Reia. Do not be concerned about Harudj. As much as I am able, I am not leaving him alone. And now, I am doing (=providing) for him.

To my brother Wahpre from your brother Makkibanit.

I have sent you (blessings) of welfare and life.

And now, if the *srhlsh* has reached you, send (word) to me through Akbah son of Wahpre. And now, whatever you desire, send (word) to me.

Dispatch to me skins enough for 1 leather garment. **VERSO** and do not take barley from Tashi and give (it in exchange) for beams and leave with Mama every beam which you find.

I have bought striped cloth and scented oil to bring to you but have not found a man to bring (them) to you. And now, let them bring me 5 handfuls of castor oil.

Do not be concerned about me; I am concerned about you. I have sent this letter (ERASURE: to) (to inquire) about your welfare.

To my father Psami from Makkibanit son of Psami. To be delivered (to) Syene. (ADDRESS)

A2.5

Subject: Letter re Vessels, Oil, and a Snake Bite

Date: Late 6th - early 5th Century BCE

RECTO

To my sisters Taru and Tabi from your brother Nabusha and Makkibanit.

We have blessed you by Ptah that he may show me your face in peace.

And now, you should no that no thing is brought to us from Syene. And moreover, since I left Syene, Shail has not dispatched me a letter or anything (else). And now, let them bring us a chest and *bynbn*. And if you can bring us castor oil let em bring (it) through Harudj son of Bethelshezib who is coming to bring down ... to *Bmrsry*.

And what is this that you have not sent a letter **VERSO** to me?! And as for me, a snake had bit me and I was dying and you did not send (to inquire) if I was alive or if I was dead. I have sent this letter (to inquire) about your welfare.

To Taru from Nabusha son of Petekhnum. To be delivered (to) Luxor. (ADDRESS)

A3.3

Subject: Letter re Salary, Garments and Journey

Date: Second quarter of 5th century BCE

RECTO

[Greetings] to the [T]emple of YHW in Elephantine.

To my son Shelomam [fr]om your brother in Osea.

[I send you (greetings)] of welfare and strength.

[And now,]from the day that you went on that way, my heart is not glad. Likewise, your mother.

Now, blessed be you[by YHW the God that He may sh]ow me your face in peace.

Now, from the day that you left (Lower) Egypt, salary has not been g[iven *to us/you here.*

And when]we complained to the OFFICIALS about your salary here in Migdol, we were told thus, saying: "About this [*you must complain* before]the scribes and it will be given to you".

Now, when you come to (Lower) Egypt ...[... ...] all your [s]alary which has been withheld.

Now, how is the household doing and how was your leaving? If [...] will be [...w]ell and there is no injury. Be a man. Do not WEEP until you come [....]

VERSO

[...]

(*concerning what you wrote*) in your letter about a tunic and a garment, your tunic and your garment are made [... ...] for your mother I made. Do not be full of anger because I did not bring them to Memphis. When you will c[ome *there* I shall bring] them ahead of you.

Now, I bought for me myself 1 linen tunic.

Now, [... ...] ... and a garment until you come.

Your mother and all the children are well.

Now, here we have been [...].

[On the ...] of Mehir I wrote this letter when I heard thus saying: "You will be released [...]".

To my brother Shelomam son of Osea, your brother Osea son of Pete[...]. (ADDRESS)

A3.8

Subject: Letter re 10 karsh, borrowing money and selling houses, bringing objects to Memphis

date: Last quarter of 5th century BCE

RECTO

[To my brother Hagg]us, your brother H[ose]a.

I send yo[u] abundant (greetings) of welfare and strength.

[And now,... ... *Pi*]sina the judge and in his [*hand*] we paid silver 10 karsh, and 1 karsh [.... ...] in ... hands which ... f[o]und ... silver, 5 karsh.

Now, [...] with you that he [g]ive you silver, 5 ka[r]sh. And write for them (= the creditors) a document about them (= the money). And if they will not [*give*] *all* [*the*] silver at interest or will ot [*gi*]ve 9it) to you, saying, "Give a pledge" (i.e. Zaccur and *Ašn*) will not sell them, seek a man who will buy the [b]ig house of Hodo and give it to him for the silver that is fixed upon it.

