Łukasz Niesiołowski-Spanò / Kacper Ziemba (eds.)

Contact Zones in the Eastern Mediterranean

Judeans and their neighbours in intercultural contexts: places, middlemen, transcultural contacts – sixth to second century BCE

V&R

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Mundus Orientis

Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Cultures

Edited by
Richard Bussmann (Cologne)
Timothy Harrison (Toronto)
Reinhard Müller (Göttingen)
Karen Radner (Munich)

Advisory Board
Yoram Cohen (Tel Aviv)
Carly Crouch (Nijmegen)
Alexandra von Lieven (Münster)
Stefania Mazzoni (Florence)
Ludwig Morenz (Bonn)
David Schloen (Chicago)
William Tooman (St. Andrews)
Nele Ziegler (Paris)

Volume 5

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Łukasz Niesiołowski-Spanò / Kacper Ziemba (eds.)

Contact Zones in the Eastern Mediterranean

Judeans and their neighbours in intercultural contexts: places, middlemen, transcultural contacts – sixth to second century BCE

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

This open access publication has been financed by the University of Warsaw.

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek:
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data available online: https://dnb.de.

© 2024 by Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Robert-Bosch-Breite 10, 37079 Göttingen, Germany, an imprint of the Brill-Group
(Koninklijke Brill BV, Leiden, The Netherlands; Brill USA Inc., Boston MA, USA; Brill Asia Pte Ltd, Singapore; Brill Deutschland GmbH, Paderborn, Germany, Brill Österreich GmbH, Vienna, Austria)
Koninklijke Brill BV incorporates the imprints Brill, Brill Nijhoff, Brill Schöningh, Brill Fink, Brill mentis, Brill Wageningen Academic, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Böhlau and V&R unipress.

This publication is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution – Non Commercial – No Derivatives 4.0 International license, at https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208. For a copy of this license go to https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/. Any use in cases other than those permitted by this license requires the prior written permission from the publisher.

Typesetting: le-tex publishing services, Leipzig
Cover design: SchwabScantechnik, Göttingen

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Verlage | www.vandenhoeck-ruprecht-verlage.com

ISSN 2566-736X (print)
ISSN 2566-7386 (digital)
ISBN 978-3-525-52220-2 (print)
ISBN 978-3-666-52220-8 (digital)

Table of contents

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Łukasz Niesiołowski–Spanò, Kacper Ziemba

Introduction

This volume has arisen from a workshop entitled: *Contact Zones in the Eastern Mediterranean: Judeans and their neighbours in the intercultural contexts: places, middlemen, transcultural contacts, Sixth – Second century BCE*, held at the University of Warsaw on 7–8 October 2021, part of a wider a research project *The Second Temple Jews – between tradition and the Greek world* hosted by the Faculty of History of the University of Warsaw and financed by the National Science Centre – Poland. This particular project looked to establish possible places, times and circumstances of contact between the Jewish and Greek worlds from the 5th BCE to the 1st AD; focusing on how such relations took place – where, in which power structures, and in which social situations – and how these contacts shaped the Jewish world during this period.

The starting point was an observation found in numerous studies regarding the similarity of motifs in biblical and Greek literary traditions. Scholars had postulated such parallels already in the 19th century. However, we had to wait until the 1960s for a ground-breaking work on this issue, most notably provided by Cyrus Gordon and Michael Astour.[1] It was not long before authors began to look for possible intermediaries between the Judean and Greek worlds. Arnaldo Momigliano, for example, believed that the parallels between Hebrew and Greek historical literature had their source in hypothetical Achaemenid historiography.[2] The study of common motifs in Greek and Jewish traditions would continue among classical scholars, the most important of whom was undoubtedly Martin West, whose *The East Face of Helicon* represents a culmination of the tradition presenting the Ancient Near Eastern inspirations of Greek thought and, at the same time, the many parallels between Greek and ANE literatures and mythologies.[3] West not only presented a catalogue of parallels between Greek literature and West Asian traditions. He also discussed the ways and means whereby the transfer may have occurred. In turn, a monumental work by John Pairman Brown, *Israel and Hellas* collects many motifs and narrative elements from Greek and Hebrew traditions, pointing out the similarities.[4]

1 Gordon, Homer and Bible; Before The Bible: The Common Background of Greek and Hebrew Civilisations; Astour, Hellenosemitica: An Ethnic and Cultural Study in West Semitic Impact on Mycenaean Greece. Cf. Tobolowsky, On Comparisons with Ancient Greek Traditions.

2 Momigliano, Alien Wisdom: The Limits of Hellenization.

3 West, The East Face of Helicon. West Asiatic Elements in Greek Poetry and Myth.

4 Brown, Israel and Hellas, vol. I–III.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

The study of Bruce Louden, who focuses on pointing out structural analogies between narrative blocks in the writing of the Greek text and the Bible, presents different approach[5]. Moreover, Anselm Hagedorn was one of the scholars to propose the analogies between law codes in the Bible and the Greek tradition[6].

Parallels between Greek and biblical traditions have also been explored by biblical scholars. John van Seters pointed to the Phoenicians as intermediaries between Hebrew and Greek historiography.[7] Subsequent works have offered parallels between the Bible and Greek literature. These included parallels between the sacrifice of Iphigenia and Jephthah's daughter;[8] Greek genealogies as possible inspirations for the genealogies in the Chronicles;[9] or parallels between the Greek epic tradition and the Pentateuch.[10] Thomas Römer would revisit the consideration of possible links between the intellectual heritage of Greece and the Levant, rejecting the hypothesis of a clear-cut barrier between the two civilisations and emphasising the possibility of independent similarities; or also a dependence on the Greek tradition in biblical writings, which he dated to the Persian period.[11] Other authors have pointed to greater structural and narrative similarities. Flemming A. Nielsen postulates that Attic tragedy influenced Deuteronomistic historiography.[12] Jan-Wim Wesselius, on the other hand, opines that biblical authors modelled the Primary History on Herodotus[13], and Łukasz Niesiołowski-Spanò argues that the creation story finds inspiration in Plato's thought.[14] There is a notable difference in these works that distinguishes them from the early stage of research on the transfer of literary traditions – it was Near Eastern (in this case biblical) authors who were supposed to be inspired by Greek traditions, and not the other way around. Russel Gmirkin and Philippe Wajdenbaum present an extreme version of this approach[15]. Both

---

5 Louden, Homer's Odyssey and the Near East; Greek Myth and the Bible.

6 Hagedorn, Between Moses and Plato: Individual and Society in Deuteronomy and Ancient Greek Law.

7 Van Seters, In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History, pp. 54, 354–62.

8 Römer, Why Would the Deuteronomist Tell About the Sacrifice of Jephtah's Daughter?

9 Knoppers, Greek Historiography and the Chronicler's History: A Reexamination.

10 Darshan, The Biblical Account of the Post-Diluvian Generation (Gen. 9,20–10,32) in the Light of Greek Genealogical Literature; Gnuse, Heed Your Steeds: Achilles' Horses and Balaam's Donkey.

11 Römer, The Hebrew Bible and Greek Philosophy and Mythology – Some Case Studies.

12 Nielsen, The Tragedy in History: Herodotus and the Deuteronomistic History.

13 Wesselius, The Origin of the History of Israel: Herodotus' Histories as Blueprint for the First Books of Bible.

14 Niesiołowski-Spanò, Primeval History in the Persian Period.

15 Gmirkin, Berossus and Genesis, Manetho and Exodus: Hellenistic histories and the date of the Pentateuch; Plato and the Creation of the Hebrew Bible; Wajdenbaum, Argonauts of the desert: structural analysis of the Hebrew Bible.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

authors argue that the Bible emerged during the Hellenistic period from a single author who followed Greek literary patterns. The hypothesis of single authorship of the Bible, formulated by Gmirkin and Wajdenbaum, has been criticised by Klaas Spronk, among others. Spronk concedes that the transfer of literary motifs may have taken place in the Hellenistic period but had the character of presenting earlier Jewish traditions through Greek narrative techniques. However, this does not mean that we should dismiss the hypothesis of the textual growth of the Bible.[16] Indeed, in order to strengthen his argument, Spronk, following Dennis R. MacDonald, lists criteria for establishing the dependence of one text on another[17]. Thus, as we have seen, there are clear voices in the research literature postulating Greek inspiration for some of the motifs and biblical traditions that originated in the Hellenistic period.

Another important development in cross-cultural transfer studies is the debate on the dating of biblical texts. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, scholars based in Copenhagen (mainly Thomas L. Thompson and Niels Peter Lemche) made a series of claims which contended that the Old Testament / Hebrew Bible had been written in the Hellenistic period.[18] This position, especially the late dating of the Bible, met with strong criticism[19]. In recent decades, however, there has been an increasing tendency to shift the date of many Hebrew Bible texts to later eras (i. e. late Persian and early Hellenistic). Such dating naturally increases the likelihood of direct contact between biblical authors and Greek traditions. In doing so, authors often point to diaspora environments as milieux in which the transfer may have taken place. As an example which points to borrowings from the Greek world, we may look to the Joseph story in Genesis 37–50, traditionally dated it to the pre-exilic period. However, in recent years a growing number of authors postulate that the influences of 'Greek thinking' and reflections on the reality of Ptolemaic Egypt are evident in specific parts of the narrative.[20] In addition, the proposed emergence of the narrative in diaspora settings indicates the possible places and environments in which the transfer may have occurred.[21] Research on the Joseph story illustrates the fact that dating certain Biblical narratives to later periods has gained support among scholars, who usually interpret the motifs as indicating a familiarity with the realities of the Greek world as a result of borrowings in the Diaspora. This does not, of course, imply a recognition that the Hellenistic era must have been central

16 Spronk, Comparing the Book of Judges to Greek Literature.

17 MacDonald, The Homeric Epics and the Gospel of Mark; Tobit and the Odyssey.

18 Lemche, The Old Testament – A Hellenistic Book?

19 Cf. e. g. Albertz, An End to the Confusion? Why the Old Testament Cannot Be a Hellenistic Book!

20 Römer, How "Persian" or "Hellenistic" is the Joseph Narrative?, 48.

21 Schipper, Joseph in Egypt: A Critical Evaluation of the Classical Parallels and a New Interpretation; Guerin, The Joseph Story from an Egyptological Perspective.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

to the formation of the biblical text. On the contrary, according to the current state of the art, the *literati* of the Persian province of Yehud were crucial for the Bible's emergence.[22] We must therefore pose the question – is there a basis for proposing a dating for the borrowings to the Persian era?

The project has explored the possible routes of cultural transfer between the Greek world and Palestine in the Achaemenid period, and the places and likely circumstances in which mutual contacts and intercultural exchanges may have occurred. The study has focused mainly on archaeological and epigraphic data, as well as on the evidence of mobility and travel (inhabitants of Yehud outside the province; Greeks to the southern Levant and the Persian Empire). The results obtained, however, have not yielded binding conclusions. Indeed, we cannot point to a specific place, time or environment that would account for the transfer of Greek cultural content into biblical writing.[23] We cannot neither exclude such relations nor prove their existence. Although we know there were intercultural contacts between the Greeks and the inhabitants of the Levant during the Persian period, our knowledge is mainly limited to the Phoenicians. We know virtually nothing about the inhabitants of the interior of the region. So we cannot reconstruct the possible mechanisms of cultural transfer in the Persian era, i. e. the situations in which the *literati* of the province of Yehud may have become acquainted with Greek literature.

The unlikelihood of concluding hypothetical contacts between Greeks and Judeans in the Persian period leads us to ask whether they may have taken place at a later time. Thus, could biblical writers have been inspired by Greek authors as late as the Hellenistic period? Scholars consider an obvious or highly probable Hellenistic context for the emergence of, for example, the Book of Daniel or the Song of Songs. However, if scholars who see Greek inspiration in the biblical historiography and narratives of the Pentateuch are correct, can the time of their composition be shifted to an era when the sources attest to the contacts between Judeans and Greeks?[24]

We can assume that those responsible for the flow of cultural content were members of broadly defined elites – those involved in the governance of political or religious power; or intellectual elites producing literary texts. These two groups may have overlapped. We should also take into account all those who were highly

22 Carr, The formation of the Hebrew Bible: a new reconstruction; Ben Zvi, Social memory among the literati of Yehud.

23 Poloczek and Ziemba, Greece and Yehud in the Achaemenid Period: the Background of Cultural Transfer.

24 Cf. Gruen, Heritage and Hellenism: the reinvention of Jewish tradition; Grabbe, A history of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period. vol. 2, The Early Hellenistic Period (335–175 BCE).

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

mobile and travelled between Palestine and the centres of the Hellenistic world. Another group is, of course, members of the Jewish diaspora outside Palestine.

Potential *loci* of cultural transfer are the centres of power of the Hellenistic world – by which we are thinking mainly of the royal courts and all situations of extended court activity, all that Rolf Strootman terms the 'outer court'.[25] In the context of mobility, it is also important not to forget the infrastructure that made journeys possible – i. e. roads and other routes.

The issue of intercultural relations requires the use of an interpretative framework. We have chosen the well-known contact zone concept, which is precise but ample enough to describe different types of interaction between actors. This term, as Mary Louise Pratt's definition indicates, means 'social spaces where cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they lived out in many parts of the world today'.[26]

The study can therefore focus on the various situations in which the relationships of Judeans with other actors/groups are characterized by the unequal distribution of power. The underlying concept of the contact zone became the subject of further study. Christoph Ulf divides relations into subtypes conditioned by the individual attributes of the producers, transmitters and recipients, the social situation and the type of ideas/objects/goods exchanged.[27] He further points to the aim of intermediaries in intercultural contacts. This allows us to grasp the importance of the different actors who mediated the exchange. It is particularly relevant for the topics discussed in the present volume, as ideas/themes/motifs often engage multiple actors in a cultural transfer that contributes to change. The contact zone can be political, cultural as well as religious. We encounter such situations in the texts featured in this volume.

The first chapters contain studies dealing with the realities of the Diaspora in Egypt and Mesopotamia. In one part, they deal directly with the Judeans. In other, they illustrate life in the Diaspora, where there may have been contacts between the Judeans and representatives of different cultures, religions and traditions.

Małgorzata Sandowicz analyses court documents from Neo-Babylonian Mesopotamia from the 6th century, containing references to the participation of people identified as West Semites in the legal procedures. The text illustrates the court forum as a meeting space for representatives of different groups (including linguistic groups) and a place for cross-cultural contact. She shows how, from court sources, it is possible to read the social and cultural differences between

25 Strootman, Babylonian, Macedonian, King of the World: The Antiochos Cylinder from Borsippa and Seleukid Imperial Integration.

26 Pratt, Arts of the Contact Zone, 34.

27 Ulf, Rethinking Cultural Contacts.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

participants in judicial practice and what this confrontation of traditions and customs may have meant for everyday life in Mesopotamia.

Giulia Francesca Grassi, in her contribution *Religious Interactions in Achaemenid Elephantine and Syene as Reflected in the Aramaic Documents*, discusses religious interactions between Judeans and other members (collectively called 'Arameans') of the garrison of Elephantine – Syene in Upper Egypt. She further examines data concerning the cult of particular gods and tackles the widespread opinion about the 'syncretic' Judean cult in Achaemenid Egypt. Joanna Wilimowska discusses papyrological and epigraphic evidence for the Jewish community in Hellenistic Egypt. She focuses on Jews in Aramaic and Egyptian (Demotic and Hieroglyphic) sources, describes the social interactions of the Jews with other communities and discusses a multi-faceted Jewish presence in Ptolemaic Egypt. These three contributions shed light on the realities where contacts may have occurred between representatives of different groups interacting with members of the Jewish Diaspora.

The next three articles contain case studies. The chapter written by Urmas Nõmmik presents the biblical scholar's approach to the issues of possible cross-cultural contacts. He discusses the motif of *The Righteous, the Wicked and Creation Theology in Genesis, Isaiah and the Book of Job*, outlining a brief history of the decline of the wicked motif in the context of creation theology. Nõmmik focuses on the social identities of the group(s), whom the author identifies with the biblical 'righteous'. He further argues that their identities responded to cultural changes during the Achaemenid and early Hellenistic periods.

Jason Silverman (with contributions from Maija Holappa) proposes a new understanding of the Persian royal road system as a context for the social interactions between the different communities of the empire. Silverman collates remains from the Persian period in the southern Levant and links them to textual sources. In doing so, it sets the stage for further research that will apply network theory and QGIS mapping software to create a tool for studying the interactions between different communities in the Achaemenid southern Levant (with a particular focus on the Judeans).

The final section of the volume presents studies discussing the contexts in which intercultural exchanges may have taken place in Palestine. Christophe Nihan takes up the long-debated problem of dating the story described by Josephus Flavius relating to the conflict between the high priest Onias II and Joseph Tobiad concerning the payment of royal tribute. Discussing Flavius' chronology and administrative issues in Palestine during the Hellenistic period, he presents a reconstruction of the role of the high priest during this period. Sylvie Honigman addresses the impact of Ptolemaic Egypt on the southern Levant and, particularly, on Judean society and culture. She presents numerous case studies and examples of this influence, including Hasmonean kingship and Judean literature; enumerating the potential channels through which the transmission of texts might have taken place. By point-

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

ing to Alexandria's role as a cultural centre, she argues that texts bearing traces of Ptolemaic influence may have originated in Judea. Kacper Ziemba presents the Maccabean crisis against the background of events in Palestine in the early Hellenistic period and happenings taking place in other parts of the Hellenistic world. He argues that the actions undertaken by rival factions among the Judean elite find parallels in earlier decades. He concludes that in stark contrast to their presentation as opponents of Hellenism in 1 and 2 Macc, the Maccabees actually participated in Hellenistic culture.

Łukasz Niesiołowski-Spanò presents an attempt to synthesise the issue of Greek inspiration in Hebrew literature, placing the milieu of biblical authors at the centre of his considerations. The main focus of this article is the intellectual profile of biblical authors inspired by the Greek tradition. Niesiołowski-Spanò further raises the question of whether the recipients of Hebrew biblical literature were aware of the existence of Greek narrative prototypes. He also asks what connotations they associated by adopting a pagan, or rather polytheistic literary tradition as a narrative template for stories in the context of texts serving representatives of a monotheistic religion.

The volume presented to the readers does not pretend to answer all the questions concerning issues related to intercultural contacts in the Eastern Mediterranean in the second half of the first millennium BCE. However, collectively these articles represent an endeavour to juxtapose several methodologies, use disparate sources and present a number of selected region. These are all issues central to our understanding of the Judean world. Indeed, in terms of the authors of the Bible, the question of environments, time, language, religious implications, and reliance on foreign literary models awaits further study. This issue is inextricably linked to the debate relating to the status of biblical texts as canonical-inspired texts; and it is also tied to the time of their writing. We hope that the questions and issues addressed in this volume will contribute, if only modestly, to the setting of directions for future research and, as a result, will lead to a keener understanding of Judean world, and the imperatives behind the writing of the Bible.

Bibliography

Albertz, R., (2001), 'An End to the Confusion? Why the Old Testament Cannot Be a Hellenistic Book!', in: L. L. Grabbe (ed.), *Did Moses Speak Attic? Jewish Historiography and Scripture in the Hellenistic Period*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press: 30–46.

Astour, M. C., (1967), *Hellenosemitica: An Ethnic and Cultural Study in West Semitic Impact on Mycenaean Greece*, Leiden: Brill.

Ben Zvi, E., (2019), *Social memory among the literati of Yehud*, Berlin – Boston: de Gruyter.

Brown, J. P., (1995–2001), *Israel and Hellas I-III*, Berlin: de Gruyter.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Carr, D. M., (2011), *The formation of the Hebrew Bible: a new reconstruction*, Oxford – New York: Oxford University Press.

Darshan, G., (2013), 'The Biblical Account of the Post-Diluvian Generation (Gen. 9,20–10,32) in the Light of Greek Genealogical Literature', *VT* 63/4: 515–535.

Gmirkin, R. E., (2006), *Berossus and Genesis, Manetho and Exodus: Hellenistic histories and the date of the Pentateuch*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

Gmirkin, R. E., (2017), *Plato and the Creation of the Hebrew Bible*, New York: Routledge.

Gnuse, R., (2017), 'Heed Your Steeds: Achilles' Horses and Balaam's Donkey', *IJRHSS* 4/9: 1–5.

Gordon, C., (1962), *Before the Bible: The Common Background of Greek and Hebrew Civilisations*, London: Collins.

Gordon, C., (1967), *Homer and Bible. The Origin and Character of East Mediterranean Literature*, Ventnor: Ventnor Publishers.

Grabbe, L. L., (2008), *A history of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period. vol. 2, The Early Hellenistic Period (335–175 BCE)*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark.

Gruen, E. S., 1998, *Heritage and Hellenism: the reinvention of Jewish tradition*, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press.

Guerin, C., (2021), 'The Joseph Story from an Egyptological Perspective', in: L. L. Grabbe (ed.), *The Joseph Story Between Egypt and Israel*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck: 119–137.

Hagedorn, A. C., (2004), *Between Moses and Plato: individual and society in Deuteronomy and ancient Greek law*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Knoppers, G. N., (2003), 'Greek Historiography and the Chronicler's History: A Reexamination', *JBL* 122/4: 627–650.

Lemche, N. P., (1993), 'The Old Testament – A Hellenistic Book?', *SJOT* 7/2: 163–193.

Louden, B., (2011), *Homer's Odyssey and the Near East*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

MacDonald, D. R., (2000), *The Homeric Epics and the Gospel of Mark*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

MacDonald, D. R., (2001), 'Tobit and the Odyssey', in: D. R. MacDonald (ed.), *Mimesis and Intertextuality in Antiquity and Christianity. Studies in antiquity and Christianity*, Harrisburg: Trinity: 11–55.

Momigliano, A. (1975), *Alien Wisdom: The Limits of Hellenization*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nielsen, F. A. J., (1997), *The Tragedy in History: Herodotus and the Deuteronomistic History*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

Niesiołowski–Spanò, Ł., (2007), 'Primeval History in the Persian Period?', *SJOT* 21/1: 106–126.

Poloczek, S., and K. Ziemba, (2023), 'Greece and Yehud in the Achaemenid Period: the Background of Cultural Transfer', *SJOT* 37/2: 262–289.

Pratt, M. L., (1991), 'Arts of the Contact Zone', *Profession*, 33–40.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Römer, T., (1998), 'Why Would the Deuteronomist Tell About the Sacrifice of Jephtah's Daughter?', *JSOT* 77: 27–38.

Römer, T., (2015), 'The Hebrew Bible and Greek Philosophy and Mythology – Some Case Studies', *Semitica* 57: 185–203.

Römer, T., (2021), 'How "Persian" or "Hellenistic" is the Joseph Narrative?', in: A. Bühler, T. Römer, and K. Schmid (eds.), *The Joseph Story Between Egypt and Israel*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck: 35–53.

Schipper, B. U., (2021), 'Joseph in Egypt: A Critical Evaluation of the Classical Parallels and a New Interpretation', in: A. Bühler, T. Römer, and K. Schmid (eds.), *The Joseph Story Between Egypt and Israel*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck: 139–163.