And when this letter [shall] reach you, do not stand (still). Come down to Memphis immediately. If you find silver, [come] down immediately, and if you do not find (any), still come down immediately.

Go to Betheltaden and he will give you [1] ... tunic, 1 *w'sh*-garment, 1 woolen ... tunic, 1 *p'qs*, 1 ... dyed *srhls*, [1] *pl*[....]*qt'*[...] *pd*, 7 *k*, 1

worn tunic. And when he gives them to you, send (word) to me. And if he does not give them to you, [s]end (word) to me.

Now, if you come down alone to Memphis, do not leave *Ašn* .... Give him grain so [*that*] you will not ....

VERSO

When the Jews will bring them before .... [*was*] abandoned .... their words. Do not stand (still). Come down immediately and immediately. Bring me down 1 tunic in your hand .... to bring to me.

Written on 27 Tybi.

To [my] bro[ther] Haggus [s]on of Hodo, your brother Ho[sea son of *Nathan*].

(ADDRESS)

A4.2

Subject: Report of Conflict and Request for Assistance

Date: Late 5th Century BCE

RECTO

To my lords Jedaniah, Mauziah, Uriah and the garrison, [yi]ur servant [PN....

May all the gods] seek after [the welfare of my lords] at all times. It is well with us here.

Now, every day that [...] he complained to the investigators. One Zivaka, he complained to an investigator ...[...] we have since the Egyptians give them a bribe. And from the (time that) [...] of the Egyptians before Arsames, but act thievishly.

Moreover,[...] the province of Thebes and say thus: Mazdayasna/ A Mazdean is an official of the province[...] we are afraid because we are fewer than 2.

Now, behold, they favored[....] Had we revealed our presence to Arsames formerly, this(!) wou[ld] not [*have happened to us* ...] he will report our affairs before Arsames. Pisina pacifies us (LIT. our presence)[.... *So whatever*] you find - honey, castor oil, string, rope, leather skins, boards[... - *send us since*] **VERSO**

they are full of anger at you.

Pasu son of Mannuki came to Memphis and ...[...] and the investigator. And he gave me silver, 12 staters and [*I am*] happy with it.[...] Hori gave me when they detained him because of the pitcher. Tiri... said: "[...] at the order of the king and they detain him. And the damage of Artames and the compensation of Seh[a ...] and Hori whom they detained".

On the 6th day of Phaophi the letters arrived[...] we will do the thing.

To my lords Jedaniah, Mauziah, y[our] se[rvant ....] (ADDRESS)

A4.3

Subject: Recommendation to Aid Two Benefactors

Date: Late 5th century BCE

RECTO

To my lords Jedaniah, Uriah and the priests of YHW the God, Mattan son of Jashobiah (and) Berechiah son of [...] ; your servant Mauziah.

[May the God of Heaven seek after] the welfare of [my] lords [abundantly at all times and] may you be in favor before the God of Heaven.

And now, when Vidranga the garrison commander arrived at Abydos he imprisoned me because of 1 dyer's stone which they found stolen in the hand of the merchants. Finally, Seha and Hor,

servants of Anani, intervened with Vidranga and Hornufi, with the help of the God of Heaven, until they rescued me.

Now, behold they are coming there to you. You, look after them. You, stand by them (in) whatever wish and thing that Seha shall seek of you, so that they shall not find a bad thing about you. It is known to you that Khnum is against us since Hananiah has been in Egypt until now. And whatever you do for Hor [y]ou are doing for [...]. Hor is a servant of Hananiah. You,

lavish from our houses **VERSO** goods. Give him as much as you can. It is not a loss for you. For that (reason) I am sending (word) to you. He said to me, "Send a letter ahead of me". [...] if there is a great loss, there is backing for it in the house of Anani.

Whatever you do for him shall not be hidden from Anani.

To my lords Jedaniah, Uriah and the priests, and the Jews; your ser[vant] Mauziah son of Nathan. (ADDRESS)

A4.4

Subject: Report of Imprisonment of Jewish Leaders

Date: Late Decade of 5th Century BCE

RECTO

[To my brier PN, your brother Islah.