Spronk, K., (2015), 'Comparing the Book of Judges to Greek Literature', in: M.C.A. Korpel and L.L. Grabbe (eds.) *Open-mindedness in the Bible and beyond: a volume of studies in honour of Bob Becking*, London – New York: T & T Clark: 261–271.

Strootman, R., (2013), 'Babylonian, Macedonian, King of the World: The Antiochos Cylinder from Borsippa and Seleukid Imperial Integration', in: E. Stavrianopoulou (ed.), *Shifting social imaginaries in the Hellenistic period: narrations, practices, and images*, Leiden – Boston: Brill: 67–97.

Tobolowsky, A., (2024), 'On Comparisons with Ancient Greek Traditions: Lessons from the Mid-Century', *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 23,6.

Ulf, C., (2009), 'Rethinking Cultural Contacts', *Ancient West & East* 8, 81–132.

Van Seters, J., (1983), *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

Wajdenbaum, Ph., (2011), *Argonauts of the desert: structural analysis of the Hebrew Bible*, Sheffield: Routledge.

Wesselius, J.-W., (2002), *The Origin of the History of Israel: Herodotus' Histories as Blueprint for the First Books of Bible*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

West, M. L., (1997), *The East Face of Helicon. West Asiatic Elements in Greek Poetry and Myth*, London: Clarendon Press.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Diaspora

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Małgorzata Sandowicz

West Semites in Babylonian Courts of Law*

Introduction

First-millennium BCE Babylonia was a multi-ethnic state in which Babylonians, Arameans, Chaldeans, and other ethnic groups lived side by side. Although the notion of a dichotomy between ethnic Babylonians on the one hand and tribal peoples on the other has been replaced by a more nuanced picture,[1] interaction between Babylonians and non-Babylonians was no doubt limited in some areas. Among these areas was the Babylonian temple: access to cultic functions was reserved for men of Babylonian descent, and temple prebends were exclusively held by ethnic Babylonians of appropriate ancestry. Another area was economic cooperation: few Babylonian entrepreneurs maintained close business contacts with their foreign colleagues.[2] Furthermore, members of both groups seldom intermarried.[3] Offices that required knowledge of cuneiform Akkadian, such as posts of scribe and notary posts, were also predominantly held by Babylonians.[4]

The objective of this paper is to elucidate the extent to which justice administration in Chaldean and Early Achaemenid Babylonia was yet another sphere in which Babylonians and non-Babylonians seldom met. The question is prompted by the fact that the significant corpus of contemporary cuneiform judicial documents seldom features parties who may be identified as non-Babylonians. One category of texts alone reveals the scale of this discrepancy: only three of 38 extant transcripts of trials held before the royal court in Babylon and none of three transcripts of trials held before the Bīt-šar-Bābili court feature litigants bearing foreign names. The discrepancy is only slightly less pronounced in Sippar court documents, where non-Babylonians appear in five of the 22 transcripts from this city known at present.

The present study limits itself in two respects. First, it focuses on West Semites, who constituted the largest but at the same time a very particular minority

* The abbreviations used are those of the *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie*. The Trustees of the British Museum are kindly acknowledged for permission to cite from tablets under their care. I am indebted to Stefan Zawadzki for reading and commenting on the paper.

1 Beaulieu 2013: 52.

2 Zadok 2003: 481, 483–84, 489, Jursa 2015: 597–98.

3 Zadok 2003: 483–84, Joannès 2009: 226–27.

4 Zadok 2003: 487–88.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

group.[5] Arameans and Chaldeans, the two best evidenced West Semitic groups in first-millennium BCE Babylonia, were a vital part of the local society, and their language, Aramaic, was the dominant vernacular in Mesopotamia. Second, this study is limited to the so-called Neo-Babylonian "long sixth century" that began with the foundation of the Neo-Babylonian state and ended with anti-Persian revolts in 484 BCE, which significantly impacted Babylonian politics and brought about major changes in local society and administration.[6] This relatively narrow chronological framework allows for a coherent selection of material.

Foreigners and local justice administration

In an early attempt to offer a comprehensive description of the treatment of foreigners in ancient legal systems, Shalom Kassan sought to demonstrate that in many parts of the ancient world, foreigners did not have the same access to local systems of justice administration as citizens of particular states.[7] Outdated as it is, Kassan's work conveniently distinguishes among a number of possible dispute trajectories. It argues that foreigners were seldom subject to local laws. Even if tried in local courts, they would often fall under exclusive jurisdiction. However, they were frequently subject to their own laws. Kassan termed this status "extraterritorial" and illustrated it using several examples. One was the Biblical *ger toshav* ("resident alien"), a believer in the god of Israel who would be subject to Israelite law, as opposed to a *nochri/ben nochar* ("alien of passage"), who remained subject to the law of their own country. In Greece, Kassan continued, foreigners were tried as local citizens in criminal matters, while in civil suits, they fell under the jurisdiction of the *polemarch*. According to Roman law, aliens were under the jurisdiction of a *praetor peregrinus*, who administered *ius gentium* (and, when inadequate, the *ius originis* of the foreigner). Kassam also cited some anecdotal examples. He maintained that in the Ptolemaic period, Egyptians considered aliens to be unclean, which led to separate colonies with different laws.[8] In Babylonia, in his view, special judges settled disputes between foreign parties. Those judges would come from the same

5 This paper uses the broad label "West Semite" throughout but, as Ran Zadok (1977: 9–10, 21) reasons, the overwhelming majority of West Semites mentioned in cuneiform sources were Arameans. In contrast to Judeans, Phoenicians, and Arabs, Chaldeans cannot be confidently distinguished from Arameans based on onomastics (Zadok 1977: 10, 192–204).

6 The term was coined by Michael Jursa (2010: 4–5).

7 Kassan 1935.

8 It is more likely that the language of documents submitted to judges and not the ethnicity of litigants (or their "purity," as Kassan had it) dictated the choice between Egyptian and Greek courts (Fischer-Bovet 2018: 223).

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

ethnic groups as the litigants, and, if the law of foreigners required that a dispute be settled before a jury, the jury would be comprised of foreigners, not Babylonians.

Later scholarship postulated that ancient Near Eastern judicial systems had a more inclusive character and cited many examples of foreigners pursuing their cases in local courts and under local laws.[9] Ethnicity itself was not a factor determining access—or the lack thereof—to a court.[10] As in Israel, local residence and the status of a resident alien (*ubāru*) were essential criteria.[11] Foreigners living in Babylonian and Levantine cities availed themselves of the right to approach local judges, including high officials and even kings.[12] In first-millennium Assyria, foreigners—such as Egyptian merchants in Assur—were subject to local jurisdictions.[13] It has been postulated that in contrast to earlier periods, it was only in Hellenistic Babylonia that there existed separate courts for local ethnic groups,[14] yet the opinion concerning the alleged "ethnic segregation" between Babylonians and Greeks remains contested.[15]

Sources and methodology

Although rich and varied, sources for the reconstruction of court proceedings in Chaldean and Achaemenid Babylonia are extremely unevenly distributed. No courthouse archive survives from the period under study. The bulk of pertinent texts stem from only three archives: the private Egibi family archive and the archives of two temples, the Ebabbar of the northern town of Sippar and the Eanna of the southern city of Uruk; both Sippar and Uruk have furthermore preserved smaller private archives of priests and businessmen containing fewer judicial documents. The limitations of this material are substantial. First, it provides substantial evidence concerning the activities of only four courts. Second, and more importantly, the material was produced by and focuses chiefly on Babylonian city elites and the personnel of Babylonian temples; it casts little light on rural areas, which were amply populated by West Semites.[16]

9 On the difficulty of defining the "foreigner" under Mesopotamian law, see Lafont 1998: 172.

10 Richardson 2019.

11 Lafont 1998: 173–76, Westbrook 2003a: 377.

12 Lafont 1998: 173–76, Slanski 2003: 497 (Babylonia), Westbrook 2003b: 660–61 (Emar), Rowe 2003a: 705–6 (Alalakh); Rowe 2003b: 723 (Ugarit). For Judeans in Late Achaemenid Persia, see especially BE 10 118.

13 Faist 2020: 256.

14 Van der Spek 2005 and 2009.

15 Clancier and Monerie 2014, Clancier 2017.

16 Zadok 2003: 489.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

As is the case for other foreigners, West Semites are not easily identifiable in cuneiform sources.[17] Scribes of legal and administrative documents seldom used reliable ethnic status markers such as ethnonyms and demonyms (e. g., lú*puqūdu* "Puqūdu [Aramean]" or lú*ṣurrāya* "Tyrian").[18] A tool often used to establish ethnicity is onomastics. Bearers of explicitly Judean or Arabic names are commonly considered to be Judeans and Arabs, particularly when their patronyms likewise have a West Semitic ring. It is further believed that many individuals bearing names with West Semitic theophoric elements (such as Amurru, Būr, Iltehri, Rammān, and Yāhû) may likewise have been of West Semitic background, even if the structure of their names is otherwise Akkadian (e. g., Būr-ibni).[19] However, onomastics is an imperfect tool, as, among other shortcomings, it disregards more complex ethnic identities. It fails to account for assimilation (e. g., West Semites assuming Akkadian names), mixed background (e. g., individuals of Babylonian–West Semitic descent), and intricate socio-cultural preferences (e. g., Babylonians using Aramaic names). Nonetheless, among bearers of Akkadian names, we may at least quite confidently identify individuals who were *not* West Semites. Members of the Babylonian urban elite identified themselves not only with first names and patronyms but also with family names manifesting their ancient ancestry. Urban Babylonians formed a self-enclosed group characterized by high social standing and prestige. They shared intellectual, religious, and cultural traditions that were firmly rooted in the Akkadian culture. Babylonian priests constituted the innermost and most exclusive circle of this group.[20] Thus, individuals who identified themselves with three-tier genealogies were in all likelihood *not* Arameans, Chaldeans, or Judeans.[21]

West Semites as members of the Babylonian judiciary

The Neo-Babylonian court system assumed its shape under Nebuchadnezzar II and underwent relatively few changes until the end of Darius I's reign.[22] At its head stood the king; following the Persian conquest, some of his functions were ceded to

17 See Zadok 1977: 1–28, Pearce and Wunsch 2014: 10–29, and Alstola 2020: 47–57 for methodological tools used to identify West Semites and differentiate among their various groups in cuneiform sources.

18 Zadok 1985: 249, 281.

19 Zadok 1977: 25–28.

20 Nielsen 2011: 269–72, Still 2019.

21 Zadok 1977: 4 allows the possibility that some of them had West Semitic roots dating back several generations.

22 For an outline of the Neo-Babylonian court system, see Oelsner, Wells, and Wunsch 2003: 918–20.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

the satrap. The king was assisted by two high judicial officials, the *sukkallu* ("vizier") and *sartennu* ("chief judge"), whose precise functions cannot be determined at present. Two high courts operated in and from the capital city of Babylon and Bīt-šar-Bābili, which was probably located in or in the vicinity of Babylon. Those courts were comprised of hierarchical judicial collegia of between six and nine judges, occasionally accompanied by high functionaries including the *sartennu* and *sukkallu*. Other than as members of central courts, judges occasionally sat with local collegial bodies, either as adjudicators or prominent witnesses. Two other elements of the court system were local courts, which consisted of respected members of local communities (including elders, city officials, and priests), and temple courts, which investigated matters related to the cult. Ad-hoc tribunals of diverse composition would be convened outside of the jurisdictions of central and local courts and in extraordinary circumstances. As prosopographic investigation demonstrates, the presence of West Semites was limited on all levels of the Babylonian judicial system.

Sukkallu and *sartennu*

The name of only one of the four presently known *sukkallu*s ("viziers") indicates a non-Babylonian background:

Nabû-mukīn-apli (0[Ngl] = [559 BCE])[23]
Rammān-šēzib (13–[>16]Nbn = 543–[>540] BCE)[24]
Nabû-šarru-uṣur (8Cyr = 531 BCE)[25]
Nabû-ēṭir (Bard/DarI = c. 522–486 BCE)[26]

The theophoric element in Rammān-šēzib's name suggests his West Semitic descent.[27] In addition, the official's seal, impressed on *Nbn*. 738 (B203 in Altavilla and Walker 2016), indicates a possibly non-Babylonian background; it was an octagonal stamp, a type common among West Semites. The fact that Rammān-šēzib's predecessor in office, Nabû-mukīn-apli, used the same kind of seal raises the possibility that he too, despite his Babylonian name, was a West Semite.

Similarly, among presently known *sartennu*s ("chief judges") there is only one bearer of an explicitly West Semitic name:

23 Wunsch, AfO 44/45 no. 5, Wunsch, AulaOr 17/18, BabA 2 46.
24 Nbn. 738, Nbn. 1113.
25 Cyr. 312.
26 VS 3 212.
27 Zadok 1977: 49–50, Lipiński 2000: 627–30, Schwemer 2006–2008.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Nabû-bāni-ahi (23NbkII = 582 BCE)[28]
Mušēzib-Marduk (35NbkII = 570 BCE)[29]
Sîn-erība (2–11Nbn = 554–544 BCE)[30]
Būr-yadē (8Cyr = 531 BCE)[31]

The *sartennu* Būr-yadē occurs in a document from the end of Cyrus' rule. This late timing is noteworthy, as it adds to the evidence of the growing number of foreigners in Babylonian administration following the Persian conquest.[32]

Judges

The dominance of Babylonians in the judiciary is even more conspicuous when it comes to judges. Among 60 holders of the title *dayyānu* attested during the Chaldean period, not even one bears a West Semitic name.[33] Moreover, most judges known from this period—at least 43 out of 68—used three-tier genealogies that indicated their affiliation with the Babylonian urban elite. The first judge of West Semitic origin may be found under Cyrus, while others occur under Darius I, but their number remains insignificant through the Early Achaemenid period:

Nabû-nāṣir/**Hazā-il** (Sippar[?], 8Cyr = 531 BCE)[34]
Nargia (Sippar, 4DarI = 518 BCE)[35]
Ahu-ērēš/**Barīk-il** (Susa, 16DarI = 505 BCE)[36]
Gargāya (Babylon/Borsippa, 25DarI = 497 BCE)[37]
Zēria/**Nargia** (Susa, 30DarI = 491 BCE)[38]

In addition, a bias may stem from the fact that two of the five judges of West Semitic background occur in documents written in the Persian capital of Susa and not in the heartland of Babylonia (although admittedly in a Babylonian milieu). Three judges had West Semitic patronyms but Babylonian first names, which suggests that

28 BabA 7 62.
29 Jursa 1999: 142.
30 Wunsch, AfO 44/45 no. 20, Nbn. 55, 64, and 1128, Sandowicz and Tarasewicz, RA 108, YOS 6 150[?].
31 Cyr. 312.
32 E. g., Hackl and Jursa 2015: 165–72, Sandowicz 2018: 53–56.
33 A database of over 200 identifiable judicial names forms the statistical base used in this section.
34 Cyr. 301.
35 Waerzeggers 2014 no. 35.
36 TCL 13 193.
37 Jursa, Paszkowiak, and Waerzeggers, AfO 50 no. 1.
38 Zawadzki, Fs. P. Calmeyer no. 11.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

they could have been Babylonized or were of mixed (Babylonian–West Semitic) extraction. Since none of the five judges were identified with family names, they in all likelihood could not claim ancient Babylonian descent.

The number of *dayyānū* bearing Babylonian names continued to decline through the Late Achaemenid period, but not at the expense of West Semites. A glance beyond the chronological focus of this paper reinforces the view that during Persian rule, Iranian and Elamite judges gained a strong footing in Babylonia at the expense of Babylonian judges and perhaps also West Semites, although in this case the sample is too small to make conclusive statements:

Table 1 Linguistic affiliation of judicial names in documents of the Chaldean and Persian periods

Names	Chaldean period	Early Achaemenid period	Late Achaemenid period
Babylonian	68 (100 %)	78 (c. 80 %)	32 (c. 59 %)
West Semite	–	2 (c. 2 %)	1$^{?}$ (c. 2 %)
Iranian and Elamite	–	10 (c. 11 %)	15 (c. 28 %)
Babylonian/West Semite	–	2 (c. 2 %)	–
Babylonian/Elamite	–	–	1 (c. 2 %)
West Semite/Iranian	–	1 (c. 1%)	–
Iranian/West Semite	–	–	2 (c. 4 %)
other	–	2 (c. 2 %)	3 (c. 6 %)

Local courts

Since local judicial bodies, in contrast to royal courts, were chiefly comprised of representatives of local communities, one would expect to find among their members people of various backgrounds, including various ethnic backgrounds. However, this is usually not the case. In cities and towns, the core personnel of local courts were priests and temple functionaries; these individuals were predominantly of Babylonian origin. Exceptions include high officials who joined local legal collegia; some of these could have been of West Semitic descent. An individual who was very likely of such extraction was Nargia, who sat as an adjudicator alongside judges in Babylon in the third decade of Darius I's reign.[39] Not only his name but also his function suggests a West Semitic background: he was the *simmagir*, the governor of the Transtigridian region, which was largely populated by Arameans.

Local adjudicating bodies were occasionally joined by members of the royal administration. Many of these individuals bore so-called "royal names" (comprising the element *šarru* "king") expressing their loyalty to the monarch. While such names

39 Jursa, Paszkowiak, Waerzeggers, AfO 50 no. 1.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

make the identification of the ethnic identities of their bearers difficult, some of these men could have had West Semitic roots.[40] This is particularly likely in the case of tribal functionaries, such as (the future *simmagir*?) Neriglissar (Nergal-šarru-uṣur), the *simmagir* Nabû-šarru-uṣur, and the deputy governor of the Sealand province (*šanû Tâmti*) Madānu-šarru-uṣur.[41] Among the king's men who sat with adjudicating bodies we also find Nabû-šulum-šarri, the chief cupbearer (*rab šaqê*),[42] Bēl-eṭēri-Nabû, the royal courtier appointed at the Eanna temple (*ša rēš šarri ša ina Eanna paqdu*),[43] royal representatives at temples (*qīpu*),[44] royal courtiers serving as supervisors at temples (*ša rēš šarri bēl piqitti*),[45] and other royal courtiers (*ša rēš šarri*).[46]

Temple courts

Given the strict social and ethnic restrictions that separated the Babylonian priesthood from much of the country's population, one might expect that the institutions that investigated cult-related offenses would be staffed exclusively by Babylonian priests. It may thus be surprising to find among members of temple courts royal residents (*qīpu*)[47] and royal courtiers serving as supervisors in temples (*ša rēš šarri bēl piqitti*),[48] a group whose members were sometimes recruited from among non-Babylonians, including West Semites. Why did representatives of the royal administration join priestly collegial bodies that prosecuted cultic irregularities? Even minor malfunctions in the offering system posed a threat to public safety and welfare. Kings, acting through royal administration, had the duty to prevent the catastrophes that could result from sacrilege and similar crimes.

40 Jursa 2011b: 165. On West Semites in Babylonian administration, see also Berlejung 2019: 238–39.

41 Jursa, Paszkowiak, and Waerzeggers, AfO 50 no. 3, BabA 2 48+, Dubsar 11 30.

42 YBC 9446, mentioned in Beaulieu 2002: 113 and Jursa 2011a.

43 TCL 13 170.

44 Anu-šarru-uṣur (BE 8 42 and 48), Nabû-kibsu-šarri-uṣur (Beaulieu, OrNS 61: 409–10, Dubsar 11 32), Mušēzib-Marduk (Scheil, RA 12), Gabbi-ilāni-šarru-uṣur (YOS 6 92, YOS 6 238), Anu-šarru-uṣur (YOS 7 7, YOS 7 66), Itti-šarri-īnīa (Dubsar 11 23). For the possible non-Babylonian background of some *qīpu*s, see Jursa 2015: 602.

45 Nabû-šarru-uṣur of Eanna (YOS 6 92, YOS 6 238), Nabû-ahu-iddin of Eanna (YOS 7 7, Czechowicz, CRRAI 47, YOS 7 66, Figulla, Iraq 13).

46 Murānu and Nazia (Jursa, Paszkowiak, and Waerzeggers, AfO 50 no. 3]).

47 Bēl-ahhē-iqīša, the *qīpu* of Ebabbar (Dubsar 11 18).

48 Nabû-ahhē-iddin *ša rēš šarri bēl piqitti* of Eanna (Geller, Fs. J. C. Greenfield).

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

West Semites as parties to trials

A modest number of 21 presently available litigation documents feature West Semitic parties addressing Babylonian courts (see Table 2). But although limited in number, these documents allow for the contextualization of disputes involving West Semites. They vary typologically and attest to various stages of court proceedings.

Courts

The documents demonstrate that institutions of all levels of the Babylonian court system handled cases involving West Semitic litigants. West Semites had access to the central court in Babylon, both to judicial collegia sitting alone and panels cooperating with the *sartennu* and/or *sukkallu*.[49] Some litigants whose cases came before this court were not even residents of Babylon. They had to (or at least were given the option to) travel to the capital city in search of justice from locations including Sippar and distant Uruk and Nippur.[50] Also judges officiating in the Aramean hub of Opis, who cannot be linked to any high court at present, accepted claims against West Semites.[51] In addition, West Semites addressed local courts, such as the Sippar court staffed by priests ("temple enterers") and city elders and presided by the local high priest (*šangû*),[52] collegial bodies headed by local officials,[53] and temple authorities of the Eanna of Uruk.[54] Lastly, West Semites faced tribunals that convened to settle atypical cases, such as the disputes involving a son of a prominent woman (of tribal descent?) and the town of Dūr-Ugūmu.[55]

It is remarkable that West Semitic litigants smoothly moved among various levels of the court system. Šē-idrī, son of Nabû-ahu-ēreš, and Kināya, son of Rahīm, had the opportunity to change pending verdicts they received in villages in the vicinity of Uruk should they choose to appear before temple officials or royal judges in Uruk.[56] When dissatisfied with decisions of Sippar and Uruk courts, Būr-ibni, son of Rubbu-Adad, and Asarluhi-dīnu-ēpuš, son of Hīr-ah, could appeal to judges in Babylon.[57] Bādi-il, presumably a resident of Uruk or

49 VS 6 99, Cyr. 312, Nbn. 356//Liverpool 98, YOS 19 101, YOS 7 31, YOS 7 189, YOS 3 96.

50 VS 6 99, YOS 7 31, YOS 3 96, Sandowicz, OLA 277 no. 3 (disputants from this last text were to face Pharnakes, a Persian dignitary, who plausibly sat with a judicial panel).

51 Dar. 149.

52 BabA 2 48+, CT 55 194+, Dubsar 11 20 and 21, VS 6 99.

53 MesCiv. 23 12, YOS 7 189, BabA 6 27 and 82.

54 YOS 6 169//YOS 6 231, MesCiv. 23 12.

55 Nbk. 109, Dubsar 11 31.

56 MesCiv. 23 12, YOS 7 189.

57 VS 6 99, YOS 7 31.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

its hinterland, presented a claim regarding his daughter directly to judges in Babylon, who in turn pressed Uruk authorities to make arrangements for the trial.[58]

Much of the material at hand comes from and attests to disputes in towns (such as Sippar) and villages (Bīt-Abī-râm, Bīt-Ibnāya, Dūr-Bīt-erim, Dūr-Ugūmu, Nāru-eššu). An accident of preservation may partly account for such a distribution of texts, but it has long been known that the West Semitic presence outside major cities was significant.[59] In towns and villages, interactions between West Semites and Babylonians were likely more intense and the social distance between West Semites and representatives of Babylonian institutions was consequently shorter. A temple administrator in Sippar and a bailiff in Bīt-Abī-râm could have been more approachable to local West Semites than a royal judge to their peer residing in Babylon.

Litigants

West Semites appear as both plaintiffs and defendants. Since plaintiffs initiated lawsuits and chose the legal fora that would handle their claims, in their case the preference for Babylonian courts over other adjudicating bodies was undoubtedly deliberate.[60] Interestingly, the preference was not determined exclusively by the background of their adversaries, as West Semites went to courts not only with Babylonians but also with other West Semites.[61] In other words, one cannot consider only one scenario, in which a West Semite involved in a dispute with a Babylonian would turn to a Babylonian court on the presumption that such a court would, for example, be able to enforce its decision with greater ease.

Onomastics suggests that many of the West Semites who addressed Babylonian courts may have been Babylonized. While they bore Babylonian names, their patronyms betray West Semitic backgrounds: Asarluhi-dīnu-ēpuš, son of Hīr-ah[62];

58 YOS 3 96. For Babylon as the seat of the judges who dispatched this letter, see Jursa and Sandowicz 2023.

59 Zadok 2003: 489.

60 E. g., Nargia son of Hanūnu, who approached *sartennu, sukkallu,* and judges (Cyr. 312), and Bādi-ili, who turned to judges in Babylon (YOS 3 96).

61 [f]Hamatāya vs. Baytil-yahīru, son of Baytil-hannan (BabA 2 48+); [f]Bunanītu, daughter of Hariṣāya and her son Apladdu-abār vs. Aqab-il, son of Niqmadū (Nbn. 356//Liverpool 98); Nabû-balāṭu-ēreš, son of Aqab-il vs. Šē-idrī, son of Nabû-ahu-ēreš (MesCiv. 23 12); Nabû-bēl-ilī, son of Nâdū-ilū vs. Ahīqar, son of Rīmūt (BabA 6 27); perhaps also Amurru-šarru-uṣur vs. Bābāya (Bābia), son of Abdu-Iššar and Abdu-Iššar (Dubsar 11 20) and Iššar-tarībi, son of Bunene-ibni vs. Šadûnu, son of Hin-il (Dar. 149).

62 YOS 7 31.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Kināya, son of Rahīm[63]; Nabû-balāṭu-ēreš, son of Aqab-il[64]; Šadûnu, son of Hin-il[65]; Nabû-zēru-iddin, son of [f]Sarrāya;[66] Šamaš-balāṭu, son of Ah-immê;[67] Nabû-bēl-ilī, son of Nâdū-ilū;[68] and perhaps also Balāṭu, son of Nasīkatu.[69]

The king's men constitute a conspicuously large group among West Semites appearing as parties to trials. Some—e. g., the royal courtier (*ša rēš šarri*) Nargia, son of Hanūnu, and his opponent Amurru-šarru-uṣur, the royal courtier in charge of the palace inner quarters (*ša rēš šarri ša muhhi bītāni*)—were overtly identified as such.[70] Others (Šarru-lū-dāri and two holders of the name Amurru-šarru-uṣur) bore names or patronyms with the component *šarru* ("king") that indicate links with the royal administration.[71]

While the majority of litigants were men, among both plaintiffs and defendants we find women of West Semitic origin. Some of them were likely widows. It must have been the case of [f]Bunanītu, daughter of Hariṣāya,[72] and probably the elderly [f]Hamatāya, as well as [f]Rahīm and [f]Sarrāya, who appeared in court alongside their presumably juvenile sons.[73] Notably, some of these women litigated against their family members. [f]Bunanītu and her son Apladdu-abār pursued action against their brother-in-law and uncle, and [f]Hamatāya sued her grandson. The majority of female litigants were conceivably independent (i. e., they were no longer under the authority of their fathers or husbands), as were many Babylonian women disputants who took their cases to courts. One may hazard a guess that West Semitic women chose Babylonian courts over tribal institutions, as Babylonian legal fora were more open to women of such a status—of any ethnic background—and because rulings of Babylonian courts would often prove more amenable to their interests.[74]

63 YOS 7 189.

64 MesCiv. 23 12.

65 Dar. 149.

66 Dubsar 11 20.

67 BabA 6 82.

68 BabA 6 27.

69 Nbk. 109. The mother could have been either a tribal leader (*nasīkatu*) or a lady of high standing whose name derived from the West Semitic word *nasīku* "sheikh" ([f]Nasīkatu).

70 Cyr. 312.

71 Sack, JCS 24 no. 3, Cyr. 312, Dubsar 11 21. Note also sons of fathers bearing "royal names": Nabû-zēru-iddin, son of Amurru-šarru-uṣur (Dubsar 11 20) and Arrabu, son of Nabû-šarru-uṣur (Sandowicz, OLA 277 no. 3).

72 Bunanītu's own name is Babylonian, but she was the widow of Apladdu-natan and the mother of Apladdu-abār.

73 Nbn. 356//Liverpool 98, BabA 2 48+, CT 55 194+, Dubsar 11 20.

74 For similar reasons Muslim and Christian women in West Jerusalem tend to choose Israeli family courts over sharia courts (Shahar 2016: 100–6).

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Twenty-one dispute documents shed light on the immediate social environment of West Semites on one hand and social boundaries within Babylonian society on the other (Table 2). It is astonishing that only one member of the urban elite can be identified among the adversaries of West Semites; all other litigants are identified with names and patronyms only. Thus, West Semites usually confronted in courts either other West Semites or commoners. In this context, one potentially relevant text is YOS 19 101, a transcript of a trial over dates that went missing while being transported by a boatman called Amurru-natan. When accused, the boatman denied having stolen the dates, but, when an informer denounced him, Amurru-natan escaped and went into hiding. It took some time to locate and bring him before judges. The stolen dates belonged to an affluent Babylonian businessman Iddin-Marduk of the Nūr-Sîn family, yet the person who traced Amurru-natan, brought him before the judges and appeared in court was Iddin-Marduk's slave Nergal-rēṣua. Slaves did not normally appear as parties to trials, and disputants did not usually use proxies to represent them in Babylonian courts. Did a social norm prevent Iddin-Marduk from litigating with a common West Semite?

The single member of the Babylonian elite known to have been entangled in a lawsuit with West Semites was Marduk-rēmanni, descendant of the Ṣāhit-ginê family, an influential priest, businessman, and secretary to the governor of Babylon.[75] Marduk-rēmanni committed a crime whose nature is unknown but which must have been grave given that he was sentenced to having his hand cut off. Ultimately, he managed to settle with his adversaries out of court and his penalty was converted to financial compensation. Regrettably, since the character of Marduk-rēmanni's crime and the identities of his opponents, the brothers Itti-Nusku-īnīya and Ba'-Iltehri-ahāt, sons of Nusku-ayyālu (and their kinsmen?), are unknown, we are unable to establish under what circumstances disputes involving West Semites and Babylonian urbanites, rare as they were, went to court.

In-court interactions of West Semites reveal that the social boundaries that foreigners in Chaldean and Early Achaemenid Babylonia were subject to ran along social, not ethnic lines. West Semites belonged to the same segment of the Babylonian society as Babylonian commoners did; both were separated from the hermetic urban Babylonian elite. Interchanges between commoners—West Semites included—and the urban elite were limited in many spheres including marriage, economic activity and, as may now be seen, litigation. Those spheres were in fact intertwined: members of distinct groups, with no marriage or business links, had fewer occasions to engage in disputes and seek settlements. A closer look at the subject of litigation refines the picture and sheds further light on the identities of West Semites who addressed Babylonian courts.

75 Roth 2007, Tolini 2011: 419–24, Waerzeggers 2014: 302–7.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Subject of litigation

Apart from cases involving temple property and single disputes about naturalia (of considerable amount and value), cattle, and a boat, most lawsuits in which West Semites appeared as parties concerned properties (all but one urban properties), slaves, and silver.[76] Interesting but more difficult to contextualize and interpret is the obscure legal fight involving Marduk-rēmanni and two cases concerning the infringement of paternal rights. One followed the contracting of a marriage without the consent of a groom's father and another the abduction of a claimant's daughter.[77]

As far as the subject of litigation is concerned, one group of West Semitic litigants stands out. Most individuals in texts from Sippar and Babylon (perhaps also one from Nippur) were property holders. They possessed—or sought to obtain through litigation—slaves and houses. In the Babylonia of the "long sixth century," houses were usually purchased not as investments intended to generate income but as a means of preserving wealth.[78] Ownership of urban properties, particularly the ownership of several plots, is thus an important wealth and social status marker. The observation that a large group of the West Semites whom we find in cuneiform dispute documents were urban property owners and thus presumably urban dwellers nuances the picture formed by other sources, from which commoners emerge as people of low economic status. Bastian Still (2019: 177–78) noted the "general inferior financial situation" of the "outsiders" who surface in the archives of Borsippa priests (although he acknowledged that the group included rich individuals).[79] Cornelia Wunsch (2003: 2–3) drew attention to the fact that dowries are often missing in marriage documents of people without family names, in contrast to texts concerned with the marriages of couples belonging to the upper stratum.[80] Court documents thus bring to light the financial elite among the commoners, who likely competed economically with Babylonian urbanites, shared urban space with them, and possibly aspired to achieve a prominent place within Babylonian society.[81]

---

76 See Table 2 for references.

77 Cyr. 312, YOS 3 96.

78 Jursa 2010: 169.

79 Still 2019: 176.

80 Waerzeggers (2020: 15–17) believes that reasons behind this discrepancy were chiefly social: for Babylonian urbanites, dowry documents marked the foundation of new (elite) households.

81 In fig. 12 in Still 2019: 176, which schematically represents interactions among priests (in the middle), the non-priestly elite (the first concentric circle), and "outsiders" (the external concentric circle), those commoners would have to be placed in breaches representing incursions into two inner layers.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Table 2 Court documents featuring West Semites as litigants

	Party A	Party B	Subject of litigation	Adjudicators	Issue place & date (Archive)	Text
1	^{f}**Hamatāya** (defendant's grand-mother)	**Baytil-yahīr/Baytil-hannan**	house, provisions	1. *simmagir* 2. high priest, temple enterers, city elders	Sippar, 7Cyr (Ebabbar)	BabA 2 48 + (Sandow-icz 2019: 160) trial transcript
2	Šamaš-erība	**Būr-uṣur/Emūqu** and ^{f}**Rahīm** (Būr-uṣur's mother)	house	high priest, temple enterers$^{?}$, city elders$^{?}$	Sippar, [5–7Cyr] (Ebabbar)	CT 55 194+ (Sandow-icz 2019: 26) trial transcript
3	Nabû-zēru-iddin/**Amurru-**šarru-uṣur and ^{f}**Sar-rāya** (Nabû-zēru-iddin's mother)	Šamaš-iqīša/Bēlšunu	silver, slave as pledge	high priest, temple enterers, city elders	Sippar, 6Cyr (Ebabbar)	Dubsar 11 20 trial transcript
4	**Amurru**-šarru-uṣur, slave of […]	Bābāya(Bābia)/**Abdu-Iššar** and **Abdu-Iššar** (his father)	boat	high priest, temple enterers, city elders	Sippar, 6Cyr (Ebabbar)	Dubsar 11 21 trial transcript
5	**Būr-ibni/Rubbu-Adad**	Šamaš-uballiṭ/Arad-Nabû	house (construction?)	1. temple resident, high priest 2. *sartennu*+ judges	Sippar, 6Cyr (Ebabbar)	VS 6 99 summons to appear in court, pending verdict
6	Nabû-ēṭir-napšāti$^{?}$	^{f}**Guzummāya**	slaves	judges	Babylon, 3Nbn (Egibi$^{?}$)	Wunsch, AfO 44/45 no. 21 trial transcript
7	**Nargia/Hanūn**, royal courtier	Amurru-šarru-uṣur, royal courtier, *ša muhhi bītāni*	unauthorised mar-riage	*sartennu* *sukkallu* judges	Babylon, 8Cyr (Egibi)	Cyr. 312 trial transcript
8	^{f}Bunanītu/Hariṣāya, wife of **Apladdu-natan/Niqmadū** and **Apladdu-abār** (^{f}Bunanītu's son)	**Aqab-il/Niqmadū** (^{f}Bunanītu's brother in law)	house; slave	judges	Babylon, 9Nbn (Egibi)	Nbn. 356//Liverpool 98 trial transcript

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

	Party A	Party B	Subject of litigation	Adjudicators	Issue place & date (Archive)	Text
9	Nergal-rēṣua, slave of Iddin-Marduk(//Nūr-Sîn)	**Amurru-natan/Ammāya**	dates	judges	Babylon, 10Nbn (Egibi)	YOS 19 101 trail transcript
10	Itti-Nusku-īnīya and **Ba'-Iltehri-ahāt**, sons of Nusku-ayyālu	Marduk-rēmanni/Bēl-uballiṭ//Ṣāhit-ginê	[…]	judges?	Babylon, 25DarI (Ṣāhit-ginê)	Roth, Fs. R. D. Biggs C (= Waerzeggers 2014: 128) record of post-trial settlement
11	Zumbu/Nanāya-ēreš	**Ahu-lētī/Ilī-yaqir**	temple sheep	temple authorities	Uruk, 17Nbn (Eanna)	YOS 6 169 //YOS 6 231 trial transcript?
12	Nabû-balāṭu-ēreš/**Aqab-ilī**	**Šē-idrī**/Nabû-ahu-ēreš	temple cow	1. local collegial body 2. temple authorities	Dūr-Bīt-erim (Eanna), 3Cyr	MesCiv. 23 12 summons to bring stolen goods, pending verdict
13	temple authorities	Asarluhi-dīnu-ēpuš/**Hīr-ah**	temple sheep	royal courthouse in Babylon (=judges)	Uruk, 4Cyr (Eanna)	YOS 7 31 summons to appear in court, pending verdict
14	Bau-ēreš/Nabû-ahu-uṣur	Kināya/**Rahīm**	temple sheep	1. local collegial body 2. royal judges	Nāru-eššu, 6Camb (Eanna)	YOS 7 189 summons to appear in court, pending verdict
15	Bādi-il	[…]	abduction of daughter?	royal judges	– (Eanna)	YOS 3 96 judicial letter

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

	Party A	Party B	Subject of litigation	Adjudicators	Issue place & date (Archive)	Text
16	Šāpik-zēri/Zērūtu	Balāṭu/ᶠ**Nasīkatu(or: *nasīkatu*)**	house	top officials of southern Babylonia	Babylon, 17NbkII (archive unknown)	Nbk. 109 trial transcript, memorandum
17	citizens of **Dūr-Ugūmu**	the Eanna temple	waterlogged district	messengers of the king	[…], 5 [x] (Eanna)	Dubsar 11 31 trial transcript, memorandum
18	**Šar-zabad**/Aššubû	Arrabi/Nabû-šarru-uṣur	house?	Pharnakes	Nippur, 5+[x]Cyr (archive unknown)	Sandowicz, OLA 277 no. 3 summons to appear in court, pending verdict
19	Nabû-bēl-ilī/**Nâdū-ilū**	**Ahīqar**/Rīmūt	cattle	deputy of *zakkû*, local collegial body, city elders	Bīt-Ibnāya, 2DarI (Yāhūd)	BabA 6 27 trial transcript
20	Zababa-šarru-uṣur/Nabû-zēru-iddin	Šamaš-balāṭu/**Ah-immê** and Nuptāya, wife of Bēl-lē'i	cow	bailiff (*paqūdu*), local collegial body	Bīt-Abī-râm, 4Xrx (Yāhūd)	BabA 6 82 trial transcript
21	Iššar-tarībi/Bunene-ibni	Šadûnu?/**Hin-il**	[…]	judges	Opis, 4DarI (Iššar-tarībi)	Dar. 149 note on not appearing in court

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Aramaic in the courtroom

Language could have been yet another factor determining court choice. Some West Semitic litigants may have had some knowledge of Akkadian, the language of Babylonian business and court documentation. Although the complexities of legal jargon make it difficult even for native speakers to follow court proceedings, it is conceivable that West Semites with no knowledge of Akkadian whatsoever may have been eager to have their disputes settled elsewhere.

But even though the Babylonian court system remained a stronghold of Akkadian traditions, it functioned in a changing linguistic and political milieu. Aramaic was the vernacular of Chaldean Babylonia; it was also the language of Persian administration. Were hearings conducted in Aramaic? Were court records put down in Aramaic? This cannot be verified based on evidence as it now stands. The presence among members of various Babylonian legal bodies of *sepīru*s, Aramaic scribes and interpreters, prompted Yigal Bloch (2018: 277) to suggest that Babylonian courts of the Persian period had records drafted in not only cuneiform but also Aramaic. However, there is no reference to such a two-pronged bureaucratic procedure in the material at hand. Moreover, *sepīru*s occasionally joined legal bodies already during the Chaldean period, apparently on account of their administrative, and not scribal, functions.[82] Finally, neither during the Chaldean nor Persian periods were *sepīru*s regularly or even frequently present at judicial proceedings.

Nonetheless, *sepīru*s had an important role to play in the course of evidentiary proceedings. Adjudicators confronted with Aramaic texts and inscriptions had to resort to their professional opinions to properly interpret these materials. Durand 1981 no. 60 (Arnaud, RA 67) recounts an investigation into the status of a slave who had on her hand a star brand and an inscription revealing that she had been dedicated as an oblate. In the course of proceedings,

> [j]udges heard their statements and brought a *sepīru*. He examined the hand of [f]Nanāya-hussinni and said: There is an old writing "for Nanāya," from a long time ago, on her hand and another writing, under the previous writing, that says "for Ištar of Uruk." (ll. 19–26)

Texts also mention the examination of items of tangible evidence in Aramaic without explicit reference to the help of scribe-interpreters. Camb. 143 provides an account of an inquiry into the status of a slave whose hand was "inscribed in Akkadian and Aramaic (*ahlamātu*)."[83] YOS 7 102 describes how investigators packed, sealed, and

82 CT 57 10, *Dubsar* 11 6, MacGinnis, and Iraq 60 no. 1 feature the *sepīru* of the Eulmaš temple among the interrogators.

83 See also AnOr 8 74: "her father inscribed her hand with an Aramaic writing (*šaṭāru ša* [lú]*sepīri*)."

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

deposited for future examination by judges a letter in Aramaic (lit. "letter of the *sepīru*") that one suspect had sent to another.

West Semitic legal traditions in Babylonian courts?

There is currently no indication that Neo-Babylonian courts administered foreign or discrete law when trying foreigners as did courts in other parts of the ancient world. Legal texts at hand reveal no evidence of the application of *ius originis* or *ius gentium*.[84] They also bear no trace of West Semitic impact on Babylonian procedural law, which one could expect to find considering centuries of Babylonian–Aramaic coexistence. Although such an impact will be difficult to discern as long as West Semitic legal traditions remain poorly known,[85] we may anticipate mutual influences in areas where legal and religious traditions usually meet. Oath-taking is one of them. However, during proceedings implemented by Babylonian legal institutions, West Semites in all likelihood took oaths by Babylonian gods (and kings) rather than gods of West Semitic pantheons. Even though the evidence concerning such judicial oaths is currently weak,[86] a significant number of documents show West Semites—as well as Egyptians, Arabs, Iranians, and Medes—taking promissory oaths by Babylonian gods and the Babylonian king.[87] This stands in contrast to more contemporary legal practice. Moroccan Jews, for example, swore oaths imposed by Muslim courts in synagogues, on Torah scrolls, invoking the God who "sent down the Torah through our lord Moses," in the presence of Muslim court clerks.[88] The reasons for the discrepancy could be different religious traditions (polytheistic versus monotheistic) and the fact that oath formulae in Babylonia were largely standardized.

Also sanctions, another area in which a potential interchange of legal traditions may have occurred, display no trace of West Semitic influences. It is noteworthy that Babylonian courts imposed on West Semites specifically Babylonian penalties, such as thirtyfold restitution, which was exacted for the theft of temple and palace

84 For the recognition of foreign laws in second-millennium BCE Babylonia, see Richardson 2017: 34–35. See also Lafont 2018.

85 Lipiński 2000: 557–97.

86 YOS 7 140 mentions Bēl-šarru-uṣur, son of **Ahu-yalid**, taking an oath by gods and the king (*nīš ilī u šarri*).

87 **Amurru-šamā**, son of **Zabinī**, by "Bēl and the king" (Nbk. 42); **Ahu-lētī** , son of Idī-il, by "Bēl, Nabû and the king Darius" (Waerzeggers 2014 no. 20); **Išī-Amurru**, son of Nūrānu, by "Bēl, Nabû, the Lady of Uruk, Nanāya, and the majesty of Nabonidus and Belshazzer" (Pinches 1916 no. 1). For oaths of other non-Babylonians, see Sandowicz 2012: 88–90.

88 Marglin 2016: 40–41.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

properties. A court comprising the *šatammu* and *bēl piqitti* of the Eanna temple and two royal courtiers sentenced the West Semite Ahu-lētī, son of Ilī-yaqir, to pay thirtyfold for a temple sheep that had been seized from his flock.[89]

One text that could be considered in the search for traces of Aramaic tradition in cuneiform sources is Dubsar 11 29. It records a dispute between litigants bearing Babylonian yet two-tier names (Rīmūt-ili, son of Šulāya, and Bēl-ahhē-erība, son of Aplāya). Similarly to YOS 6 169//YOS 6 231, the dispute concerned the theft of temple sheep, but there are many differences between both proceedings: Dubsar 11 29 was drafted not in Uruk but in a small locality of Ālu-ša-Iaqiʾ-ilī; the adjudicators were not temple authorities but a body comprising the deputy governor of Piqūdu Arameans and a group of elders; and the ruling was not thirtyfold but fivefold. While rare in Neo-Babylonian sources, fivefold restitution is known from the Bible, which prescribes it for the theft of bovines.[90] It would be appealing to see in Dubsar 11 29 an Aramean judicial body handing down a ruling deeply rooted in the West Semitic legal tradition. However, a second Neo-Babylonian document mentioning fivefold penalty, Walker and Kramer, Iraq 44 no. 5, which is concerned with the theft of royal flour, provides no indication of the West Semitic background of the parties or judges. Thus, it is possible that fivefold penalties imposed by courts in Babylonia were not inspired by West Semitic influences.[91]

Alternative to Babylonian courts

What options did West Semites who chose not to turn to Babylonian courts have? Recourse to tribal justice system was one possibility. Aramean and Chaldean elders and functionaries no doubt settled disputes in the Babylonian hinterland. Letters from the period of the Assyrian rule over Babylonia and later allude to tribal leaders (Bīt-Amukean in OIP 114 76 and Dakkurean in CT 22 222) in the context of dispute settlement. Evidence is slim since relevant records, if put down at all, were presumably drafted in Aramaic. Occasionally, proceedings relevant to Babylonian institutions—such as Dubsar 11 29, which deals with temple animals—were recorded in Akkadian.