It is well with me here.] may God/the gods seek after your welfare at all times.

And now, [... ...] PN son of PN went to Syene and did/made ... [... ...

Behold, these are the names of the men wh]o were imprisoned in [Ele]phantine: Berechia, Hose[a, ...] Pakhnum.

Behold, these are the names of the women who were f[ound] at the gate in Thebes and were seized as p]risoners: Rami wife of Hodo,

Isireshwet wife of Hosea, Pallul wife of Islah, Reia [wife/daughter of PN,] Tabla daughter of Meshullam (and) Kavla her sister.

Behold, (these are) the names of the men who were found at the gate in Thebes and were seized [as prisoners:] Jedaniah son of Gemariah, Hosea son of Jathom, Hosea son of Nattum (and) Haggai his brother, Ahio son of Micai[ah. *They left*] the houses into which they had broken in at Elephantine and they surely returned to their owners the goods which they took.

However, they mentioned to [their] owners [silver,] 120 karsh. May another decree no more be (delivered) to them here.

Greetings to your house and your children until God/the gods show me [your face in peace.]

[To my brother PN son of] Gaddul, your broth[er] Islah son of Nathan. (ADDRESS)

A5.5

Subject: Fragmentary Letter re Rebellion, hereditary Lease

Date: Late 5th Century BCE

RECTO

(BEGINNING MISSING)

You [...

Now, PN] officer of Thebes says thus: [...] the troop [...] to kill [...] Moreover, killed [...] they/them [... ...] (MISSING) they said [... and] they came to *Pnh* to [....] their detachment and the chiefs of their centuries [...] even now this fortress [*this*] tro[*op* ....]

VERSO

Now, thus says Mithradates: [...] you judges say to P[N ...] let him give to the rebels.

D1.7

Subject: Writing Exercise?

Date: Second half of 5th Century BCE

RECTO

1. [...] ... (The) gods, all; your welfare; greetings[...]
2. [...]your welfare. ... greetings[...]

VERSO (ORIGINAl TEXT)

[To ... PN ... PN, your ... PN] son of Idri son of Shabbethai.

D2.3

Subject: Beginning of Contract Fragment

Date: Ca. February 14-April 21, 473-465 BCE

RECTO

[On the *x* (day)] of Adar, that is [day *z* of Athyr/Choiak, year *b* of Xerxes the king, said *Zadak* son of] Kon, an Aramean of[Syene of the detachment of PN, to PN son of PN, a Jew/an Aramean of Elephantine/Syene] of the [de]tachment of Ar[tabanu ...]

D2.5

Subject: Fragment of Document of Withdrawal

Date: Ca. Middle of 5th Century BCE

RECTO

[On the *x* (day) of *y* (Babylonian month), that is day *z* of (Egyptian) month *a*, year *b* of Artaxerxes the king,

said PN son of PN, a Jew/an Aramean of Elephantine/Syene of the detachment of PN to ...]*h* daughter of *Gemariah*, a Je[wess of Elephantine of the detachment of PN ...]the detachment ...[?]

VERSO

Document of withdrawal [which PN son of PN wrote for PN daughter of *Gemariah*].

D7.2

Subject: Request for Salt

Date: First Quarter of 5th Century BCE

CONCAVE

[Gr]eetings, Ahutab.

Now, dispatch to me a little salt this day. And if there isn't salt in the house buy from the boats of grain (OR: *ferryboats*) which are in Elephantine.

Lo, I don't have **CONVEX** any salt to out in the flour.

D7.6

Subject: Instructions re Children and Request re Passover

Date: First Quarter of 5th Century BCE

CONCAVE

To Hoshaiah.

Your welfare (may DN seek after at all times).

Now, singly (= alone) look after the children until Ahutab comes. Do not entrust them to others. **CONVEX** If their bread is ground, knead for them 1 *qab* before their mother comes.

Send (word) to me when you make (= observe) the Passover.

Do send greetings (= news) of the child.

D7.10

Subject: Sarcastic Request for Provisions

Date: First Quarter of 5th Century BCE

CONCAVE

Greetings, Jedaniah.

Now, we're I put [in] the stocks/confinement, then it would be commanded. "[Let] them [*not*] withhold from him bread and water."

[*Now*, ... let] Ahutab [take] out for (= supply) me. But, [... d]ay of the Sabbath (OR: ... captured)(LINES MISSING?)

CONVEX Now, if they did not capture Nathan there, let him go out to me and I will go grind[...] [...]...

Moreover, dispatch to me...[...] and I shall write[...] [...]and do not[...].

(LINES MISSING)

D7.16

Subject: Instructions re Legumes and Barley, etc

Date: First Quarter of 5th Century BCE

CONCAVE

Greetings, Islah.

Now, behold, vegetables I shall dispatch tomorrow. Meet the boat tomorrow on Sabbath, lest, if they get lost, by the life of YHW, if not (= surely) yo[ur] life I shall take. Do not rely on Meshullemeth and on Shemaiah.

Now, exchange for me (= send in return) barley. And seek 1 (= someone) and I shall ... (with) them vegetables (OR: and I will set them up in *ql*).

Now, by the life of YHH, if not(,) on your life

CONVEX ... on account of *tqbh*. That which you dispatched instead of *hmy* to/for ... I/you dispatched it.

If Meshullemeth is not concerned about me, you, what will you say?!

You will see my face (in peace) and I shall see your face (in peace).

D7.18

Subject: Instructions re Tunic

Date: First Quarter of 5th Century BCE

CONCAVE

Regard my tunic which I left at the house (= building) of the house of YHH. Say to (= tell) Uriah [that] he *should drop it off* at Salluah('s)

D7.21

Subject: Request for Garment

Date: First Quarter of 5th Century BCE

CONCAVE

To my lord Micaiah, your servant Giddel.

(Blessings of) welfare and life I sent to you. I blessed you by YHH and Khnm.

Now, send me the garment CONVEX which is upon you (= which you owe/wear) so that I/he may sew it.

(to inquire) about your welfare I sent (this) letter.

D7.24

Subject: Instructions re Passover

Date: First Quarter of 5th Century BCE

CONCAVE

Now, lo, this I sent you this letter by the boat of *Pmhn*, saying: "I shall enter Syene this day."

Now, lo, on account of the Sukkeins/sharp implements [...]...this day. If you can d[o (OR: pas[sover]) ...]...on the Passover then stand w[ith (= by) ...](just) as I would have you stand with [...]...,and his vessels examine [...]*ask* **CONVEX** [...]... You/I have to him/her [... *if*] you can do (OR: pass over) [...].

Now, regard *what* (OR: we 2 saw) [...*P*]*mhn* son of *snd*, saying: "[*What is the*]epistle which Mic[*aiah*] sent you?" Lo, the word (OR: matter) of a document (OR: scribe) it is which Rauk sent to me and I sent to him to explain (OR: translate) for me the word (OR: matter).

Moreover, I sent to him to show the order to Hosea.

D7.28

Subject: Instructions re Salt and Sabbath

Date: First Quarter of 5th Century BCE

CONVEX

Greetings, Nathan.

Now, regard ... a(rdab) 1, salt in your hand. And from/whoever[...] sh(ekel) 1, q(uarter) 1 - a bundle (OR: to be locked up) ... On the Sabbath. (REST ILLEGIBLE)

D7.35

Subject: Request for Salt and Dispatch of Fish

Date: First Quarterof 5th Century BCE

CONCAVE

[To my *brother* ...]iah.

Your welfare may YHW of [*Hosts* see]k after at all times.

Now, when [the ...] of Wahpre son of [PN ...]..., dispatch to me [...]... *ysh* and salt [...]... CONVEX until (=before) the Sabbath day.

[*Now, I dispatched to you*] in the hand of (= with) Meshullam 3 fish and[...] in the hand of (= with) Baadi 3 lar[ge ones ...] and I gave him ...[...] cut[...] 1 sm[all ...].

D7.48

Subject: Fragmentary Letter re Bread, *et al.*

Date: First Quarter of 5th Century BCE

CONCAVE

Dispatch to me ... that day 2. Dispatch to me a little bread this day.

And now, bring (OR: they brought) to me on *the Sabbath*

CONVEX ... to/for ... *bad* ... you sent, saying: "[Let them] send me the instruction *this* day."