An attractive and no doubt common alternative to Babylonian courts must have been out-of-court dispute resolution. Negotiation, mediation, and arbitration procedures, which were also popular among Babylonians, were usually conducted orally and left little trace in cuneiform records. It is due to more complex dispute

89 YOS 6 169//YOS 6 231.

90 Westbrook 1992.

91 Sandowicz 2019: 100.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

circumstances that we owe a handful of documents—mostly pending verdicts and summonses—featuring West Semites (Table 3). Some of those texts were drafted in the course of disputes among West Semites and Babylonians,[92] others, when parties expected that their cases would—or could—end up before Babylonian institutions, which would appreciate cuneiform records as useful traits of earlier stages of proceedings.[93] Debt notes and receipts are other footprints of settlement procedures.[94]

A particularly large number of out-of-court documents survive in the archive of the influential Babylon Egibi family. One of the family members, Nabû-ahhē-iddin, a scribe and judge-to-be, kept copies of legal documents that he wrote when performing his scribal duties. At the end of Nebuchadnezzar II's reign, Nabû-ahhē-iddin spent several months in the city of Opis, close to the Babylonian eastern border. Opis was a trade hub and a doorway to a region inhabited by Piqūdu Arameans; it was perhaps even the Piqūdean capital and seat of the governor (*simmagir*). From Opis, Nabû-ahhē-iddin brought with him a group of records of pending verdicts featuring West Semites. Since these texts never name judicial bodies and mostly deal with the restitution of objects of disputes and not penalties, it is a viable assumption that they are records of out-of-court settlements.[95] Examining the subjects of these disputes is instructive. In contrast to records of in-court disputes, they are never concerned with real estate, and some deal with items of relatively small value, such as household utensils or food products. Outside the Egibi Opis dossier, we also find summonses, pending verdicts, and quitclaims that feature West Semites as litigants and objects of minor value (never land) as subjects of disputes; these texts in all likelihood stem from out-of-courts proceedings. Notably, here too members of urban elites seldom feature as adversaries of West Semites.[96]

92 BM 65409, Dar. 57.

93 Perhaps YOS 17 358.

94 Roth, Fs. R. D. Biggs A–C.

95 Not included in Table 3 is Nbk. 266, which diverges from other texts of the dossier: Neriglissar appears as adjudicator (arbitrator?), one of the parties is his slave, and Neriglissar's substantial property (100 sheep) is at stake.

96 Also Late Achaemenid documents of this category show commoners as adversaries of West Semites. See the summons to litigate Hackl 2013 no. 108 (Babylon, 3DarII), in which Nādin-ahi, son of **Dahhūa,** and a Babylonian–Egyptian Mušēzib, son of Harri-hibī', appear as parties. Note also Dalley, *Levant* 16 (Harran, 0DarII), in which the litigants are **Qusu-šamā**, son of **Qusu-…-yadā**, and **Samsa-yābi** (see Joannès, RA 81: 165 for improved reading).

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Table 3 Records of out-of-court proceedings featuring West Semites as litigants

	Party A	Party B	Subject of litigation	Issue place & date (Archive)	Text
1	**Ai-ahhā'/Šani-Yāma (+Baruh-il)**	Nabû-nā'id /Nabû-gāmil	trading goods[97]	Opis, 40NbkII (Egibi)	Nbk. 361 summons to bring a witness, pending verdict
2	**Natan-il**$^{?}$ (and his$^{?}$ son **Iltameš**-šarru-uṣur)	Balṭia (or: **Palṭia**)[98] /Uballissu-Marduk	silver (21 shekels)	Opis, 40NbkII (Egibi)	Nbk. 363 summons to bring a witness, pending verdict
3	Šarru-kīnu/**Ammānu**	**Idih-ili**/Dīnāya	slave's blood money (1 mina of silver)	Opis, 40NbkII (Egibi)	Nbk. 365 summons to bring a witness, pending verdict
4	Bau-ēreš/Nabû-tabni-uṣur	Gūdadû/**Hin-il**	barley	Opis, 40NbkII (Egibi)	Nbk. 366 summons to bring a witness, pending verdict
5	**Hatān** (slave of Neriglissar)	Šarru-iluya (slave of Neriglissar)	iron utensil (*raqundu*)	Opis, [x]NbkII (Egibi)	Nbk. 419 summons to bring a witness, pending verdict
6	Balṭia(or: **Palṭia**)[99] /**Ahu-rām**	Bēl-ahhē-erība /Balāssu (*rab būli*)	sheep	Amanu, 14NbkII (Eanna$^{?}$)	YOS 17 358 quitclaim
7	**Naṭir**/[...]	Bēl-usātu /Itti-Marduk-balāṭu //Nabunnāya	slave	Opis, 22NbkII (archive unknown)	BM 65409 summons to bring a slave pending verdict
8	**Ahī-qam/Rapā-Yāma**	**Nadab-Yāma /Abdi-Yāhû**	dates, field rent	Alu-ša-Amurru-šarru-uṣur on the Zabināya Canal, 9DarI (Yāhūd)	CUSAS 28 16 summons to litigate

97 To be repaid twice. This is the single text of the dossier where damages are mentioned.

98 Zadok 1977: 127, idem 2003: 509.

99 See note above.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

	Party A	Party B	Subject of litigation	Issue place & date (Archive)	Text
9	Erēbšu/Bušēa	**Būr-dalā**/**Addu-sarah**	1/3 mina bronze	…, 14[Nbk or Nb]p (archive unknown)	BM 30932 summons to bring a witness, pending verdict
10	^{f}Šiddātu/**Baytil-naṭar**	Bēl-iddin /Nergal-ušēzib	jewelry	Sippar, 2AM (Adad-šammē)	Dubsar 11 3 quitclaim
11	Asqūdu	Sîn-ahu-iddin/**Iltehri-…**	bronze vessel (*haṣbu*)	Sippar , 6$^{?}$Nbn (archive unknown)	BM 63951 (Bertin 1296) deposition
12	**Addu-sara[h$^{?}$]**	[Nabû-ēṭir$^{?}$]/Bēl-iddin	2 donkeys	– (archive unknown)	BM 58762 deposition
13	Marduk-nāṣir/Aplāya	Ak-du-lūmur and ^{f}**Haninā** (slave of Marduk-nāṣir)	dates (anything above 30 kors)	Babylon, 17Nbn (archive unknown)	Pinches 1888 no. 15 quitclaim and pending verdict
14	Lā-qīpu/Muraliku	Sîn-kitri(/**qitri**) /**Kamūšu**-šarru-uṣur	slave	Babylon, 6Camb (unknown archive)	Oppert, RevArch. 1 (with improvements by Stol [1977]) summons to deliver evidence
15	**Nadab-lāma**/**Abdi-Yāhû**	**Il-linṭar**/Nabû-zēru-iddin	sheep	[…], 5+[x]DarI, (Yāhūd)	BabA 6 11 pending verdict
16	Zababa-šarru-uṣur/Nabû-zēru-iddin and his sister ^{f}Esagil-ramât	^{f}**Ukkamatā**/**Sir-adri** and Nabû-ēṭir/Erība	slave	Babylon, 22 DarI (Yāhūd)	BabA 6 84 quitclaim
17	Zababa-šarru-uṣur/Nabû-zēru-iddin, the steward of the crown prince's estate	**Tammeš-ladīn**/**Zabdia**	silver?	Kar-Adad, 23DarI (Yāhūd)	BabA 6 79[100] pending verdict
18	Itti-Nusku-īnīya and **Ba'-Iltehri-ahāt**, sons of Nusku-ayyālu	Marduk-rēmanni/ Bēl-uballiṭ//Ṣāhit-ginê	penalty conversion	Babylon, 25DarI (Ṣāhit-ginê)	Roth, Fs. R. D. Biggs A–C (= Waerzeggers 2014 nos. 126–28) records of post-trial settlement, promissory note

100 Since it does not name any adjudicating authority, this text has been tentatively classified as an out-of-court record. However, the high sum mentioned in the penalty clause (10 minas of silver) has no parallel in documents of this type.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Summary

Through most of the "long sixth century," the core of the Babylonian system of justice administration remained essentially indigenous. Akkadian was the language of court documents and the cuneiform tablet—the standard form of court document.[101] Centuries of interaction with Arameans and Aramaic seem to have left little trace on Babylonian procedural law. The traditional judiciary was staffed predominantly by members of Babylonian urban elites, and it was only after the Persians had seized power when it reluctantly began to open up to judges of West Semitic and Persian descent.

Still, the hermetic character of the Babylonian judiciary is only partly responsible for the rare occurrences of West Semites in cuneiform trial documents. Writing on the second-millennium BCE Babylonian law, Joachim Renger (1977: 68) suggested distinguishing among several Rechtskreise in Mesopotamia, delimited by both horizontal lines (running across various regions) and vertical lines (separating various segments of Old Babylonian society). It is inviting to adopt the same approach to contextualize the occurrences of West Semites in Babylonian courts. The present paper argued that the Rechtskreise to which West Semites belonged in first-millennium BCE Babylonia was not confined to them alone. They shared it with Babylonians and foreigners who were considered outsiders by urban elites, a distinct group with a common Babylonian social and cultural identity expressed on the outside by the use of a three-tier naming pattern. Alongside the cult, marriage, and business, dispute settlement was yet another context where commoners—including West Semites—and urban Babylonians stood apart. Cuneiform documents shed light on the legal choices of Babylonian urbanites and a small group of West Semites who breached the boundaries of their Rechtskreis. Among them were urban property holders, who chose to turn to Babylonian courts when disputing objects of substantial value and significance for family wealth. Alongside the value of objects involved in disputes and place of residence, the socio-economic status of disputants was hence a major factor that informed the choice of Babylonian legal fora.

Bibliography

Alstola, T., (2020), *Judeans in Babylonia. A Study of Deportees in the Sixth and Fifth Centuries BCE*. CHANE 109. Leiden and Boston.

Altavilla, S., and C. B. F. Walker, (2016), *Late Babylonian Seal Impressions on Tablets in the British Museum. Part 2: Babylon and its vicinity*. Nisaba 28. Messina.

101 Beaulieu 2006: 209 and Joannès 2009: 219–21, 227–29.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Arnaud, D., (1973), 'Un document juridique concernant les oblats', *RA* 67: 147–56.

Beaulieu, P.-A., (1992), 'Kissik, Dūru and Udannu', *OrNS* 61: 400–24.

Beaulieu, P.-A., (2000), *Legal and Administrative Texts from the Reign of Nabonidus*. YOS 19. New Haven and London.

Beaulieu, P.-A., (2002), 'Ea-dayān, Governor of the Sealand, and Other Dignitaries of the Neo-Babylonian Empire', *JCS* 54: 99–123.

Beaulieu, P.-A., (2006), 'Official and Vernacular Languages: The Shifting Sands of Imperial and Cultural Identities in First-Millennium B.C. Mesopotamia', in: S. Sanders (ed.), *Margins of Writing, Origins of Cultures*. OIS 2. Chicago, Illinois: 187–216.

Beaulieu, P.-A., (2013), 'Arameans, Chaldeans, and Arabs in Cuneiform Sources from the Late Babylonian Period', in: A. Berlejung and M. P. Streck (eds.), *Arameans, Chaldeans, and Arabs in Babylonia and Palestine in the First Millennium B.C.* LAOS 3. Leipzig: 31–55.

Berlejung, A., (2019), 'Forever Foreign? Marriage Rules in Urban Babylonia and their Impact on the Exiles and Returnees', in: A. Berlejung and M. Grohmann (eds.), *Foreign Women – Women in Foreign Lands. Studies on Foreignness and Gender in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East in the First Millennium BCE.* Orientalische Religionen in der Antike: Ägypten, Israel, Alter Orient/Oriental Religions in Antiquity: Egypt, Israel, Ancient Near East 35. Tübingen: 237–61.

Bloch, Y., (2018), *Alphabet Scribes in the Land of Cuneiform:* Sēpiru *Professionals in Mesopotamia in the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid Periods*. Piscataway.

Campbell-Thompson, R., (1906), *Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets, &c., in the British Museum*. Vol. 22. London.

Clancier, P., (2017), 'The Polis of Babylon: An Historiographical Approach', in: B. Chrubasik and D. King (eds.), *Hellenism and the Local Communities of the Eastern Mediterranean: 400 BCE–250 CE*. Oxford: 53–82.

Clancier, P., and J. Monerie, (2014), 'Les sanctuaires babyloniens à l'époque hellénistique: évolution d'un relais de pouvoir'. *Topoi* 19: 181–237.

Clay, A. T., (1904), *Business Documents of Murashû Sons of Nippur Dated in the Reign of Darius II (424–404 B.C.)*. BE 10. Philadelphia.

Clay, A. T., (1908), *Legal and Commercial Transactions Dated in the Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian and Persian Periods, Chiefly from Nippur.* BE 8. Philadelphia.

Clay, A. T., (1919), *Neo-Babylonian Letters from Erech*. YOS 3. New Haven and London.

Cole, S. W., (1996), *Nippur IV. The Early Neo-Babylonian Governor's Archive from Nippur*. OIP 114. Chicago.

Contenau, G., (1929), *Contrats néo-babyloniens II. Achéménides et Séleucides.* TCL 13. Paris.

Czechowicz, N., (2002), 'Zwei Frauengeschichten aus den späten Jahren von Nebukadnezar II. Probleme der Interpretation', in: S. Parpola and R. M. Whiting (eds.), *Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East. Proceedings of the 47th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Helsinki, July 2–6, 2001*, Helsinki: 113–16.

Dalley, S., (1984), 'The Cuneiform Tablet from Tell Tawilan', *Levant* 16: 19–22.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Dougherty, R. P., (1920), *Records from Erech. Time of Nabonidus (555–538 B. C.)*. YOS 6. New Haven and London.

Durand, J.-M., (1981), *Textes babyloniens d'époque récente*. Paris.

Faist, B. (2020), *Assyrische Rechtsprechung im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.* Dubsar 15. Münster.

Figulla, H. H., (1951), 'Lawsuit Concerning a Sacrilegious Theft at Erech', *Iraq* 13: 95–101.

Fischer-Bovet, Ch., (2018), 'Official Identity and Ethnicity: Comparing Ptolemaic and Early Roman Egypt', *Journal of Egyptian History* 11: 208–42.

Geller, M. J., (1995), 'An Eanna Tablet from Uruk in Cleveland', in: Z. Zevit, S. Gitin, and M. Sokoloff (eds.), *Solving Riddles and Untying Knots. Biblical, Epigraphic, and Semitic Studies in Honor of Jonas C. Greenfield*. Winona Lake, Indiana: 531–42.

Hackl, J., (2013), *Materialien zur Urkundenlehre und Archivkunde der spätzeitlichen Texte aus Nordbabylonien*. 2 Vols. PhD dissertation, Vienna University.

Hackl, J., and M. Jursa, (2015), 'Egyptians in Babylonia in the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid Periods', in: J. Stökl and C. Waerzeggers (eds.), *Exile and Return: The Babylonian Context*. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 478. Berlin: 157–80.

Joannès, F., (1987), 'A propos de la tablette cunéiforme de Tell Tawilan', *RA* 81: 165–66.

Joannès, F., (2009), 'Diversité ethnique et culturelle en Babylonie récente', in: P. Briant and M. Chauveau (eds.), *Organisation des pouvoirs et contacts culturels dans les pays de l'empire achéménide*. Persika 14. Paris: 217–36.

Jursa, M., (1999), *Das Archiv des Bēl-rēmanni*. PIHANS 86. Leiden.

Jursa, M., (2010), *Aspects of the Economic History of Babylonia in the First Millennium BC: Economic Geography, Economic Mentalities, Agriculture, the Use of Money and the Problem of Economic Growth* (with contributions by J. Hackl, B. Janković, K. Kleber, E. E. Payne, C. Waerzeggers, and M. Weszeli). AOAT 377. Münster.

Jursa, M., (2011a), 'Patronage in Babylonien im sechsten Jahrhundert v. Chr', *ARTA* 2011.001.

Jursa, M., (2011b), '«Höflinge» (*ša rēši, ša rēš šarri, ustarbaru*) in babylonischen Quellen des ersten Jahrtausends', in: J. Wiesehöfer, R. Rollinger, and G. B. Lanfranchi (eds.), *Ktesias' Welt / Ctesias' World*. Wiesbaden: 159–73.

Jursa, M., (2015), 'Families, Officialdom, and Families of Royal Officials in Chaldean and Achaemenid Babylonia', in: A. Archi (ed.), *Tradition and Innovation in the Ancient Near East. Proceedings of the 57th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale at Rome, 4–8 July 2011*. Winona Lake, Indiana: 597–606.

Jursa, M., J. Paszkowiak, and C. Waerzeggers, (2003/2004), 'Three Court Records', *AfO* 50: 255–68.

Jursa, M., and M. Sandowicz, (2023), '"We Shall Hear their Case": Neo-Babylonian Letters from Judges', in: Ph. Clancier and J. Monerie (eds.), *L'empreinte des empires au Proche-Orient ancien. Volume d'hommage offert à Francis Joannès*. Études Mésopotamiennes/ Mesopotamian Studies 3. Oxford: 232–51.

Kassan Sh., (1935), 'Extraterritorial Jurisdiction in the Ancient World', *The American Journal of International Law* 29 (1935): 237–47.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Lafont, S., (1998), 'Le roi, le juge et l'étranger à Mari et dans la Bible', *RA* 92: 161–81.

Lafont, S., (2018), 'L'altérité comme passerelle juridique. L'example de la cité d'Émar (Syrie XIV^{e}-XII^{e} s. av. n.è.)', *Droit et cultures* 76 (L'étranger et le droit. D'Orient en Occident, l'infuence de l'altérité, chemin d'intégration): 107–16.

Lipiński, E., (2000), *The Arameans: Their Ancient History, Culture, Religion*. OLA 100. Leuven, Paris, and Sterling, Virginia.

MacGinnis, J., (1998), 'Ordering of the House of Šamaš: Texts from the Management of the Neo-Babylonian Ebabbara', *Iraq* 60: 207–17.

Magdalene, F. R., B. Wells, and C. Wunsch, (2019), *Fault, Responsibility, and Administrative Law in Late Babylonian Legal Texts.* MesCiv. 23. University Park, Pennsylvania.

Marglin, J. M., (2016), *Across Legal Lines. Jews and Muslims in Modern Morocco*. New Haven and London.

Nielsen, J. P., (2011), *Sons and Descendants: A Social History of Kin Groups and Family Named in the Early Neo-Babylonian Period, 747–626 BC*. CHANE 43. Leiden and Boston.

Oelsner, J., B. Wells, and C. Wunsch, (2003), 'Neo-Babylonian Period', in: R. Westbrook (ed.), *A History of Ancient Near Eastern Law*: 911–74.

Oppert, J., (1886), 'Un traité babylonien sur brique conservé dans la Collection de M. Louis de Clerque', *RevArch*. 1: 164–77.

Pearce, L. E., and C. Wunsch, (2014), *Documents of Judean Exiles and West Semites in Babylonia in the Collection of David Sofer*. CUSAS 28. Bethesda, Maryland.

Pinches, Th. G., (1888), *Inscribed Babylonian Tablets in the Possession of Sir Henry Peek, Bart.* London.

Pinches, Th. G., (1916), 'Two Late Tablets of Historical Interest', *PSBA* 38: 26–34.

Pinches, Th. G., (1982), *Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum.* Vol. 55–57. *Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid Economic Texts*. London.

Pohl, P. A., (1933), *Neubabylonische Rechtsurkunden aus den Berliner Staatlichen Museen*. AnOr 8. Roma.

Renger, J., (1977), 'Wrongdoing and Its Sanctions. On "Criminal" and "Civil" Law in the Old Babylonian Period', *JESHO* 20: 65–77.

Richardson, S., (2017), 'Before Things Worked: A "Low-Power" Model of Early Mesopotamia', in: C. Ando and S. Richardson (eds.), *Ancient States and Infrastructural Power: Europe, Asia, and America*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: 17–62.

Richardson, S., (2019), 'Aliens and Alienation, Strangers and Estrangement: Difference-Making as Historically-Particular Concept', in: J. Mynářová et al. (eds.), *Crossroads III: A Stranger in the House: Foreigners in Ancient Egyptian and Near Eastern Societies of the Bronze Age*. Prague: 307–40.

Roth, M. T., (2007), 'On Amputation, Beating, and Illegal Seizure', in: M. T. Roth et al. (eds.), *Studies Presented to Robert D. Biggs, June 4, 2004*. From the Workshop of the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary 2, AS 27. Chicago: 207–18.

Rowe, I. M., (2003a), 'Anatolia and the Levant: Alalakh', in: R. Westbrook (ed.), *A History of Ancient Near Eastern Law*: 693–717.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Rowe, I. M., (2003b), 'Anatolia and the Levant: Ugarit', in: R. Westbrook (ed.), *A History of Ancient Near Eastern Law*: 719–35.

Sandowicz, M., (2012), *Oaths and Curses: A Study in Neo- and Late Babylonian Legal Formulary*. AOAT 398. Münster.

Sandowicz, M., (2018), 'Before Xerxes: The Role of the Governor of Babylonia in the Administration of Justice under the First Achaemenids', in: C. Waerzeggers and M. Seire (eds.), *Xerxes and Babylonia: The Cuneiform Evidence*. OLA 277. Leuven, Paris, Bristol, CT: 35–62.

Sandowicz, M., (2019), *Neo-Babylonian Dispute Documents in the British Museum*. Dubsar 11. Münster.

Sandowicz, M., and R. Tarasewicz, (2014), 'Court of Assize at Neo-Babylonian Apšu', *RA* 108: 71–92.

Scheil, V., (1915), 'La libération judiciaire d'un fils donné en gage sous Neriglissor en 558 av. J.-C.', *RA* 12: 1–13.

Schwemer, D., (2006–2008), 'Rammān(um)', in: M. P. Streck (ed.), RlA 11: 235–36.

Shahar, I., (2016^2), *Legal Plurality in the Holy City. Competing Courts, Forum Shopping, and Institutional Dynamics in Jerusalem.* London and New York.

Slanski, K., (2003), 'Mesopotamia: Middle Babylonian Period', in: R. Westbrook (ed.), *A History of Ancient Near Eastern Law*: 485–520.

van der Spek, R. J., (2005), 'Ethnic segregation in Hellenistic Babylon', in: W. H. van Soldt, R. Kalvelagen, and D. Katz (eds.), *Ethnicity in Ancient Mesopotamia. Papers Read at the 48th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Leiden, 1–4 July 2002*. Leiden: 393–408.

van der Spek, R. J., (2009), 'Multi-ethnicity and ethnic segregation in Hellenistic Babylon', in: T. Derks and N. Roymans (eds.), *Ethnic Constructs in Antiquity. The Role of Power and Tradition*. Amsterdam: 101–15.