(To inquire) about your welfare I sent [*this letter*].

Selected Egyptian Inscriptions- Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature. A Book of Readings. vols 1-4* (London, 1973-1980)

1. **Statue Inscription of Neferibre-Nofer**

"... Neferibre- Nofer, to whom the Two Lands recount their hearts, and repeat to him all their thought; [[who pleases]] king Nferibre (Psamtik II) by doing that which is his desire, when he commands to protect their holy places, beautifying the Two Lands____ ..., ... He built the temple of the Lord of eternity erecting a pyramidion in Mehenet of Sais in work _____ fine limestone of Ayan; obelisks of Elephantine granite, houses for the first time for Neit; a (portable) barque shrine of fine gold, inlaid with every splendid costly stone... ..

2. **A Victory Stela of King Psamtik II**

(From Shellal)

(1)Year 3, 2d month of summer, day 10 under the majesty of Horus: Menekhib; King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Two Ladies: Mighty-of-arm; Gold-Horus who graces the Two Lands: Neferibre; Son of Re, of his body: Psamtik ever-living, beloved of Khnum, lord of the cataract region, of Satis, Lady of Yebu (Elephantine), of Anukis, presiding over Nubia. Good god, effective, effective of counsel; (3) valiant king, successful in deeds; strong-of-arm who smites the nine bows.

His majesty was roaming the marshes at lake Neferibre, circling its inundated land, traversing its two islands, viewing the sycamores of god's land on its mud bank, his heart eager (5) to see the

goodness (or, beauty), like the Great God traversing the primeval water. Then one came to tell his majesty:

"The troops your majesty sent to Nubia have reached the hill-country of Pnubs. It id a land lacking a battlefield, a place lacking horses. (7) The Nubians of every hill-country rose up against him, their hearts full of rage against him. His attack took place and it was misery for the rebels. His majesty has done a fighter's work. Then the battle was joined the rebels turned their backs. The arrows did not stray from piercing them. (9) The hand did not let loose. One waded in their blood as water. Not one bound pair escaped of the 4,200 captives. A successful deed has been done!"

Then the heart of his majesty was happy beyond anything. His majesty presented (11) a great sacrifice of oxen and shorthorns to all the gods of Upper and Lower Egypt, and an offering to the gods of the palace in the palace chapel. May he be given all life, stability, dominion, all health and happiness like Re forever!

3. **The Famine Stela**

(On Sehal Island)

(1) Year 18 of Horus: Neterkhet, the King of Upper and Lower Egypt: Neterkhet; Two Ladies, Neterkhet; Gold-Horus: Djoser; under the count, Prince, Governor of the domains of the South, Chief of the Nubians in Yebu (Elephantine), Mesir. There was brought to him this royal decree. To let you know:

I was in mourning on my throne,
Those of the palace were in grief,
My heart was in great affliction,
Because Hapy had failed to come in time
In a period of seven years.

Grain was scant,
Kernels were dried up,
Scarce was every kind of food.
Every man robbed (3) his twin,
Those who entered did not go.
Children cried,
Youngsters fell,
The hearts of the old were grieving;
Legs drawn up, they hugged the ground,
Their arms clasped about them.
Courtiers were needy,
Temples were shut,
Shrines covered with dust,
Everyone was in distress.

I directed my heart to turn to the past,
I consulted one of the staff of the Ibis,
The chief lector-priest of Imhotep,
Son of Ptah South-of-his-wall:
"In which place is Hapy born?
Which is the town of the Sinuous one?
Which god dwells there?
That he might join with (5) me."

He stood: "I shall go to Mansion-of-the-Net,
It is designed to support a man in his deeds;
I shall enter the House of Life,
Unroll the Souls of Re,
I shall be guided by them."

He departed, he returned to me quickly,
He let me know the flow of Hapy,
[His shores] and all the things they contain.
He disclosed to me he hidden wonders,
To which the ancestors had made their way,
And no king had equalled them since.
He said to me:
"There is a town in the midst of the deep,
Surrounded be Hapy, (7) Yebu (Elephantine) by name;
It is first of the first,
First nome to Wawet,
Earthly elevation, celestial hill,
Seat of Re when he prepares
To give life to every face.
Its temple's name is 'Joy-of-life',
'Twin Caverns' is the water's name,
They are the breasts that nourish all.

It is the house of sleep of Hapy,
He grows young in it in [his time],
[It is the place whence] he brings the flood:
Bounding up he copulates,
As man copulates with woman,
Renewing his manhood with joy;
Coursing twenty-eight cubits high,
He passes Sema-behdet (9) at seven.
Khnum is the god [who rules] there,
[He is enthroned above the deep],
His sandals resting on the flood;
He holds the door bolt in his hand,

Opens the gate as he wishes.

He is eternal there as Shu,

Bounty-giver, Lord-of-fields,

So his name is called.

He has reckoned the land of the South and the North,

To give parts to every god:

It is he who governs barley, [emmer],

Fowl and fish and all one lives on.

Cord and scribal board are there,

The pole is there with its beam

... ...

(11) His temple opens southeastward,

Re rises in its face every day;

Its water rages on its south for an iter,

A wall against the Nubians each day.

There is a mountain massif in its eastern region,

With precious stones and quarry stones of all kinds,

All the things sought for building temples

In Egypt, South and North,

And stalls for sacred animals,

And palaces for kings,

All statues too that stand in temples and in shrines.

"Their gathered products are set before the face of Khnum and around him; likewise (13) tall plants and flowers of all kinds that exist between Yebu (Elephantine) and Senmut, and are there on the east and the west.

"There is in the midst of the river- covered by water as its annual flood- a place of relaxation for every man who works the stones on its two sides.

"There is in the river, before this town of Yebu, a central elevation of difficult body which is called grf-3bw.

"Learn the names of the gods and goddesses of the temple of Khnum: Satis, Anukis, Hapy, Shu, Geb, Nut, Osiris, Horus, Isis, Nephthys.

"Learn the names of (15) the stones that are there, lying in the borderland: those that are in the east and the west, those [on the shores] of Yebu's canal, those in Yebu, those in the east and west, and those in the river: _____ in the east____ in the west_____ in the west and in the river.

"The names of the precious stones of the quarries that are in the upper region- some among them at a distance of four__ are: gold, silver, copper, iron, lapis lazuli, turquoise, red jasper, emerald. In addition _____(17) green eye paint, black eye paint, carnelian and ochre are within this township."

When I heard what was there my heart was guided. Having heard of the flood <I> opened the wrapped books. <I> made a purification; <I> conducted a procession o the hidden ones; <I> made a complete offering of bread, beer, oxen, and fowl, and all good things for the gods and goddesses in Yebu whose names had been pronounced.

As I slept in peace, I found the god standing before me. <I> propitiated him by adoring him and praying to him. He revealed himself to me with kindly face; he said:

"I am Khnum, your maker!
My arms are around you,
To steady your body,
To (19) safeguard your limbs.
I bestow on you stones upon stones,

[That were not found] before,
Of which no work was made,
For building temples,
Rebuilding ruins,
Inlaying statues' eyes.

For I am the master who makes,
I am he who made himself,
Exalted Nun, who first came forth,
Hapy who hurries at will;
Fashioner of everybody,
Guide of each man in his hour,
Tatenen, father of the gods,
Great Shu, high in heaven!

The shrine I dwell in has two lips,
When I open up the well
I know Hapy hugs the field,
A hug that fills each nose with life,
(21) For when hugged the field is reborn!
I shall make Hapy gush for you,
No year of lack and want anywhere,
Plants will grow weighed down by their fruit;
With Renutet ordering all,
All things are supplied in millions!
I shall let your people fill up,
They shall grasp together with you!
Gone will be the hunger years,
Ended the dearth in their bins.
Egypt's people will come striding,

Shores will shine in the excellent flood,

Hearts will be happier than ever before!"

I awoke with speeding heart. Freed of fatigue I made (23) this decree on behalf of my father Khnum. A royal offering to Khnum, lord of the cataract region and chief of Nubia:

In return for what you have done for me, I offer you Manu as western border, Bakhu as eastern border, from Yebu to Kemsat, being twelve __ on the east and west, consisting of fields and pastures, of the river, and of every place in these miles.