Still, B., (2019), *The Social World of the Babylonian Priest*. CHANE 103. Leiden and Boston.

Stol, M., (1971), 'Un texte oublié', *RA* 71: 96.

Strassmaier, J. N., (1885), 'Die babylonischen Inschriften im Museum zu Liverpool nebst anderen aus der Zeit von Nebuchadnezzar bis Darius', *Actes du sixième congrès international des orientalistes tenu en 1883 à Leide*. Leide: 569–624, plates 1–176.

Strassmaier, J. N., (1889a), *Inschriften von Nabonidus, König von Babylon (555–538 v. Chr.)*. BT 1–4. Leipzig.

Strassmaier, J. N., (1889b), *Inschriften von Nabuchodonosor, König von Babylon (604–561 v. Chr.)*. BT 5–6. Leipzig.

Strassmaier, J. N., (1890a), *Inschriften von Cyrus, König von Babylon (538–529 v. Chr.).* BT 7. Leipzig.

Strassmaier, J. N., (1890b), *Inschriften von Cambyses, König von Babylon (529–521 v. Chr.)*. BT 8–9. Leipzig.

Strassmaier, J. N., (1892–1897), *Inschriften von Darius, König von Babylon (521–485 v. Chr.)*. BT 10–12. Leipzig.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Tolini, G., (2011), *La Babylonie et l'Iran: les relations d'une province avec le coeur de l'empire achéménide (539–331 avant notre ère)*. PhD dissertation, Université Paris I, Panthéon-Sorbonne.

Tremayne, A., (1925), *Records from Erech. Time of Cyrus and Cambyses (538–521 B.C.)*. YOS 7. New Haven and London.

Ungnad, A., (1907), *Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler der Königlichen Museen zu Berlin*. Vol. 3. Leipzig.

Waerzeggers, C., (2014), *Marduk-rēmanni: Local Networks and Imperial Politics in Achaemenid Babylonia*. OLA 233. Leuven, Paris, and Walpole, Massachusetts.

Waerzeggers, C., (2020), 'Changing Marriage Practices in Babylonia from the Late Assyrian to the Persian Period', *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern History* 7: 101–31.

Walker, C. B. F., and S. N. Kramer, (1982), 'Cuneiform Tablets in the Collection of Lord Binning', *Iraq* 44: 70–86.

Weisberg, D. B., (1980), *Texts from the Time of Nebuchadnezzar*. YOS 17. New Haven and London.

Westbrook, R., (1992), 'Punishments and Crimes', in: D. N. Freedman et al. (eds.), *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Vol. 5. New York: 546–56.

Westbrook, R., (2003a), 'Mesopotamia: Old Babylonian Period' in: R. Westbrook (ed.), *A History of Ancient Near Eastern Law*: 361–430.

Westbrook, R., (2003b), 'Anatolia and the Levant: Emar and Vicinity', in: R. Westbrook (ed.), *A History of Ancient Near Eastern Law*: 657–91.

Westbrook, R., (ed.) (2003), *A History of Ancient Near Eastern Law*. HdO 72. Leiden and Boston.

Wunsch, C., (1997/1998), 'Und die Richter berieten ... Streitfälle in Babylon aus der Zeit Neriglissars und Nabonids', *AfO* 44/45: 59–100.

Wunsch, C., (1999/2000), 'Eine Richterurkunde aus der Zeit Neriglissars', *AulOr* 17/18: 241–54.

Wunsch, C., (2003), *Urkunden zum Ehe-, Vermögens- und Erbrecht aus verschiedenen neubabylonischen Archiven*. BabA 2. Dresden.

Wunsch, C., (2022), *Judaeans by the Waters of Babylon. New historical evidence in cuneiform sources from rural Babylonia, primarily from the Schøyen Collection* (with contributions by J. D. Moore and L. E. Pearce). BabA 6. Dresden.

Zadok, R., (1977), *West Semites in Babylonia during the Chaldean and Achaemenian Periods: An Onomastic Study*. Jerusalem.

Zadok, R., (1985), *Geographical Names According to New- and Late-Babylonian Texts*. RGTC 8. Wiesbaden.

Zadok, R., (2003), 'The Representation of Foreigners in Neo- and Late-Babylonian Legal Documents (Eighth through Second Centuries B.C.E.)', in: O. Lipschits and J. Blenkinsopp (eds.), *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period*. Winona Lake, Indiana: 471–589.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Zawadzki, S., (2000), 'Zazannu and Šušan in the Babylonian texts from the archive of the *Ṣāḫit ginê* family', in: R. Dittmann et al. (eds.), *Variatio Delectat. Iran und der Westen. Gedenkschrift für P. Calmeyer*. AOAT 272. Münster: 723–44.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Giulia Francesca Grassi

Religious Interactions in Achaemenid Elephantine and Syene as Reflected in the Aramaic Documents

Introduction

In 1906, some Aramaic papyri dated to the 5th century BC were published by Arthur Cowley and Archibald Sayce with the title "Aramaic papyri discovered at Assuan".[1] It turned out that the papyri were found not in Syene/Aswan, but rather in Elephantine, the small island in the Nile in front of Aswan, where archaeological excavations were immediately carried out both by a German and by a French expedition. The difference between Syene and Elephantine might seem minimal, but it is indeed crucial, for we have very few texts from Syene, or about Syene, whereas we have hundreds of texts from Elephantine. The non-official documents from Elephantine concern almost exclusively a Judaean community, whereas the scanty texts related to Syene pertain apparently to an Aramaic-speaking pagan community. The members of both communities were mostly soldiers working for the Achaemenid Empire, but it must be stressed that there is a huge disproportion in the documentation.

None of the texts from Elephantine is religious in character, no quotation nor passage from the Bible occurs, and the form of religion which emerges from them was immediately perceived as different from that offered by the Torah. Their monotheism does not seem to have been rigid: they had their own temple on the island, and important features of later Judaism, for example Sabbath keeping, seem to be interpreted by the Elephantine community in a rather flexible way.

The differences between Elephantine Judaism and Biblical Judaism have been often put on a Procrustes' bed, for attempts have been made to make the documents compatible with "orthodox" contemporary Judaism, either downplaying the differences between their Judaism and the Judaism known from the Bible;[2] treating the Judaeans of Elephantine as fossils, remnants of the pre-exilic time;[3] or considering them prone to external influences, mainly from the so called "Aramaean" part of

1 Sayce, Cowley (1906).

2 E. g. Porten (1968), in many respects still the milestone of Elephantine studies; the differences with "orthodox" Judaism are here ascribed to external influences.

3 E. g. Cowley (1923): XX; Dion (2002).

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

the community, and ultimately champions of a syncretistic religion.[4] It is indeed because of this heterodoxy, and because some people are alternatively called "Judaean" and "Aramaean", that the term "Judaeo-Aramaeans" has been created by Albin von Hoonacker,[5] and is still in use.[6] However, the term is misleading. The nisbe "Aramaean" is not used as an ethnic label, but seems to indicate an Aramaeophone, more specifically an Aramaeophone serving in the army.[7] Besides, the documents concerning the Judaean community in Elephantine, and the documents concerning the "pagan" community in Syene are rather clearly separated.

To be sure, we know that pagan Aramaeophones were living in Syene, and that they interacted with the Judaeans of Elephantine as comrades and parties in contracts. This information is provided by the documents from Elephantine, in which several people with pagan names are recorded, mainly as witnesses. Moreover, several texts demonstrate that Semitic pagan cults were practiced in Syene. However, this information does not come from Elephantine, but from documents from other regions, mainly from the letters from Hermopolis (TADAE A2.1–2.6) and from the sarcophagus of a priest of Nabu from Syene found in Saqqara (TADAE D18.1). In other words, the documents from Elephantine, which represent 57% of the Aramaic documents from Egypt, do not mention any Semitic foreign cult either in Elephantine or in Syene, and Semitic and Egyptian deities are recorded rarely, with the only exceptions being the Egyptian gods Khnum and Yahweh. These texts are the product of a Judaean community; pagan Aramaeophones lived in Syene, and their own documents are largely lost.

It must be stressed that the relationship between the Judaean community and the Aramaeophone pagan community seems to be routinary and friendly. The same kind of relationship may be seen with other foreign groups, for example Bactrian, Carian, or Choresmian neighbours or parties in contracts. Also the relationship with the Egyptians seems to have been peaceful (mixed marriages are apparently also attested), with the dramatic exception of the temple affaire, the destruction of the temple of Yahweh apparently promoted by the priests of Khnum, with the help of the Persian governor Vidranga and his son Nefaina, commander of the troops in Syene.[8] Some incidents may nevertheless occur: for example, Malkayah son of Yašobyah must swear that he did not make violence and theft in the house of a man with an Iranian name, Artafrada [*ʾr*]*tprd* (B7.2). Interestingly, he must swear by Ḥerem-Betˀel. The mention of this deity, apparently a non-Judaean one, leads us

4 E. g. (with different nuances) Vincent (1937); Grelot (1972); Becking (2003).

5 Von Hoonacker (1915).

6 For example, see Rohrmoser (2014).

7 See Grassi (2022).

8 This topic will not be dealt with in this paper, both because it would require a whole article, and because I am convinced that it is not ultimately a religious affair.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

to the main question. Besides the good or troubled relationships with neighbours and comrades, and even taking into account mixed marriages, do the texts reveal profound cultural influences? The nature of the material makes a clear answer very difficult. The Judaean community surely adopted some Egyptian habits, but they apparently also retained their own traditions, and a distinguishable ethnic identity.

"Ethnicity" has been much studied during the last decades; and this extends to the study of ancient societies; and although several definitions have been produced, ethnicity remains a discussed and elusive concept.[9] However, as far as the content of ethnic identity is concerned, many scholars would agree with the notion of individuating as discernible features a common name, a myth of common ancestry, a link with a homeland, shared historical memories, solidarity, and shared cultural traditions, in particular religion and language.[10] This paper is therefore focused on religious interactions. In its first part, it deals with the Aramaic texts from Elephantine, i. e. with the Judaean community; in the second part, it deals with the scanty Aramaic texts related to Syene, i. e. with non-Judaean foreigners.

Elephantine

Semitic deities

As already pointed out, the religion of the Judaean community has been generally considered as either syncretistic or an archaic expression of Judaism. The texts, however, show in my opinion a different situation.

Yahweh is the most frequently cited god in the non-literary Aramaic texts from Egypt, occurring in 39 texts, but all these texts originate from Elephantine and concern the Judaean community. In other terms, there is no evidence of a cult of Yahweh among non-Judaeans.

The nature of the texts does not allow a full analysis of the religious practices related to Yahweh, because very few documents are primarily concerned about the cult, and none, even among the scanty literary texts, is theological. However, some details can be grasped. Letter A4.7/A4.8 shows Yahweh listening at the prayers of the Judaeans and supporting them both by punishing their enemies and rewarding their friends. Yahweh occurs in greetings formulas at the beginning of private letters, once as simply Yahweh (D7.21), once as "the temple of Yahweh" ([*b*]*yt yhw*: A3.3), whereas "the god of heaven" is slightly more common (A3.6; A4.3; A4.7/8). The

9 For an introduction to the various schools and theories about Ethnicity, see for example Banks (1996), Fabietti (2013).

10 See e. g. the very similar definitions in Jones (1997): 84; Smith (1997: 65); Knapp (2014: 35).

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

imprecation *ḥylyhh*, "for the life of Yahweh!" (rarely written *ḥy lyhh*), is relatively frequent in the ostraca from Elephantine (CG14, 33, 41, 56, 174, J8, possibly X16), and it is worth noting that Yahweh is the only god occurring in imprecations in the whole corpus.[11] The theonym Yahweh Ṣabaˀot (*yhh ṣbˀt*), the only epigraphic mentions of the deity, occurs a couple of times in Elephantine (CG167, both in the old and in the new text (palimpsest); CGJ8; perhaps CG 186 (D7.35)), once probably as responsible for the infertility of a woman.[12] Finally, the centre of his cult was a temple on the island, well known in Egypt also outside Elephantine, as is demonstrated by a letter sent from Migdol (A3.3).

No other deity plays such a prominent role in the corpus. However, there are other gods occurring in the texts.

The most famous deities related to the Judaean community are ˁAnat-Betˀel and ˀEšem-Betˀel, mentioned in the list of donors, to whom may be added two more deities occurring in oaths, the above mentioned Ḥerem-Betˀel, and ˁAnat-Yaho (an occurrence of Ḥerem alone is possible, but partially restored in B7.3).

In the list of donors C3.15, a sum of money is collected for Yahweh, for ˁAnat-Betˀel and for ˀEšem-Betˀel. The reason for collecting the money is not specified, but each deity receive a precise sum, similar for Yahweh and ˁAnat-Betˀel, significantly lower for ˀEšem-Betˀel. This suggests a hierarchy in which Yahweh and ˁAnat-Betˀel are more important than ˀEšem-Betˀel. The possibility that ˁAnat-Betˀel and ˀEšem-Betˀel are wife and son of Yahweh, may be considered likely. It has been suggested that this might be due to an Egyptian influence, but triad is a usual structure of the pantheon in the Ancient Near East as well.

ˀEšembetˀel and ˁAnatbetˀel seem to be linked to the Judaean community, and indeed the first editor and the first commentators did not doubt that there was a link between these deities and the Judaean community.[13]

If we look at the names contained in the list, it will be clear that the vast majority of them can be considered Judaean. The only theonym used in the donors' names is Yahweh, i. e. there is no pagan deity in compound names, with one possible exception (a *ˀšm*-name in l. 41). Names without a divine element can mostly be explained as Hebrew. Some of them are linguistically Aramaic, but religiously neutral since no god is named. Non-Semitic names are few. As far as the names of the fathers and grandfathers of the donors are concerned, the situation is similar, even if we may find some more Egyptian names and a couple of pagan names.

ˁAnat-Yaho occurs in the oath B7.3 (end 5th century BC), in which Menaḥem bar Šallum swore or will swear by ˁAnat-Yaho to Mešullem bar Natan about a she-ass.

11 For this swear, see also Dupont-Sommer (1947: 185–8).

12 See Grassi (2017).

13 Sachau (1911, I: 85); Cowley (1923: XVIII–XIX); Vincent (1937).

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

We may notice that the names of the parties are typical of the Judaean community, as the vast majority of the names of the list of donors C3.15.

A link between these deities and the Judaean community seems obvious, but it has been sometimes denied, in my opinion on very fragile grounds.[14] Another way to consider ˀEšembetˀel, ˁAnatbetˀel, ˁAnat-Yaho, and Ḥerem-Betˀel not properly "Judaean" is to postulate a mixed Judaeao-Aramaean community, and an Aramaean origin of these gods.

However, an Aramaean origin is questionable for Betˀel, and very unlikely for ˁAnat.

ˁAnat is mainly known from Ugarit and from Phoenician and Punic texts. The first attestations of the goddess ˁAnat occur early in the second millennium BC. She is attested in the Amorite onomasticon,[15] and venerated in Mari, i. e. on the Middle Euphrates region, where her cult can be detected up to the 8th century BC.[16] In the second millennium BC, ˁAnat is mainly known from the coastal region and the area adjacent to it. Already in the 18th–16th centuries ˁAnat-names are recorded in Hazor,[17] and in the Amarna letter a person from Byblos is called Anati.[18]

The best source for understanding this goddess are the literary texts from Ugarit (13th century BC), where she plays an important role as an aggressive, independent maiden warrior. ˁAnat maintains some characteristics he had in Ugarit also in Egypt, where she was introduced from the Hyksos period and was particularly popular in the Ramesside era.[19] Her introduction in Egypt as foreign deity together with Astarte, with whom she is often paired, is important for the investigation of her role in the Persian period, because it cannot be ruled out that she was not imported from the Near East; but rather that she was already present in the region, and that her cult was revitalized by the West Semites living there.

Several toponyms in the Egyptian texts containing ˁAnat are likely to be located in the Levant.[20] An ostracon dated to the 19th dynasty (13th century BC) and sent from a scribe stationed with the Egyptian garrison at Gaza records "the festival of ˁAnat of Gaza".[21] Although the information provided by the text is not enough to establish whether the cult was local, or imported to Palestine by the Egyptian

14 See e. g. Porten (1969: 120–1); Joisten-Pruschke (2008: 94).

15 See e. g. Streck (2000: 264, 266).

16 Day (1999: 39–40).

17 Hallo, Tadmor (1977: 4–5).

18 Day (1999: 38).

19 For ˁAnat in Egypt, see Stadelmann (1967: 88–96); Leclant (1975); Lloyd (1994: 63–136); Tazawa (2009: 72–82).

20 Day (1999: 38).

21 Lloyd (1994: 88–9); Cornelius (2004, Cat. 3.1 and 3.2).

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

garrison,[22] it demonstrates that ˤAnat was known in Palestine in the 13th century BC. The Northern Temple of Ramses III in Beth Shean contained a stele dedicated by an Egyptian official in which ˤAnat is represented.[23] ˤAnat-names are recorded in Phoenician (two arrowheads from the Beqaˤ and from the environs of Bethlehem[24]) and Punic (Carthage, Hadrumetum[25]), in the Bible (Šamgar ben ˤAnat; Judg. 3:31), on an unprovenanced Hebrew seal,[26] on a bowl from Ekron dated to the 7th century BC;[27] we may further note that in the Roman Near East some ˤAnat-names are perhaps recorded in the Greek transcriptions in the region of Mount Ḥermon; whereas in the Hellenistic age the Zenon archive seems to locate the toponym Βαιτανατα.[28]

ˤAnat-names can thus be found in Amorraean, Ugaritic, Phoenician, Punic, Hebrew, Aramaic (in Neo-Assyrian transcription), as well as probably in Greek transcriptions from Mount Ḥermon.

As far as Aramaic texts are concerned, the only possible anthroponym formed with ˤAnat is *ˤnty*, found twice in our corpus and nowhere else, once in a letter of Hermopolis (A2.1) and once in the list of donors (C3.15), but it is doubtful if it is built on the theonym, since the element *ˤnt* never occurs in compound names. The Aramaic assimilated form *ˤt*/*ˀt* (<*ˤnt*) is recorded in a number of anthroponyms.[29]

Attestation beyond proper names may still be found in the first millennium BC. Her cult is attested on the Middle Euphrates in the 8th century BC.[30] Four Phoenician inscriptions from Cyprus mentioning the goddess can be dated between the 5th and the late 4th–early 3rd century BC,[31] and a Punic inscription from Malta published in the late 1990s contains perhaps her name.[32]

Aramaic is absent from the list of the occurrences of ˤAnat outside Egypt. Even in Egypt, her occurrences are scanty. Her name is attested once in Papyrus Amherst 63 (VIII 9) and occurs in two inscriptions, which are however controversial. A short inscription (TAD D24.4) on a small wooden vase (9,5 cm h.), possibly from the

22 Lloyd (1994: 89).

23 Lloyd (1994: 90–92).

24 Milik (1956); Yeivin (1958); Cross (1980: 5–7).

25 Halff (1965: 74 (note 45), 88, 127, 132); Benz (1972: 63, 382).

26 Avigad, Sass (1997, No. 345; see also page 488).

27 Gitin, Dothan, Naveh (1997: 13–14 (Fig. 7)).

28 Aliquot (2008: 114).

29 A certain *ˀtˤdry* (patronym lost) is witness in the contract B4.4, a text with mixed onomastics, *ˤtḥt* may perhaps be read in fragmentary D1.16 and *ˀtḥtˀ* in C3.4, all from Elephantine. In Saqqara, *ˤthnwry* occurs in a fragment (Segal 1983, 122–3, No. 144).

30 Day (1999: 40).

31 Three of them can now be found in Bianco, Bonnet (2016). For the fourth one (RÉS 1209a), see Magnanini (1973: 116 (Idalion 1)).

32 Frendo (1999).

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

region of Memphis and published by Edda Bresciani in 1958,[33] is likely a forgery, like several other pieces from the Michaelidis collection.[34]

A second, interesting text (TADAE D21.17) is a small memorial stela of limestone (20,5 x 16,5 x 4) seen for the first time by Aimé-Giron (sceptical about its authenticity) in Cairo in 1926, and then found and bought by Dupont-Sommer in Paris ca thirty years later.

The inscription, allegedly from Memphis,[35] is dated by Dupont-Sommer to the end of the 6th century BC. The text runs:

1. lˀnn br ˀlyš
2. kmrˀ zy
3. bˁl bˁlˁnwt

1. Belonging to *ˀnn* son of *ˀlyš*
2. priest of
3. Baˁal of *bˁlˁnwt*.

The anthroponyms *ˀnn* and *ˀyš* are remarkable, and, as stressed by Aimé-Giron, they are likely renderings of *ḥnn* and *ˀlyšˁ*, i. e. product of a dialect which did not have ḥ and ˁ as phonemes (*ˀlyšˁ* could alternatively be related to Punic names *ˀlšˀ/y*, according to Benz from *ˁlšˀ/y*[36]). We would expect these forms in Phoenician and Punic, where *ˀnn* is indeed attested (Carthago), but not in Aramaic.

As regards the deity, Baˁal is known among the Aramaeans, but his importance in the Phoenician pantheon is well known. Finally, the discussed term *bˁlˁnwt* at the end likely contains a vocalization which, albeit unexpected, seems more Canaanaean than Aramaic, namely ô (<ā), or even o (>a).[37] If the inscription is

---

33 Bresciani (1958: 281–3 and plate III).

34 TADAE D: 299. The object is in itself suspicious: Bresciani considers it "del tutto originale", and surely not Egyptian, but rather a Phoenician importation – although I must say that I could find no Phoenician parallel for it. The text runs *mšhˀl kmrˀ zy ˁnt*. This would be the only occurrence of a priest of ˁAnat in the whole corpus. As regards the proper name *mšhˀl*, it is a hapax legomenon, and its first part is not easy to explain. Silverman suggested "a free invention after biblical Mîšāˀēl", which is a problematic name: if its first element is the interrogative pronoun *my*, the name cannot be Aramaic and is hardly Phoenician (*my*- in proper names is not recorded in Benz 1972).

35 « Au mois de décembre 1926, j'ai eu quelques instants entre les mains, sans pouvoir en prendre copie, une petite stèle de calcaire qu'on disait trouvée à Memphis » (Aimé-Giron 1931: 107).

36 Benz (1972: 379). We can further note that the original *ṯ would have already be written t in Imperial Aramaic, but this might be due to conservativism in anthroponymy.

37 Dupont-Sommer explains the form as dialectal, and compares the Biblical toponyms Bêt ˁAnāt (Jos. XIX:38; Judg. I:33) and Bêt ˁAnôt (Jos. XV:59), usually thought to be formed on theonym ˁAnat (see however Day 1999: 4–5). We may note that if Hallo and Tadmor (1977: 4–5) are correct in interpreting the names Mar-Ḫanuta and Sum-Ḫanuta found in a lawsuit from Hazor (18th–16th

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

not a forgery, we might simply think that, even if it was written in Aramaic, the author(s) had more familiarity with a Phoenician dialect than with Aramaic.