All tenants who cultivated the fields, and the vivifiers who irrigate the shores and all the new lands that are in these miles, their harvests shall be taken to your granary, in addition to (25) your share which is in Yebu.

All fishermen, all hunters, who catch fish and trap fish and trap birds and all kinds of game, and all who trap lions in the desert- I exact from them one-tenth of the take of all of these, and all the young animals born of the females in these miles [in their totality].

One shall give the branded animals for all burnt offerings and daily sacrifices; and one shall give one-tenth of gold, ivory, ebony, carob wood, ochre, carnelian, ___-plants, ____-plants, all kinds of timber, (being) all the things brought by the Nubians of Khent-hen-nefer <to> Egypt, and (by) every man (27) who comes with arrears from them.

No officials are to issue orders in these places or take anything from them, for everything is to be protected for your sanctuary

I grant you this domain with (its) stones and good soil. No person there - - - - - - anything from it. But the scribes that belong

to you and the overseers of the South shall dwell there as accountants, listing everything that the __-workers, and the smiths and the master craftsmen, and the goldsmiths, and the ..., (29) and the Nubians and the crew of Apiru, and all the corvée labour who fashion the stones, shall give of gold, silver, copper, lead, baskets of ... firewood, the things that every man who works with them shall give as dues, namely one-tenth of all of these. And there shall be given one-tenth of the precious stones and quarrying stones that are brought from the mountain side, being the stones of the east.

And there shall be an overseer who measures quantities of gold, silver, copper, and genuine precious stones, the things which the sculptors shall assign to the gold house, (31) <to> fashion the sacred images and to refit the statues that were damaged, and any implements lacking there. Everything shall be placed in the storehouse until one fashions anew, when on knows everything that is lacking in your temple, so that it shall be as it was in the beginning.

Engrave this decree on a stela of the sanctuary in writing, for it happened as said, (and) on a tablet, so that the divine writings shall be on them in the temple twice. He who spits (on it) deceitfully shall be given over to punishment.

The overseers of the priests and the chief of all the temple personnel shall make my name abide in the temple of Khnum-Re, lord of Yebu, ever mighty.

4. **Morning Hymn to Khnum (Esna)**

Awakenings of Khnum say:

Wake well in peace, wake well in peace,

Khnum-Amun, the ancient,
Issued from Nun,
In peace, awake peaceably!

Wake, lord of the fields,
Great Khnum,
Who makes his domain in the meadow,
In peace, awake peaceably!

Wake lord of gods and men,
Lord of the war cry,
In peace, awake peaceably!

Wake, mighty planner,
Great power in Egypt,
In peace, awake peaceably!

Wake, lord of life,
Wooer of women,
To whom come gods and men as he bids,
In peace, awake peaceably!

Wake, ram great of majesty,
Tall-plumed, sharp-horned,
In peace, awake peaceably!

Wake, great lion,
Slayer of rebels,
In peace, awake peaceably!

Wake, crocodile king,
Mighty victor,
Who conquers as he wishes,
In peace, awake peaceably
Wake, veiled-faced one,
Who shuts his eyes to his foes,
As he bears arms,
In peace, awake, peaceably!

Wake, leader of herdsmen,
Who grasps the stick,
Smites his attacker,
In peace, awake peaceably!

Wake, great crocodile who says,
"Each of you shall slay his fellows"
In peace, awake peaceably!

Wake, Shu, strong-armed,
His father's champion,
Slayer of rebels
In peace, awake peaceably!

Wake, fighting ram who chases foes,
Herdsman of his followers,
In peace awake peaceably!

Wake, multiform one,
Who changes shape at will,
In peace, awake peaceably!

Wake, Khnum who fashions as he wishes,

Who sets every man in his place!

5. **The Great Hymn to Khnum**

Part one:

Another hymn to Khnum-Re,

God of the potter's wheel,

Who settled the land by his handiwork;

Who joins in secret,

Who builds soundly,

Who nourishes the nestlings by the breath of his mouth;

Who drenches the land with Nun,

While round sea and great ocean surround him.

He has fashioned gods and men,

He has formed flocks and herds;

He made birds as well as fishes,

He created bulls, engendered cows.

He (8) knotted the flow of blood to the bones,

Formed in his workshop as his handiwork,

So the breath of life is in everything,

Blood bound with semen in the bone,

To knit the bones from the start.

He makes women give birth when the womb is ready,

So as to open - - - as he wishes;

He soothes suffering by his will,

Relieves throats, lets everyone breath,
To give life to the young in the womb.

He made hair sprout and tresses grow,
Fastened the skin over the limbs;
He built the skull, formed the cheeks.
To furnish shape to the image,
He opened the eyes, hollowed the ears,
He made the body inhale air;
(10) He formed the mouth for eating,
Made the gorge for swallowing.
He also formed the tongue to speak,
The jaws to open, the gullet to drink,
The throat to swallow and spit,
The spine to give support,
The testicles to move,
The arm to act with vigour,
The rear to perform its task.

The gullet to devour,
Hands and their fingers to do their work,
The heart to lead.
The loins to support the phallus
In the act of begetting.
The frontal organs to consume things,
The rear to aerate the entrails,
Likewise to sit at ease,
And sustain the entrails at night.
The male member to beget,
The womb to conceive,

And increase generations in Egypt,
The bladder (12) to make water,
The virile member to eject
When it swells between the thighs.
The shins to step,
The legs to tread,
Their bones doing their task,
By the will of his heart.

Part Two

Formed all on his potter's wheel,
Their speech differs in each region,
And clashes with that of Egypt.
He created precious things in their lands,
That they might bear their products abroad,
For the lord of the wheel is their father too,
Tatenen who made all that is on their soil,
They produce their supplies- thus the people of Ibhat-
To nourish themselves and their children.
As his mouth spat out they were born straightaway,
Without pause henceforth the wheel turns (14) every day.

All your creatures give you thanks,
You are Ptah-Tatenen, creator of creators,
Who in Iunyt brought forth all that is.
He feeds the chick in the nest in its time,
He makes its mother eject it in time,
He made mankind, created gods,
He fashioned flocks and herds.

He made birds, fishes, and reptiles all,
By his will Nun's fishes leap from the caverns,
To feed men and gods in his time.
He made plants in the field,
He dotted the shores with flowers;
He made fruit trees bear their fruit,
To fill the needs of men and gods.
(16) He opened seams in the bellies of the mountains,
He made the quarries spew out their stones.

Part Three

In "First-of-towns" he is Ba-of-Re,
Fashioning people throughout this land;
At Iunyt he is Ba-of-Shu,
Modelling people of his wheel.
He has fashioned men, engendered gods,
They live by that which comes from him,
He makes breathe those who rest in their tombs.

In Shas-hotep he is Ba-ofOsiris,
Making all herds by his handiwork;
In Herwer he is Ba-of-Geb,
Fashioning all beings in his land.
He is Horus-Metenu in Semenhor,
Making birds from the sweat of his body.

He changes his form (18) to Lord-of-the-booth, (Anubis)
To wrap Osiris in the place of embalmment,
He models all things between his hands,

To guard Osiris on his right side,
Save him from the water of his Twins, (Shu and Tefnut)
Guard the king on his left side, ever-living.

He changes his form to Suwadjenba of Pi-neter,
Eho makes all things in his field,
He grows trees, he raises crops,
To nourish all by his products.
He alters his form to beneficent Nourisher,
On top of nestleing-hill,
To fashion all men and beasts.

They have placed their four Meskhnet at their sides,
To repel the designs of evil by incantations;
They stand as lords of the shrines of South and North,
At the place of creation of all that (20) exists.
Beneficent god,
Contening god,
God who forms bodies,
God who equips nostrils,
God who binds the Two Lands,
So that they join their natures.

When Nun and Tatenen first came into being,
They appeared as lotus on his back,
As heir to Djed-shepsy at the start.
Their ka will not perish,
None shall hinder their action,
No land is lacking in all that he made.
They are concealed among mankind,

Creating all beings since gods time,

They are alive and abiding, like Re rising and setting,

May your fair face be kind to Pharaoh ever-living.

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