Whether the last term of the inscription contains the theonym ˁAnat is disputed. The polysemy of the term *bˁl* makes the word difficult to understand. It is a theonym, like in the previous word, but it also means "Lord", "owner", "husband", and "citizen". In this inscription, we may either think that *bˁl* means "husband", followed by theonym ˁAnat/ˁAnôt, or that it means "citizen", followed by a toponym: in the first case, Baˁal would be called "Husband of ˁAnat", in the second, "Citizen of ˁAnôt". Dupont-Sommer, who considers both explanations possible, favours the first one.[38]

According to Dupont-Sommer, Baˁal and ˁAnat were husband and wife. Albeit it is possible that in Ugarit these gods are consorts, this view has been sometimes challenged.[39] In Egypt, where the goddess was imported in the Hyksos period, ˁAnat is considered the wife of Seth, who is equated with Semitic Baˁal. This does not automatically mean that the same was true for Ugarit, but it makes possible that Baˁal could be "husband of ˁAnat" in 6th-century Egypt. However, the use of defining a god or a goddess "husband" or wife of another god/goddess is otherwise unattested in our corpus, although it is likely that the same meaning is conveyed in Elephantine by a much more elliptical form, a *status constructus* in which ˁAnat is the first element of two theonyms, ˁAnatyaho/ˁAnatbetʾel.

A further argument in favour of the interpretation of *ˁnwt* as a theonym is the disposition of the inscription on the stone. The first line reports name and patronym, the second the qualification "priest of", whereas the third has the words *bˁl* and *bˁlˁnwt*; although there was enough space to write *bˁl* after *zy* at the end of line 2, and the surface does not seem damaged from the photo.[40] This division would have been more logical, if the purpose was to write "priest of Baˁal, citizen of ˁAnot".

To sum up, ˁAnat is a West-Semitic deity, already present in Amorraean, but much more significant in the Canaanaean than in the Aramaean pantheon. Moreover, she was well known not only in Israel, but also in Judaea well before the Aramaeans were deported there. If the presence of ˁAnat in the pantheon of the Judaeans has to be considered an external influence, then both the Phoenicians and the Egyptians are much more likely than the Aramaeans as promoters of her cult.

However, an external influence is not the only possibility. That the religion of the Judaeans and Israelites was not so different from that of the "Canaanites" has

BC) as ˁAnat-names, forms of theonym ˁAnat with o rather than a would be attested already in the second millennium BC.

38 Dupont-Sommer (1956: 83–4).

39 E. g. Walls (1992); Day (1999).

40 See also Dupont-Sommer (1956: 83).

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

been now generally accepted.[41] Another aspect has been the focus of interest in the last decades: the important role played by goddesses both in the Bronze and in the Iron age, "even in the supposedly monotheistic culture of Israel".[42] Many studies have been devoted to this subject since the ground-breaking monograph by Patai in 1967,[43] who supported the idea of a goddess through the history of Israel and Judah. The discovery of many figures of goddesses in Palestine, and of the inscriptions of Kuntillet ˁAğrud (Northern Sinai)[44] and Ḫirbet el-Qom (near Ḥebron),[45] dated respectively to the end of the 9th and to the middle of the 8th century BC, gave new inputs to the discussion.

I am sceptical about an Aramaean origin of this cult, both because ˁAnat is not typically Aramaean, and because traces of her worship may be found in Palestine; as well as the presence of a paredra besides Yahweh. In other words, the cult of a consort of Yahweh is not unprecedented, only the name ˁAnat-Yaho is. If it has been created under some external influence, then it is not her role, but just her name which constitutes an innovation. In this case, both a Phoenician and an Egyptian influence are possible: in the first millennium BC, ˁAnat may be found especially in the Phoenician-Punic area, and in Egypt, where she has been imported as a foreign deity, but was soon integrated in the Egyptian pantheon, had her own temples, and was worshipped until the Roman period.

God Betˀel/Baitˀil (*btˀl*) is attested in one of the most ancient Aramaic documents from Egypt, the letter of Hermopolis A2.1, where he is the titular deity of a temple in Syene. The deity is also attested in Papyrus Amherst 63, where he plays an important role. Moreover, Betˀel occurs as a theonym in several proper names of the corpus, all dated from the end of the 6th to the end of the 5th century BC. Finally, Betˀel is the second element of the theonyms ˁAnat-Betˀel (*ˁntbytˀl*), attested in Elephantine, and ˀEšem-Betˀel (*ˀšmbytˀl*) and Ḥerem-Betˀel (*ḥrmbytˀl*), recorded in Elephantine and in Papyrus Amherst 63.

God Betˀel, together with ˁAnat-Betˀel, is attested for the first time in the Neo-Assyrian period, in two treaties of Esarhaddon: the treaty between Esarhaddon and Baal, king of Tyrus (dated shortly after 676 BC),[46] and the so-called "succession treaty", concluded in 672 to secure the succession of his son Assurbanipal. The occurrence of their names in the latter, which has been disputed, is now certain, since they are preserved in the copy recently found in Tell Taynat, albeit with

41 Literature is overwhelming. For a recent discussion with further bibliographic references, see Thomas 2017.

42 Ackerman (2003: 391).

43 Patai (1990 [1967]).

44 Meshel et al. (2012).

45 Hadley (1987).

46 SAA 2: 5, IV, l. 6′.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

some errors,[47] which may testify the scarce knowledge the scribe had with these gods.

$^{\mathrm{d}}$*ba-a-ti*-DINGIR.MEŠ $^{\mathrm{d}}$*a-na-ti-ba*-⸢*a*⸣-[*a-ti*-DINGI]R.MEŠ
ina ŠU$^{\mathrm{II}}$ UR.MAH *a-ki*-⸢*li*⸣ [*lim-nu-u-k*]*u-nu*
Esarhaddon's Treaty with Baˁal, King of Tyrus (676 BC), iv 6'–7'

$^{\mathrm{d}}$*ba-a-a-ti*(text: *bal*)-DINGIR <$^{\mathrm{d}}$>*a-na-an-ti*-⸢$^{\mathrm{d}}$⸣*ba-a-a-ti*-DINGIR
ina ŠU$^{\mathrm{II}}$ UR.MAH *a-ki-li lim-nu-ku-nu*
Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty (672 BC), Tell Taynat vi 48–49

May Bait-ili and Anat-Bait-ili
Hand you over to the paws of a man-eating lion

In both texts, several deities are asked to punish any breach of the treaty, and among them Baitˀel and ˁAnat-Baitˀel, who should hand the culprit "to the paws of a men-eating lion". It is likely that they are meant here to be a couple, but this is not entirely clear, and it must be stressed that in the standard curse section of the succession treaty it is the only case in which two deities are mentioned together, without any further specification.

In the treaty with Baˁal, Baitˀel and ˁAnat-Baitˀel are mentioned after Mullišŝu, Ištar, Gula and the Pleiades (but the beginning is broken and several deities were likely mentioned before Mullišŝu) and immediately before the conclusion "May the great gods of heaven and earth, the gods of Assyria, the gods of Akkad and the gods of Eber-nari curse you with an indissoluble curse". After this statement, Phoenician deities are evoked: Baˁal Šamaim, Baˁal Malagê, Baal Ṣaphon, Melqart, ˀEšmun, and ˁAstarte. Due to the ambiguous position in which the two deities occur, Betˀel and ˁAnat-Betˀel have been considered either Phoenician[48] or Aramaean.[49]

In the Succession treaty, after a long list of Akkadian gods, are mentioned the Pleiades (possibly West Semitic rather than Akkadian), Aramiš, Baitˀel and ˁAnat-Baitˀel, and finally Kubaba. Kubaba, non-Semitic in origin, but attested in the Aramaic inscriptions of Zincirli, is explicitly said to be the goddess of Carchemish. Aramiš was thought to be a North-Syrian god, since some rare personal names containing Aramiš are associated with Northern Syria in Neo-Assyrian sources. However, in the copy of Tell Taynat the god is called "lord of the city and land of Qarnê (and) lord of the city and the land of Azaʾi"; these titles suggest rather

47 Lauinger (2012: 102, T vi 48).
48 Milik (1967).
49 Van der Toorn (1992).

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

a South-Syrian origin of the god, because Qarnê is the Assyrian province south of Damascus.[50] Since Baitˀel and ˁAnat-Baitˀel are mentioned between Aramiš and Kubaba, it is possible that they are supposed to "cover" the remaining region, Central-Northern Syria, but unfortunately nothing is said about their origin, and they are not related to a specific toponym.

Northern Syria, and more precisely the region of Aleppo and/or the reign of Arpad have been cautiously suggested as the place of origin for both of them.[51] However, there are in my opinion several problems. First of all, Baitˀel and ˁAnat-Baitˀel are not linked to a specific city or region in the treaties of Esarhaddon. Secondly, and most importantly, Aleppo was likely part of the Aramaean reign of Arpad (modern Tell Rifˁat, ca. 30 km northwest from Aleppo), or at best an independent city, over which however the king of Arpad seems to have had suzerainty (Sefire III, 5). From Arpad we have two important royal inscriptions. One is the Bar-Hadad stele, showing a clear Phoenician influence both in the iconography, and in the god depicted and mentioned, Melqart. The second inscription is the longest extant Old Aramaic inscription, the Stele of Sefire. As usual in treaties, the text presents a long list of the deities of both parties. The first part of the list contains mainly Akkadian gods, whereas the second mentions the deities of Arpad, beginning with Hadad of Aleppo ([*hdd ḥ*]*lb*: Sefire IA, l. 10). In the list there is no trace of Betˀel and ˁAnat. If the first inscription shows that the reign of Arpad could be exposed to Phoenician influences, the second demonstrates that Betˀel and ˁAnat-Betˀel were not central deities in the reign of Arpad – or at least makes it rather unlikely.[52]

Albeit the origins of Betˀel and ˁAnathbetˀel cannot be established, the region in which they were known was likely rather vast, and included areas now in modern Lebanon, Syria, and Israel. The Bible states that Betˀel was an important god in Israel. In Jer 48:13 is stated: "Moab shall be ashamed of Kemosh as the house of Israel was ashamed of Beth-ˀEl, their refuge" (ובש מואב מכמוש כאשר-בשו בית ישׂראל מבית אל מבטחם). Differently from other passages of the Old Testament, in which the toponym Bethˀel might be meant (Am 3:14, 5:5), here Bethˀel is obviously a god. This passage further suggests that Bethˀel was an important deity in Israel, since Kemoš was the main god of the Moabites.

Although no Phoenician nor Punic inscription mentions this god, his name is preserved in the most informative literary text dealing with Phoenician religion, namely *The Phoenician History* (*Phoinikikà*) by Philo of Byblos, active between the reign of Hadrian and the reign of Antoninus Pius. The text is only partially

50 Lauinger (2012: 119).

51 van der Toorn (1992).

52 The same argument, i. e. the absence of textual evidence, is used by van der Toorn to reject a Tyrian origin of the deities.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

preserved, and the main source is the *Praeparatio evangelica* by Eusebius of Caesarea (4th century AD).

According to Philo, the main deity was Baalshamim, and other pre-eminent gods were Elioun and his consort Berouth, parents of Ouranos. Grandson of Elioun and son of Ouranos/Sky and his wife Ge/Earth was Elos, identified by him with Chronos, and brothers of Elos were Atlas, Dagon, and Baitylos:

> Παραλαβὼν δὲ ὁ Οὐρανὸς τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς ἀρχὴν ἄγεται πρὸς γάμον τὴν ἀδελφὴν Γῆν, καὶ ποιεῖται ἐξ αὐτῆς παῖδας τέσσαρας, Ἦλον τὸν καὶ Κρόνον καὶ Βαίτυλον καὶ Δαγὼν ὅς ἐστι Σίτων καὶ Ἄτλαντα.
> *Philo of Byblos (Eusebius, Praeparatio evangelica 1.10.16)*

"Ouranos, having succeeded to his father's rule, took in marriage his sister Ge, and had from her four children: Elos, who is also (called) Kronos, Baitylos, Dagon, who is Siton, and Atlas".

Thus, Baitylos is clearly considered by Philo a part of the Phoenician pantheon. The mention of Betʔel by Philo of Byblos, and the fact that ʕAnat was apparently related to him could suggest that his ultimate origin was closer to a Phoenician than to an Aramaean area. It is then conceivable that Betʔel was known in a vast region, and was not just "Aramaean", although Aramaean culture in Babylonia seems to have given impulse to the use of this theonym in proper names.

The majority of Betʔel-names come indeed from Babylonia during the Neo-Babylonian period, and no Betʔel-name is attested before, nor after the 5th century BC. I suspect that the spread of Betʔel-names in the Neo-Babylonian period is due to a Babylonian influence. Betʔel means "house of god", "temple", and this is the only meaning this compound has in Aramaic. Hyatt suggested long ago that the name meant originally "temple", then more specifically "temple of ʔEl", and in a further development it designated the deity living in it. Ultimately, the temple itself was deified, and could be conceived as a deity.[53] This suggestion seems convincing. Differently from other theonyms, but similarly to god names as Baʕal or ʔEl, Baytʔel/Betʔel is semantically clear. It is conceivable that Baytʔel/Betʔel meant originally simply "temple", and then became an hypostasis of god ʔEl, rarely attested as such in the first millennium BC. This would also explain the total absence of this god in the second millennium BC, due to the fact that the theonym developed in a second stage. The clear meaning of the theonym could have promoted his transmission in the whole area; and even parallel developments cannot be ruled out. However, in order to explain the popularity of Betʔel-names from the Neo-

53 Hyatt (1939: 91).

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Babylonian period, I think, again with Hyatt,[54] that a Mesopotamian impulse could have been crucial.

Proper names formed on the temple are extremely rare in West Semitic, but popular in Mesopotamia, where the word for "temple", Bītum, or the name of a specific temple (for example the Eanna or the Esagila), could be used as theophoric element.[55] Indeed, in Mesopotamia the temple could be addressed as if it were alive, and it and its elements could be considered divine.[56] Temples are even mentioned in blessing formulas in the letters in Southern Babylonia,[57] as it happens in the Aramaic letters from Egypt, possibly another Babylonian influence. It is thus conceivable that a theophoric element meaning "temple" was considered suitable for the Mesopotamian onomastic system. It is worth noting that after the end of the 5th century BC, no Betˀel-name is recorded. In other words, Betˀel disappears from Semitic anthroponymy, and even the mentions of the deity are more than scanty. Betˀel/Baitˀel is unlikely a pure Mesopotamian creation as is most probably Amurru, a god unknown to the Amorraeans but created as Amorrean god by the Mesopotamians.[58] However, Betˀel/Baitˀel knew a real spread only after a Mesopotamian sojourn and is first mentioned in Mesopotamian texts, thus demonstrating the role that Mesopotamia played in his launching.

The presence of Betˀel among the Judaean pantheon of Elephantine is thus not necessarily due to an Aramaean influence in Elephantine or in Israel: it could be rather the effect either of a common heritage, and/or of a long stay in the region in which Betˀel-names reached their peak, namely Babylonia. It is worth observing that in the corpus published by Pearce and Wunsch Bītil-names occur particularly in the documentation of Al-Yaḫudu properly, or in texts which mention Judeans,[59] although none of these names can be safely considered to have been borne by a Judean.

There is a similar problem in the Betˀel-names from Egypt, even if a couple of Betˀel-names were likely borne by Judaeans. Betˀel-names have been considered "Jewish" by Silverman,[60] but in most cases the "Jewishness" of the bearer is uncertain or even unlikely: there are only two or three cases in which a Betˀel-name occurs with a Hebrew name within a family (*bytʾlntn br yhwntn* in B6.4 and *hwšʿ [br byt]ʾlnwry* in the list of donors for the temple (C3.15); more ambiguous is *ḥrmntn br bytʾlntn br ṣḥʾ* in B6.4). These few cases, scanty as they are,

54 Hyatt (1939: 92).
55 Roberts (1972: 17–18).
56 Hundley (2013: 76).
57 See Arnold (1992: 384).
58 Beaulieu (2005).
59 Pearce, Wunsch (2014: 13).
60 Silverman (1985: 223).

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

demonstrate that Betˀel had some importance for the Judaean community of Elephantine.

Among the characteristics of Yahweh and of his cult in Elephantine, two seem relevant for our purpose: the centrality of the temple, and the presence of Yahweh, who is explicitly said to reside in Elephantine. In B3.3 (l. 2), ˁAnanyah is called "servitor of Yahweh the god who is in Elephantine the fortress" (*lḥn zy yhh ʾlhʾ zy byb byrtʾ*). Other cases are more ambiguous, but given the construction in B3.3, they most likely referred to Yahweh. Furthermore, his wife Tapemet is once designated as "Servitor (f.) of Yahweh the god dwelling (m.) in Elephantine the fortress" (B3.12, l. 3; *lḥnh zy yhw ʾlhʾ škn yb byrtʾ*). Yahweh was thus thought to dwell in Elephantine, and his most obvious house there is the temple. It is possible that Betˀel was identified with Yahweh in his specific role as the dweller of the temple. This would explain why the wife of Yahweh could be called also ˁAnat-Betˀel, and not only ˁAnat-Yaho, and their son could be named ˀEšem-Betˀel.

As far as the elements ˀEšem and Ḥerem in the theonyms ˀEšem-Betˀel and Ḥerem-Betˀel are concerned, their interpretation is doubtful. In my opinion, the most likely explanation is that *ˀšm* is related with *šm*, "name", and *ḥrm* with God Ḫarīm, which in Akkadian names is usually considered to designate "the sanctuary" or "the deified sacred enclosure".[61] As far as Ḥerem-Betˀel is concerned, element betˀel has been interpreted here as "baetyl", i. e. as "standing stone". This idea should however be rejected, and for several reasons. Firstly, in no Semitic language *bytˀl* indicates a standing stone. Even the frequently quoted biblical passage is misleading.

61 Zadok (1977: 60); Roberts (1972: 30). Van der Toorn recently suggested a correlation with Akkadian *ḫarīmtu*, "prostitute", or better "single woman" (Assante 1998). Van der Toorn maintain that *ḥrm* and *ḫarīmtu* are formed on the root *ḥrm*: "The name Herem (*ḥrm*) must somehow be connected to the sacred marriage ceremonies. The etymology of *ḥrm* is uncontested; it derives from the common Semitic root ḤRM, which refers to the sphere of the sacred – awe-inspiring, forbidding, fascinating" (2016: 677). There are however several problems. The word is vocalized in Akkadian *ḫarmu*, not *ḫarīmu*, and is moreover applied exclusively to Tammuz and Apsu (CAD Ḫ: 104). We should then postulate a neologism, in which on the feminine *ḫarīmtu* a masculine form *ḫarīmu* was created. A form *Ḫarīmu* does exist in Akkadian, but it only designates the above-mentioned theonym of likely West Semitic origin that occurs in Old Akkadian (CAD Ḫ: 102) and Neo-Babylonian. The second problem is related to the etymology of the terms. Root *ḥrm* is not Protosemitic, but rather Proto-West-Semitic, and had originally the meaning "to forbid" (Kogan 2015: 84). The root is not attested in Akkadian, where verb *ḫarāmu*, "to separate", usually considered related to *ḫarīmu*, is barely attested (CAD Ḫ: 89–90) and cannot be related to a Proto-Semitic *ḥrm*. In fact, Proto-Semitic ḥ went lost in Akkadian, where the expected form of PS *ḥrm* would be **erēmum*. This is the reason for which the theonym *Ḫarīm* found in proper names in Sargonic age is considered West Semitic rather than Akkadian (Roberts 1972: 30). It must be stressed that *ḫarāmu* means only "to separate", and it does not have any religious connotation. Also *ḫarīmtu* is not a religious term, but rather an administrative label denoting an independent woman not subdued to the authority of a man, who "could be anything from a virgin to a prostitute" (Assante 1998: 13).

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

In Gen 28:22, as Jacob, after his dream, erects a stele with the stone he used as a pillow during the night, he states "and this stone (*ʾeḇen*), which I have erected as stele (*maṣṣēbāh*), will be a house of god (*bêṯ ʾĕlohîm*)", calling the place Bethel (והאבן הזאת אשר-שׂמתי מצבה יהיה בית אלהים). The same word, "the house of god", may be found in 28:17, when Jacob, scared by his dream, exclaims: "How dreadful is this place! This is none other than the house of God, this is the gate of heaven!" (מה-נורה המקום הזה אין זה כי אם-בית אלהים וזה שער השמים). It is obvious that the scope of the passage is not to establish an equivalence between *bêṯ ʾĕlohîm* and the stone, but rather to explain the toponym. The stele is called *maṣṣēbāh*, a noun well attested also in Aramaic, with the meaning "stele" or "column". Secondly, in Classical authors the *baetylos* is a small, round, magical stone, mainly connected with sky, or the stone swallowed by Chronos (mainly among lexicographers); it is definitely not a stele, nor a column, and nor is there anything of this kind in any Greek or Latin source.[62]

To sum up, I think that these deities cannot be taken as proof of syncretism. It cannot be ruled out that Betʾel entered the Judaean pantheon because of an Aramaean influence, and ʿAnat because of an Egyptian or Phoenician one, but an internal development seems more likely, for both deities were already known in Palestine.

These are the only Semitic deities other than Yahweh occurring in the texts pertaining to the Judaean community. The only exception is a famous ostracon mentioning Nabu, Shamash and Nergal together with Yahweh (CG 277; D7.30), first published by Dupont-Sommer in 1944.[63] The text, dated to the beginning of the 5th century BC, runs:

1. ʾl ʾḥy ḥgy ʾḥwk
2. yrḥw šlm ʾḥy
3. bl wnbw šmš wnrgl

1. To my brother Ḥaggay your brother
2. Yarḥo. The well-being/peace of my brother
3. Bel and Nabu, Šamaš and Nergal (will ask all time?).

This ostracon presents some peculiarities. The text is complete as it is, although there is no verb: the last two letters of *nrgl* are written below the last *š* of *šmš* and conjunction *w*, which means that the ostracon was broken after the text had been written. It is possible that the verb of the salutation formula and the core of the letter were written on another ostracon, but this is not likely, because the ostraca, the

62 As stressed already by Moore (1903); see also Gaifman (2008) and Grassi (2022b).

63 Dupont-Sommer (1944: 28): « recueilli à Éléphantine par l'égyptologue H. Gauthier, au cours d'une campagne des fouilles que celui-ci a conduite sur le site célèbre durant l'hiver 1908–1909 ». The director of the third campaign was however not H. Gauthier, but Joseph-Étienne Gautier.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

dimension of which may be considerably different, were usually chosen according to the length of the text. In the corpus there are apparently no cases in which the scribe chose to write the text on two different ostraca. This poses the question as to what the text was intended for. As suggested by Lozachmeur, it is possible that the text was a scribal exercise, or a model for an apprentice scribe.[64] We may also surmise that it was simply the draft of a letter.

The two possibilities, that is that the text is a scribal exercise/model, or a draft, have different implications. From its publication, the text has been taken as paradigmatic to represent the degree of syncretism in everyday life in Elephantine. If the text is a draft, this is a possibility, but if the text is just a model, there are almost no religious implications bar the fact that these deities were known in the colony – as is clear from the proper names.

The text has also been described as "Greetings from a Pagan to a Jew",[65] – and Yarḥo has been frequently called "Aramaean",[66] whereas Ḥaggay would have been Judaean. These names are much more complex than commonly assumed. There is no proof that Ḥaggay was exclusively borne by Judaeans,[67] although in Elephantine the name, which is very common, is mostly associated with Yahwistic names. Yarḥo is definitely not an Aramaean name: in Old and Imperial Aramaic, *yrḥ* is not recorded in proper names but in the Amman inscription (*yrḥʿzr*), which is culturally Ammonite,[68] whereas *yrḥ*-names are known in Ugaritic, Phoenico-Punic, and Ammonite.[69] As far as Hebrew is concerned, Moon-names are not frequent, but they are attested: *ʿbdyrḥ* is known from a seal (CWSS 34),[70] and for Biblical Yārôaḥ a derivation from *yrḥ* has been proposed by Dupont-Sommer.[71] An indirect indication that cult of the Moon was practiced in Palestine are the prohibitions contained in the Bible (Deut. 4:19; 17:3; 2 Kgs 23:5; Jer. 8:2), and further references

64 Lozachmeur (2006: 88, 411). Lemaire, who also considers the text a scribal exercise, prefers the translation "Shalam my brother. Bel and Nabu, Shamash and Nergal" (Lemaire 2013: 60–1). It seems however more logical to consider the deities part of the salutation formula, and not a separate list.

65 Ginsberg (1969: 491).

66 Porten (1968: 166); Grelot (1972: 349).

67 See e. g. Zadok (1979: 24). However, there is no proof, either, that the name was borne by non-Judaeans and in Al-Yaḫudu the name is at least once borne by a Judaean (Pearce, Wunsch 2014: 52–3). There is no doubt that the name is mostly attested among communities with Judaean elements.

68 This inscription has been considered sometimes Ammonite sometimes Aramaic. See recently Fales, Grassi (2016: 244–6).

69 Gröndahl (1967: 145); Benz (1972: 326); Aufrecht (2019: 494).

70 The man has been sometimes considered an Ammonite: see commentary in Avigad, Sass (1997: 62, No. 34).

71 The etymology of the name is disputed (s. Noth 1928: 226; Zadok 1988: 133) and, although Dupont-Sommer's proposal is usually neglected, a derivation from *yrḥ* cannot be ruled out.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

in the Bible support the importance of this cult.[72] As far as ending -w is concerned, it must be stressed that, if it is rare in Hebrew proper names,[73] it is almost unattested in Aramaic but for the transcriptions of Arabic anthroponyms (e. g. in Nabataean), in which -w represents their nominative ending. All in all, the possibility that the name is borne by a Judaean, as originally suggested by Dupont-Sommer, seems to be the most likely.

To sum up, it is difficult to judge whether this ostracon represents proof of religious syncretism, because it is a unique piece in several respects. It must be however stressed that Nabu, Shamash and Nergal are recorded nowhere else in Elephantine.

Khnum

Albeit there is no proof of syncretism as far as Semitic deities are concerned, it is clear that the Judaean community was not rigidly monotheistic. The attitude towards the main Egyptian deity of Elephantine, the ram god Khnum, is significant in this respect.

In Elephantine, his temple was located near the temple of Yahweh. The neighbourly relations were apparently peaceful for most of the time, but at the end of the 5th century BC the priests of Khnum were responsible for the attack on the temple of Yahweh. This is of course one of the reasons for which Khnum occurs rather frequently in the documents of the Judaean community, but this is not the whole story, since the proximity of the temple and its importance apparently favoured a certain affection for the god on the part of the Judaeans. It is worth stressing that Khnum is the only god beside Yahweh appearing in a blessing formula, the unique exception being the already discussed ostracon D7.30. It should be also observed that, even in the most dramatic moments of the conflict between the Judaeans and the priests of Khnum, the god himself is mentioned with respect.

It should be noted that Khnum is always called “the god”, *ˀlhˀ*, just as Yahweh, although the scribes, when their name is legible (this is not the case for B3.7), bear names which are typical of the Judaean community: Ḥaggay son of Šemayah (B3.4; 3.10; 3.11) and Maˁuziah son of Nathan (B3.5).

We would look in vain for any anathema or disdain. Quite the contrary, from the scarce evidence it is clear that Khnum was considered powerful.

In a letter likely sent from Abydos at the end of the 5th century BC (A4.3), a worried Maˁuziah son of Nathan (the scribe of contract B3.5 mentioned above) wrote to “Yedaniah, ˀUriah and the priests of Yahweh the god” in Elephantine to inform

72 See Schmidt (1999).

73 Zadok (1988: 157–8).

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

them about the difficult experience he had just lived. He had been imprisoned in Abydos under an accusation of theft. Unfortunately, no detail is provided about the situation, which was evidently not only a matter of theft, because in a sibylline sentence he states "To you it is known that Khnum is against us since Ḥananiah has been in Egypt until now" (*lkm ydyˁ zy ḥnwm hw ˁlyn mn zy ḥnnyh bmṣryn ˁd kˁn*, l. 8). Whatever the reason for the conflict, it is interesting that not the priests of Khnum are said to be against the Judaean community, but the god himself. The involvement of the god is emphasized by the presence of the pronoun *hw*, which is normally used to give prominence. It is possible that Maˁuziah ultimately meant that the priests of Khnum were acting against the Judaeans of Elephantine; but he wrote the name of the god and stressed the same by the use of the pronoun, thus implying that he recognized him as god and as fearful force.

Much more benevolent is thought to be the force of Khnum on an ostracon (D7.21/CG70),[74] found during the French campaign in Elephantine in 1907 and dated to the first half of the 5th century BC. The ostracon runs as follows:

1. ˀl mry mykyh ˁbdk
2. gdl šlm wḥyn šlḥt
3. lk brktk lyhh wlḥnwm
4. kˁn šlḥly lbšˀ
5. zy ˁlyk wˀ/yḥṭnh
6. lšlmk šlḥt sprˀ

1. To my Lord Mikayah your servant
2. Gaddul. Peace and life I sent
3. to you. I blessed you by Yahweh and Khnum.
4. Now, send me the garment
5. that you wear, so that he/I will sew it.[75]
6. About your welfare I sent the letter.

Milkayah is a Yahwistic name, and Gaddul a frequent anthroponym among the Judaean community. The mention of Yahweh together with Khnum is unique in the corpus, but it clearly shows the respect of the Judeans toward the main deity of the island.

Further evidence that Khnum was appreciated also by people of likely West Semitic origin may perhaps be found in contract B2.7, dated 446 BC, although the reading of the theonym is disputed. In this contract, Maḥseyah son of Yedanyah gives her daughter Mipṭaḥyah a house. The boundaries of this house are said to

74 First published by Dupont-Sommer (1945).

75 The reading *y* seems to be more likely than ˀ according to the photo: "and he will sew it".

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

be the house of Yaˀuš son of Penuliah, the temple of Yahweh, the house of Gaddul son of ˀOšeˁa, and the house of Ḥarudj or Ḥaruṣ son of Palṭu, most likely priest of Khnum the god. The name of the god is partially reconstructed. Since *kmr*, "priest" (of a god other than Yahweh), and *ˀlhˀ* are legible, what follows *kmr zy* is obviously the name of a god. The first editors, Arthur Cowley and Archibald Sayce, suggested *kmr* [*lḥnw*]⌜*m*⌝ [*ws*]*ty ˀlhyˀ*, "the priest of the gods [Khnûm and Sa]ti",[76] whereas Porten and Yardeni do not restore the theonym: *kmr zy ḥ*[…] *ˀlhˀ*. Judging from the plate published in the first editions, *ˀlhˀ* is almost certain, and there is moreover not enough space in the lacuna to contain two theonyms. The traces after *kmr* are fully compatible with *zy*. The first grapheme of the god name is almost surely *ḥ*, and the traces of the second grapheme are compatible with *n*. The third grapheme is completely lost, whereas traces of the fourth are still visible. A reading *ḥn*[*w*]*m* seems then to be preferable, although both *n* and *m* are not entirely certain. Moreover, we know that this priest lived in the Elephantine, near the temple of Yahweh, and this means near the temple of Khnum as well.

To sum up, all the evidence suggests that *ḥrwṣ br plṭw* was a priest of Khnum. Although *ḥrwṣ* may be interpreted either as Egyptian or as Semitic, *plṭw* is surely Semitic, and both names are attested in Hebrew (albeit the second with suffix -*y* and not -*w*).[77] It is thus possible that this priest of Khnum was of Judean origin.

Syene

The letters of Hermopolis and the burial texts from Saqqara

As already pointed out, very few documents have been found in Syene. As regards the Semitic cults attested there, our main sources are the letters sent to Syene from Memphis, which for unknown reasons were left in Hermopolis, located near the boundaries between Upper and Lower Egypt. In these letters, Makkibanit son of Psami and Nebušezib son of Peṭeḥnum, likely half-brothers,[78] wrote to their family

76 Sayce, Cowley (1906: 40–1, (translation and notes), 66 (transliteration), Text E).

77 For Ḥārûṣ (Father-in-law of king Manasseh)/*ḥrwṣ* and its different etymologies, s. Silverman (1985: 148), Zadok (1988: 110), HAHAT, 396. For Palṭî/*plṭy* and similar names, s. Silverman (1985: 170), Zadok (1988: 74), HAHAT, 1054–5.

78 Their father is different and their mother apparently the same (A2.1; A2.4). However, "father" and "mother" seem to have been used sometimes as honorific titles, as in A2.1, where Nebušezib addresses Psami as "my father". Perhaps, "father" and "mother" can sometimes be used with the meaning "father/mother in law", and Makkibanit and Nabušezib could be, as suggested by Bresciani, Kamil (1966: 365) and Grelot (1972: 147), brothers-in law. Many family relations remain unclear because of the ambiguity of the term "brother" and "sister", the meaning of which is fluid and

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

in Syene, and in the opening formulas they mention the temples of their home city: the already mentioned temple of Betˀel and the temple of the Queen of Heaven (A2.1: *šlm byt btˀl wbyt mlkt šmyn*), the temple of Nabu (A2.3: *šlm byt nbw*), the temple of Banit (*šlm byt bnt bswn*: A2.2 and A2.4; in 2.2 is mentioned also "perfumed oil for the temple of Banit" (*mšḥ bšm lbt bnt*), bought by Makkibanit). This formula is usually translated as "Greetings to the temple of Betˀel and the temple of Malkat Shamayn/Banit in Syene/Nabu", and then "from X to Y". I find more convincing the suggestion by Fales,[79] who considers *šlm byt* DN related to the second part: "The peace/well-being of the temple of X to my sister Y from your brother Z". In this interpretation, the sender is asking for the peace/ well-being emanating from the temple to be conveyed upon his relative. If *šlm byt* DN is interpreted as greetings to the temple, the construction is, as far as I know, unprecedented. If a kind of blessing is asked through the temple, then this formula shows a possible Babylonian influence, for the concept of appealing to a temple for a blessing is attested in South Babylonia. One of the governors of Uruk used this kind of blessing in his letters: "May Uruk and Eanna bless the king of the land my lord" (*Uruk u Eanna ana šar mātāti bēlīja likrubū*).[80]

A Mesopotamian influence is visible also in some of the mentioned deities, Nabu and Banit. Nabu is by far the second most common Semitic deity after Yahweh in the Aramaic texts from Egypt, and in their anthroponymy. A further mention of his cult in Syene is provided by the clay sarcophagus found in Saqqara Sud by Gustave Jéquier, which mentions a priest of Nabu from Syene (TADAE D18.1): *lšˀyl kmrˀ zy nbw ytb tqmˀ bswn*. Šaˀīl, a man bearing an Aramaic name, is thus "priest of Nabu", and *bswn*, "in Syene", makes clear that the cult of the god was in Syene. Participle *ytb*, "residing", is usually referred to Šaˀīl, but it could refer to god Nabu as well.[81]

Nabu is a deity of Mesopotamian origin, as well as Banit. The name of this goddess may represent either Akkadian *banītu*, "Beautiful one", or Akkadian *bānītu*, "Creatress" (CAD B, 94–95). Banītu and Bānītu are found as epithets for Nanay (CAD

indicates generically a strong relation: in letter A2.7 – which is not part of the Makkibanit/Nebušezib correspondence – the sender defines himself "brother" and the recipient "mother" on the inside and "sister" on the outside.

79 Fales (1987).

80 Arnold (1992: 384).

81 In the first case, the difficult term *tqmˀ* has been interpreted either as an adverb, "ordinarily" (prefix *t* + root *qwm*; these formations *t* + *qwm* are indeed well attested, however to my knowledge not in adverbial sense), or as the usual word for "ricin oil" (Egyptian loanword), here in the sense of "the castor place". In the second case, *tqmˀ* would be a substantive with the meaning "sanctuary" (for both interpretations, see DNWSI, 1228).

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

B, 81, 3'),[82] although the latter is more frequently used for Ištar.[83] An identification with Nanay, the spouse of Nabu, seems quite reasonable.[84]

We have already discussed about Betˀel and the impulse that Mesopotamia likely gave to the spread of his worship. As regards the "Queen of Heaven", her identification is difficult, because the epithet is used for several goddesses and is rather generic. This "Queen" has been identified either with Astarte[85] or with ˁAnat,[86] although a combination of the two cannot be ruled out, and the use of generic epithets might be "a symptom of a religious atmosphere in which the qualities of a deity are held to be of more importance than her name",[87] and already in 1967 Milik observed that a mixed religious milieu could have facilitated the use of shared epithets, without the loss of one's own traditions.[88]

Albeit these deities are all Semitic, the blessing formula contains always the name of the Egyptian god Ptaḥ: "I/we bless you (m./f./pl.) by Ptaḥ, who may/will show me your (f., m., pl.) face in peace" (*brktky/brktk/brknkn lptḥ zy yḥwny/yḥzny ˀpyky/ˀpyk/ˀpykn bšlm*), and the formula shows perhaps a Demotic influence.[89] It is likely that Ptaḥ was chosen because he was the main god of the city, Memphis, in which the letters were written and the two "brothers" Makkibanit and Nabušezib were at that time conducting their business. It is indeed very common that the Egyptian deities mentioned in the Aramaic texts are related to the place in which the texts were written.[90]

These letters clearly show on one hand that the members of this family were willing to use an Egyptian god (more specifically, the god of the city in which they were staying) in the blessing formula, and on the other hand that they were still attached to "their" temples of Semitic deities in Syene. The anthroponymy of their letters shows the same tendency. Several names, and among them Makkibanit and Nabušezib, contain as theophoric elements the very same deities who had their temples in Syene. There are moreover some other names containing Semitic theophoric elements, but there are also Egyptian names, sometimes containing Egyptian theophoric elements.

---

82 Tallqvist (1938: 386).

83 Tallqvist (1938: 70–1).

84 See Holm (2017: 24–5).

85 Bresciani, Kamil (1966: 400).

86 Porten (1969: 120).

87 Houtman (1999: 679).

88 Milik (1967: 563).

89 Vittmann (2017: 252). Particle *zy* can be translated either as a relative particle, as in Demotic, or as declarative particle, as it is usually translated.

90 We have already seen that the most common Egyptian deity in Elephantine is Khnum. We may further notice for example the mention of Osiris in the *proskynemata* from the Osirieion of Abydos (D22.9–27) and the *proskynemata* to Min in Abu Qwei (Eastern Desert; D22.29–32).

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

There are clearly two cultures that have been intermingled in these texts. The Semitic background of the people involved is still strong, as demonstrated by many anthroponyms, by the mention of the temples of Semitic deities and by the choice of the language. Several names are however Egyptian, and Egyptian is the deity chosen in the blessing formula. In spite of their openness towards Egyptian culture, all the temples in Syene are temples of Semitic deities, and their mother tongue apparently still dominated over Egyptian. The picture provided by these letters portrays a phase in which Semitic culture was still dominant, in spite of the fact that Makkibanit and Nabušezib were hardly recent immigrants, given the Egyptian names of their fathers.

The Sarcophagi

Whereas we have no burial inscription from Elephantine, the situation is slightly better for Syene.

Among the scanty inscriptions found in Aswan, three occur on interesting limestone anthropoid sarcophagi in the Egyptian style, likely dated to the 5th century BC. They were all found near the temple of Isis in 1963 during the excavations by El-Hetta. Each coffin is different, as it may be seen from the photo published in 1967 in the edition princeps by Kornfeld.[91] The represented deities are all Egyptian: Apis, Isis and Nephtys, Maat, the Ba-bird, the four sons of Horus. These sarcophagi, together with some Egyptianizing stelae with Aramaic inscriptions found elsewhere in Egypt,[92] betray the influence of Egyptian Afterlife conceptions and practices on Aramaic-speaking immigrants.

As for the Egyptianizing stelae, no Semitic deity nor Semitic religious iconography can be found in these objects, which however at least in one case seem to indicate a non-Egyptian craftmanship.[93] Again, Semitic and Egyptian names coexisted. *šbty* in D18.18 is a West Semitic name, possibly but not necessarily Judaean, *ḥwr* in D18.17 is a common Egyptian name, and *ʔbyty*[94] *brt šmšnwry*, a woman, bears a Semitic anthroponym, as well as her father.

Given the fact that Aramaic was chosen, and that at least in one case the iconography seems to be untypical for Egypt, it may be assumed that the three coffins were destined to Orientals. However, no detail is provided about the excavations. It is

91 Photos and descriptions may be found in Kornfeld (1967); see also Porten, Gee (2001: 273–9).

92 For these stelae, see Vittmann (2003: 106–115); Porten, Gee (2001); Schipper (forthcoming); for the Salt stele, see recently Grassi (2021).

93 E. Winter apud Kornfeld (1967: 15); Vittmann (2017: 254); *contra* Porten, Gee (2001: 279): according to them, the craftmanship of the coffins is purely Egyptian, and only the inscriptions were misplaced by the non-Egyptian purchasers.

94 Kornfeld (1967: 13): *ʔbrty*, palaeographically possible but unlikely.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

thus unclear if there was a cemetery, or a part of the cemetery dedicated to foreign communities. Kornfeld comments that the sarcophagi were used by members of the Judaean community of Elephantine, and that they demonstrate that their religion was syncretistic.[95] As already pointed out, not every member of the colony was Judaean. Other Aramaeophone groups of the colony are simply underrepresented. Nothing in these coffins suggests a Judaean origin of the deceased but the name *šbty*, which may however be found also among non-Judaeans (for example in the Hermopolis letters). On the contrary, a name as *šmšnwry* does not favour a Judaean origin for its bearer.

However, at least one text suggests that mummification was practised by Judaeans in Elephantine, for a wooden mummy label was found during the excavation by Rubensohn with the Aramaic text *šbh br hwšʿ* (D19.7; Sachau (1911: text 84/13, Pl. 71/13). The patronymic is a short form of *hwšʿyh*, and both names are Hebrew and very common among the Judaean community, whereas they do not seem to be borne by "Aramaeans".

It is thus clear that Egyptian(izing) funerary practices were widespread among Orientals (and perhaps also among Judaeans[96]), who were at the same time willing to maintain a bond with their antecedents, expressed by their choice of language.

A rare votive inscription

The dedication made by the Persian troop commander of Syene (D17.1) is a unique item of the corpus. It comes allegedly from Syene, but no further detail is provided

95 Kornfeld (1967: 14).

96 Note that one of the Egyptianizing steles from Saqqara could contain a Yahwistic name. This fragment was published by Aimé-Giron (1939: 40–43 and Pl. III, No. 114), but its fate is unknown. The fragment (h 13,2 cm x w 11,00 cm x d 4,5 cm) contains part of two registers, but the upper one is broken, and only some jars and the bottom part of two human or divine bodies are visible (legs and skirts, once long and once short). I cannot detect the third human figure mentioned by Aimé-Giron. I suspect that what he described as a third frontal man is rather an object. Comparing this iconography with the other stele, I would cautiously suggest that the object could be a vase, and that the two men/deities (Anubis?) were part of an embalming scene close to that represented in the Vatican Stele, where the two depicted Anubis and their attendants wear skirts of different length. The underlying register depicts wailing women with "Syrian" hairdressing. The two registers are separated by the Aramaic inscription (TADAE D20.4): *brk pṭʾs*[*y*] *br yhʾ*[...], "blessed be Peteese son of *yhʾ*[...]". The first name is Egyptian. As far as the second one is concerned, Aimé-Giron suggested that it could be either Egyptian or Yahwistic; although he favoured the first interpretation, he did not rule out the short form of *yhwʾwr*, here misspelled *yhʾ*[*wr*] (1939: 42). Indeed, the only proper names in the corpus beginning with the sequence *yh-* are Yahwistic, and the error postulated by Aimé-Giron remains in my opinion the most likely explanation.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

by its first editor, Melchior de Vogüé.[97] It is fragmentary, being mutilated both in its upper and its lower part; its current measures are 27.5 cm h x 44.2 cm w x 12.5 cm d, and it is now in Cairo (J. 36448). The text, engraved on red sandstone, contains five lines, and traces of the upper part of a sixth line, completely illegible. The surface had been prepared by tracing horizontal traits.

1. brzmdnˀ znh (...)[...]
2. rb ḥylˀ zy swn ˁbd
3. byrḥ sywn hw mḥyr
4. šnt šbˁ ˀrtḥšsš mlkˀ
5. [..](.)wpr/dn⌜ḥ⌝ty ˀlhˀ drwk
6. [...]

1. This *brzmdnˀ* (...)[...]
2. the troop commander of Syene made
3. in the month of Siwan, i. e. Meḥir,
4. year seven of Artaxerxes the king
5. [to? ...]*wpr/dnḥty* the god. Peace
6. [...]

The name of the troop commander is lost: although it has been suggested to restore Vidranga,[98] the author of the attack on the temple of Yahweh, this reading seems impossible judging from the photo. Artaxerxes is likely Artaxerxes I (458 BC; Lemaire prefers Artaxerxes II, i. e. 398 BC,[99] but this seems less likely).

The object dedicated is called *brzmdnˀ*, a Persian loanword which is however only indirectly transmitted. According to Bogoljubov, its meaning is "house of rites" (*brazman*, "rite" and **dāna*, "house"), hence "shrine".[100] However, the etymological analysis proposed by Bogoljubov has been criticised, for the precise meaning of Old Persian *brazman* is still debated, and the second part of the noun may be explained with the element *-dāna-*, "holder, container", which is used also to build architectural lexicon; the word would then mean the "holder of devotion".[101] An analysis of the second element as *-dāna-*, "holder, container" was proposed by

97 De Vogüé (1903). Note that Seymour De Ricci, in his Appendix II. Bibliography of Egyptian Aramaic Papyri in Sayce, Cowley (1906: 27–34), indicates rather Elephantine as the provenance (page 32).

98 Lemaire (1991).

99 Lemaire (1991: 200–201).

100 Quoted in Lemaire (1991: 200); Tavernier (2007: 438).

101 Tavernier (2007:438). The word *brz*[*mn*]*ˀ*, with the meaning "ceremony" (Lemaire, Lozachmeur 1998: 308–14), has been reconstructed also in one Aramaic inscription from Meydancikkale (Cilicia), which is however very fragmentary.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Andreas, who saw in the first part of the noun the element **barzma*, "holy twig", hence "holder of the holy twigs" ("der Behälter für die heiligen Zweige");[102] it should be noted that the word is attested in Syriac as well as in Mandaic (*bwrsmʾ*), where it denotes indeed the twigs used by the Persian magi during their ceremonies.[103] Tavernier considers this meaning unlikely for Aramaic *brzmdnʾ*, apparently not for the etymology, but for the fact that the inscription should indicate a kind of building. However, the verb used in the inscription is *ʿbd*, "to make", which may be used for a temple, but also for any other object, from an altar to a statue. Since the archaeological context of the inscription is unknown, it cannot be taken for granted that it is a building inscription. Even if *brzmdnʾ* defines a religious building, it is in my opinion more likely that it designates something specifically Iranian rather than a generic "shrine".

As far as the deity is concerned, Andreas suggested that the name of the god could be interpreted as a transcription of *ʾnh(y)ty*, Anahita, or *spnd(t)ʾrmt*, *spontā aramatiš*,[104] but Lidzbarski rightly observed that both of these readings are impossible.[105] Grelot thought that the deity was Ahura Mazda,[106] but his suggestion is once again impossible according to the photo. It must be observed that already the first editor read [*l*].*w.rn.ty*, with a reading very close to [*l.*].*wpd/rnḥty* of Porten and Yardeni. Almost all the letters are clear from the photo. This rules out the attractive reading suggested by Lemaire, [*l*].*w*⌜*s*⌝*rn*⌜*ḥ*⌝*ty*, to Osirnaḥty, "Osiris the strong".[107] The second part could be a transcription of Egyptian *nḫt*, "strong", but the first part (.*wpr/d*) does not seem to provide any satisfactory parallel. The problem is that no deity seems to be known with this sequence of graphemes, not in Egypt nor in Persia. Albeit his name remains obscure, the following *ʾlhʾ* makes clear that he is a male god.

Although it is nowadays assumed that the deity is Egyptian, in my opinion an Iranian origin cannot be ruled out. Syene was the residence of the troop commander, who was Persian and had likely Persian officials at his orders. It is thus conceivable that the commander and his subordinates had an Iranian cultic shrine at their disposal. If it is true that the name of the deity is unknown, it must be observed that we know Egyptian deities better than Iranian ones. Moreover, if the shrine/the cultic object was dedicated to an Egyptian god, both the use of Iranian loanwords, in particular for the dedicated object/building, and the choice of writing in Aramaic,

102 Andreas apud Lidzbarski 1908: 222, note 1. Grelot (1972, 333–4) follows this interpretation.

103 SL, 131–132; MD, 57.

104 Apud Lidzbarski (1908: 223, note 1). He does not explain it. I suppose that he means the goddess Speñta Aramaiti, but *ʾlhʾ* is clearly masculine.

105 Lidzbarski (1908 : 223, note 1).

106 Grelot (1972: 333–4, No. 75).

107 Lemaire (1991).

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

and in Aramaic only (unless the text is the extant part of a bilingual inscription), would be difficult to understand. Although Aramaic was one of the official languages in the Achaemenid Empire, the use of Egyptian in this case would have been more natural, whereas Aramaic is an understandable choice for an inscription addressed to an Iranian god outside Persia.

It must be stressed that we have very few texts directed by Persians to Egyptian deities, and that they seem to have been written by sons of mixed marriages.[108]

Moreover, a further characteristic of the devotion manifested by Persians to foreign deities is the relationship with local cults, although the similarity between an Iranian and a local deity could have been a further stimulus.[109] Both these factors would lack in this case with a (palaeographically difficult) reading Osiris, for neither Osiris is the local deity of Syene/Elephantine nor he is similar to any Persian god.

Why should a Persian high official dedicate at Syene a temple or a cultic object to Osiris, using Aramaic for the writing of the inscription, and make recourse to a Persian loanword to define the dedicated object/building (and a further Persian word for "peace", *drwk*[110])? This scenario is in my opinion hard to conceive, unless the idea was exactly to dedicate an Iranian cultic tool to an Egyptian god, be he Osiris or a still unknown Egyptian local deity. In this case, the willingness to treat the local deity appropriately could explain the offering, and the willingness to stress the origin and culture of the donor could explain its Iranian nature. If the deity is Egyptian, I think it is unlikely that the offering is a shrine. Apparently, Persian kings, or at least their satraps, were involved even in the granting of permission to build or rebuild/repair temples to non-Iranian deities, as is the case for the temple of Yahweh in Elephantine. It is thus unlikely that the troop commander could have built a temple to an Egyptian god without the approval, or even the support, of the king and the satrap. The inscription is incomplete, but the commander is the subject of the verb, and he incontestably plays the most important role, the king being mentioned only in the dating formula.

To sum up, I would not rule out the possibility that the deity was Iranian; if Egyptian, then the dedicated object could hardly have been a temple or shrine.

Whether directed to an Iranian or to an Egyptian god, the inscription is unique. It would be the only dedication to an Egyptian god in Aramaic together with an offering table from Saqqara (D20.1), and as far as I know, it would have been the only dedication to an Iranian god in Egypt. The implications would be obviously different.

---

108 See Kuhrt (2013: 157–8). For the stela of Djeherbes, found in Saqqara in 1994, see recently Wasmuth (2017), who analyses also other cultural traditions in the stele, due either to the owner's wish or to the artist's background.

109 Kuhrt (2013: 158).

110 *drwk* (**Druvata*-), "blessing, peace": Tavernier (2007: 403), and see already Andreas apud Lidzbarski (1908: 223, note 2).

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

A dedication to an Egyptian god would point either to a certain acculturation, or to the desire of keeping the local deities, and possibly their worshippers, favourable to the Persian rulers, whereas the presence of an Iranian cult would reflect the official religion of the Empire, and of its officials and functionaries far from home.

Conclusions

As far as the Judaean community is concerned, their form of Judaism, albeit clearly different from the model proposed in the Bible, is hardly syncretistic. Yahweh is by far the main deity. Few other Semitic gods are recorded, two of them, Ḥerem/Ḥarim and Betˀel/Baytˀel, are probably somehow connected with the temple, which was the centre of the Judaean cult. In my opinion these Semitic deities do not necessarily indicate a form of syncretism, because they can be interpreted simply as remnants of a common Canaanite religious heritage. Indeed, the two deities mostly considered to be "Aramaean", namely Betˀel and ˁAnat, are better attested in the Canaanaean pantheon than in the Aramaean one. Also the presence of a paredra of Yahweh is documented in Palestine in the 9th and 8th century BC. On the contrary, the most widespread Semitic god in the Achaemenid age, Nabu, is recorded just once in Elephantine, in an ostracon which is in many respects an unicum. Other gods and goddesses known from the letters of Hermopolis and from anthroponymy, for example Banit or Nanay, are absent in the documents pertaining to the Judaean community.

Judaeans were clearly respectful towards other gods, and they regarded Khnum, a powerful deity, as the most important Egyptian god of Elephantine. They seem also to have accepted Egyptian funerary customs, although the evidence from Elephantine is scant.

In a nutshell, the religion of the Judaean community seems to have been strongly Yahwistic, albeit not monotheistic in a proper sense, and thus quite different from Biblical Judaism. This might be due simply to the fact that official religion and everyday, domestic religion was kept separate[111]. However, the possibility that Biblical Judaism was still not the rule should be taken into strong consideration.[112]

As far as Syene is concerned, the scanty evidence comes from other sites, with the exception of the sarcophagi and the dedication by the Persian chief of the army.

Two Semitic deities venerated in Syene were of Mesopotamian origin, namely Nabu and Banit, whereas Betˀel is not Mesopotamian, but his cult was probably

111 Becking (2011: 408–9).

112 As pointed out by Kratz (2013: 196): "Nicht Elephantine und die Judäer in Ägypten, sondern die Hebräische Bibel und das biblische Judentum waren selbst in persischer Zeit noch die Ausnahme und nicht die Regel".

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

launched in Babylonia during the Neo-Babylonian period. Properly Aramaean deities, such as Baʕal Shamayn and Hadad, who were important in Old Aramaic inscriptions, are almost unattested in Syene and in whole Egypt even in proper names. It seems likely that at least part of the community of Syene had some contacts with Mesopotamia before the emigration. The letters found in Hermopolis demonstrate that the cult of Semitic deities was important in Syene at the end of 6^{th}/beginning of 5^{th} century BC, and the burial inscription of the priest of Nabu confirms that his cult was still practiced in the late 5^{th} century BC. In the meantime, Aramaic-speaking immigrants were attracted by Egyptian cults and practices. The god Ptah is mentioned in the Hermopolis letters sent from Memphis, and a local criterion is visible in the Aramaic inscriptions and graffiti in Egypt, for they often mention local deities. Albeit less impressive than the stelae found in Lower Egypt, the sarcophagi found in Syene testify once again to the main area in which Egyptian religion was attractive to Aramaic-speaking foreigners, namely the Afterlife.

Dedicatory inscriptions in Aramaic are surprisingly scarce in the whole of Egypt, and Syene/Elephantine is no exception. For this reason, the sacred object dedicated in Syene by the chief of the army is most remarkable, even if neither the nature of the object nor the deity (Egyptian or Iranian) are entirely clear.

Bibliography

Ackerman, S., (2003), 'Goddesses', in S. Richard (ed.), *Near Eastern Archaeology. A Reader*, Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns: 391–397.

Aimé-Giron, N., (1931), *Textes araméens d'Égypte*, Le Caire: Imprimerie de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale.

Aimé-Giron, N., (1939), 'Adversaria semitica', *BIFAO*, 38: 1–63.

Aliquot, J., (2008), *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie, Tome 11, Mont Hermon (Liban et Syrie)*, Beyrouth: Institut français du Proche Oriente.

Arnold, B. T., (1992), 'An Early Neo-Babylonian Formula from Uruk', *JAOS*, 112 (3): 383–7.

Assante, J., (1998), 'The kar.kid / ḫarimtu, Prostitute or Single Woman? A Reconsideration of the Evidence', *UF*, 30: 5–95.

Aufrecht, W.E., (2019), *A Corpus of the Ammonite Inscriptions*, Second Edition, Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.

Avigad, N., and B. Sass, (1997), *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities.

Banks, M., (1996), *Ethnicity: anthropological constructions*, London – New York: Routledge.

Beaulieu, P.-A., (2005), 'The God Amurru as Emblem of Ethnic and Cultural Identity', in: W. van Soldt, R. Kalvelagen, and D. Katz (eds.), *Ethnicity in Ancient Mesopotamia: Papers Read at the 48th Rencontre assyriologique internationale, Leiden 1–4 July 2002*, Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten: 31–46.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Becking, B., (2003), 'Die Gottheiten der Juden in Elephantine', in: M. Oeming and K. Schmid (eds.), *Der eine Gott und die Götter. Polytheismus und Monotheismus im antiken Israel*, Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich: 203–26.

Becking, B., (2011), 'Yehudite identity in Elephantine', in: O. Lipschits, G.N. Knoppers, and M. Oeming (eds.), *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid period. Negotiating Identity in an International Context*, Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns: 403–19.

Benz, F. L., (1972), *Personal Names in the Phoenician and Punic Inscriptions*, Rome: Biblical Institute Press.

Bianco, M., and C. Bonnet, (2016), 'Sur les traces d'Athéna chez le Phéniciens', *Pallas*, 100: 155–179.

Bresciani, E., (1958), 'Nuovi documenti aramaici dall'Egitto', *Annales du service des antiquités de l'Égypte*, 55: 273–83 and plates I–III.

Bresciani, E., and M. Kamil, (1966), *Le lettere aramaiche di Hermopoli*, Rome: Accademia nazionale dei Lincei.

Cornelius, I., (2004), *The Many Faces of the Goddess. The Iconography of the Syro-Palestinian Goddesses Anat, Astarte, Qedeshet, and Asherah c. 1500–1000 BCE*, Fribourg: Academic Press and Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Cowley, A. E., (1923), *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Cross, F. M., (1980), 'Newly Found Inscriptions in Old Canaanite and Early Phoenician Scripts', *BASOR*, 238: 1–20.

Day, P. L., (1999), 'Anat', in: K. van der Toorn, B. Becking, and P.W. van der Horst (eds.), *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, Second Revised Edition, Leiden – Boston – Köln: Brill: 36–43.

Dion, P.-E., (2002), 'La religion des papyrus d'Éléphantine: un reflet de Juda avant l'exile', in: U. Hübner and E.A. Knauf (eds.), *Kein Land für sich allein: Studien zum Kulturkontakt in Kanaan, Isreal/Palästina und Ebirnari für Manfred Weippert zum 65. Geburtstag*, Freiburg: Universitätsverlag and Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: 243–254.

Dupont-Sommer, A., (1944), '«Bel et Nabû, Šamaš et Nergal» sur un ostracon araméen inédit d'Éléphantine', *RHR*, 128: 28–39.

Dupont-Sommer, A., (1945), 'Le syncrétisme religieux des Juifs d'Éléphantine d'après un ostracon araméen inédit', *RHR*, 130: 17–28.

Dupont-Sommer, A., (1947), '«Yahô» et «Yahô-Ṣebaʾôt» sur des ostraca araméens inédits d'Éléphantine', *CRAIBL*, 224: 175–191.

Dupont-Sommer, A., (1956), 'Une stèle araméenne d'un prêtre de Baʿal trouvée en Egypte', *Syria*, 33: 79–87 and Pl. IV.

Fabietti, U. E. M., (2013), *L'identità etnica. Storia e critica di un concetto equivoco*, terza edizione, Rome: Carocci.

Fales, F. M., (1987), 'Aramaic Letters and Neo-Assyrian Letters: Philological and Methodological Notes', *JAOS*, 107 (3): 451–469.

Fales, F. M., and G. F. Grassi, (2016), *L'aramaico antico. Storia, grammatica, testi commentati*, Udine: Forum.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Frendo, A., (1999), 'A New Punic Inscription from Zejtun (Malta) and the Goddess Anat-Astarte', *PEQ*, 131: 24–35.

Gaifman, M., (2008), 'The Aniconic Image of the Roman Near East', in: T. Kaizer (ed.), *The Variety of Local Religious Life in the Near East in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods*, Leiden – Boston: Brill: 37–72.

Ginsberg, H. L., (1969), 'Letters of the Jews of Elephantine', in: J.B. Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, Third Edition, 491–492, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Gitin, S., T. Dothan, and J. Naveh, (1997), 'A Royal Dedicatory Inscription from Ekron', *IEJ*, 47: 1–16.

Grassi, G. F., (2017), 'Bemerkungen zu Ostrakon Clermont-Ganneau J8 (175+185) aus Elephantine', *ZAW*, 129: 84–97.

Grassi, G. F., (2021), 'Aramaic-Speaking Communities in Achaemenid Egypt and the Afterlife: the 'Stela saltiana' (TADAE D22.54)', *Göttinger Miszellen*, 264: 83–90.

Grassi, G. F., (2022), '«Do we know the Arameans?» (SAA 17, 176). The Use of Ethnonyms in the Aramaic Documents from Egypt', in: R.G. Kratz and B.U. Schipper (eds.), *Elephantine in Context*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck: 3–34.

Grassi, G. F., (2022b), 'Il dio Bethel e i 'betili'', in: S. Graziani and G. Lacerenza (eds.), *Egitto e Vicino oriente Antico tra passato e futuro. The Stream of Tradition: la genesi e il perpetuarsi delle tradizioni in Egitto e nel Vicino oriente Antico*, Neaples: UniOr Press: 397–405.

Grelot, P., (1972), *Documents araméens d'Egypte*, Paris: Les éditions du Cerf.

Gröndahl, F., (1967), *Die Personennamen der Texte aus Ugarit*, Rome: Biblical Institute Press.

Hadley, J. M., (1987), 'The Khirbet El-Qom Inscription', *VT*, 37 (1): 50–62.

Halff, G., (1965), 'L'onomastique punique de Carthage. Répertoire et commentaire', *Karthago*, 12: 61–146.

Hallo, W. W., and H. Tadmor, (1977), 'A Lawsuit from Hazor', *IEJ*, 27 (1): 1–11 and Plate 1.

Holm, T. L., (2017), 'Nanay and Her Lover: An Aramaic Sacred Marriage Text from Egypt', *JNES*, 76: 1–37.

Hoonacker, A., (1915), *Une Communauté Judéo-Araméenne à Éléphantine, en Égypte, aux VIe et Ve siècles av. J.-C.*, London: British Academy and Oxford University Press.

Houtman, C., (1999), 'Queen of Heaven', in: K. van der Toorn, B. Becking, and P.W. van der Horst (eds.), *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, Second Revised Edition, Leiden – Boston – Köln: Brill: 678–680.

Hundley, M. B., (2013), *Gods in Dwellings: Temples, and Divine Presence in the Ancient Near East*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.

Hyatt, J. P., (1939), 'The Deity Bethel and the Old Testament', *JAOS*, 59 (1): 81–98.

Jones, S., (1997), *The Archaeology of Ethnicity. Constructing identities in the past and present*, London – New York: Routledge.

Knapp, A. B., (2014), 'Mediterranean Archaeology and Ethnicity', in: J. McInerney (ed.), *A Companion to Ethnicity in the Ancient Mediterranean*, 34–49, Chichester: John Wiley and Sons.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Kogan, L., (2015), *Genealogical Classification of Semitic: The Lexical Isoglosses*, Boston – Berlin: Brill.

Kratz, R. G., (2013), *Historisches und biblisches Israel*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.

Kuhrt, A., (2013), 'Can we understand how the Persians perceived 'other' gods / 'the gods of others'?', *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte*, 15 (1): 149–165.

Lauinger, J., (2012), 'Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty at Tell Taynat: Text and Commentary', *JCS*, 64: 87–123.

Leclant, J., (1975), 'Anat', in: W. Helck and E. Otto (eds.), *Lexikon der Ägyptologie I*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz: 253–258.

Lemaire, A., (1991), 'Recherches d'épigraphie araméenne en Asie Mineure et en Égypte et le probleme de l'acculturation', in: H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg and A. Kuhrt (eds.), *Achaemenid History VI. Asia Minor and Egypt: Old Cultures in a New Empire. Proceedings of the Groningen 1988 Achaemenid History Workshop*, Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten: 199–206.

Lemaire, A., (2013), *Levantine Epigraphy and History in the Achaemenid Period (539–332 BCE)*, Oxford: British Academy and Oxford University Press.

Lemaire, A. and H. Lozachmeur, (1998), 'Les inscriptions araméennes', in: A. Davesne and F. Laroche-Traunecker (eds.), *Le site de Meydancikkale Gülnar I*, Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les civilisations: 307–344.

Lidzbarski, M., (1908), *Ephemeris für semitische Epigraphik, Zweiter Band, 1904–1907*, Gießen: Alfred Töpelmann.

Lloyd, J. B., (1994), 'The Goddess Anat. An Examination of the Textual and Iconographic Evidence from the Second Millennium B.C.', PhD Dissertation, University of Edinburgh.

Lozachmeur, H., (2006), *La Collection Clermont-Ganneau: ostraca, épigraphes sur jarres, étiquettes de bois*, 2 volumes, Paris: De Boccard.

Magnanini, P., (1973), *Le iscrizioni fenicie dell'Oriente. Testi, traduzioni, glossari*, Rome: Istituto di studi del Vicino Oriente.

Meshel, Z. et al., (2012), *Kuntillet ʿAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman). An Iron Age II Religious Site in the Judah-Sinai Border*, Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society.

Milik, J. T., (1956), 'An Unpublished Arrow-Head with Phoenician Inscription of the 11^{th}–10^{th} century BC', *BASOR*, 143: 3–6.

Milik, J. T., (1967), 'Les papyrus araméens d'Hermoupolis et les cultes syro-phéniciens en Égypte perse', *Bib*, 48: 546–622.

Moore, G., (1903), 'Baetylia', *AJA*, 7: 198–208.

Noth, M., (1928), *Die israelitischen Personennamen im Rahmen der gemeinsemitischen Namengebung*, Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer.

Patai, R., (1990), *The Hebrew Goddess*, Third Edition, Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Pearce, L. E., and C. Wunsch, (2014), *Documents of Judaean Exiles and West Semites in Babylonia in the Collection of David Sofer*, Bethesda: CDL Press.

Porten, B., (1968), *Archives from Elephantine: The Life of an Ancient Jewish Military Colony*, Berkeley – Los Angeles: University of California Press.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Porten, B., (1969), 'The Religion of the Jews of Elephantine in Light of the Hermopolis Papyri', *JNES*, 28 (2): 116–121.

Porten, B., and J. Gee, (2001), 'Aramaic Funerary Practices in Egypt', in: M. Daviau, J.W. Wevers, and M. Weigl (eds.), *The World of the Aramaeans II. Studies in History and Archaeology in Honour of Paul-Eugène Dion*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press: 270–307.

Roberts, J. J. M., (1972), *The earliest Semitic pantheon; a study of the Semitic deities attested before Ur III*, Baltimore – London: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Rohrmoser, A., (2014), *Götter, Tempel und Kult der Judäo-Aramäer von Elephantine*, Münster: Ugarit-Verlag.

Sachau, E., (1911), *Aramäische Papyrus und Ostraka aus einer jüdischen Militär-Kolonie zu Elephantine*, 2 Bände, Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs.

Sayce, A. H., and A. E. Cowley, (1906), *Aramaic Papyri Discovered at Assuan*, London: Alexander Moring.

Schipper, B. U., (forthcoming), 'Die Berliner Stele 7707 und die ägyptisch-aramäischen Grabstelen der Perserzeit', in: S. Wimmer and W. Zwickel (eds.), *Egypt and the Hebrew Bible*, Münster: Zaphon Verlag.

Schmidt, B. B., (1999), 'Moon', in: K. van der Toorn, B. Becking, and P.W. van der Horst (eds.), *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, Second Revised Edition, Leiden – Boston – Köln: Brill: 585–93.

Segal, J. B., (1983), *Aramaic Texts from North Saqqâra with some Fragments in Phoenician*, London: Egypt Exploration Society.

Silverman, M. H., (1969), 'Onomastic Notes to "Aramaica dubiosa"', *JNES*, 28 (3), 192–196.

Silverman, M. H., (1985), *Religious Values in the Jewish Proper Names at Elephantine*, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag.

Smith, A. D., (1997), *The Nation in History. Historiographical Debates about Ethnicity and Nationalism*, Hanover: University Press of New England.

Stadelmann, R., (1967), *Syrisch-palästinensische Gottheiten in Ägypten*, Leiden: Brill.

Streck, M. P., (2000), *Das amurritische Onomastikon der altbabylonischen Zeit, Band I*, Münster: Ugarit-Verlag.

Tallqvist, K. L., (1938), *Akkadische Götterepitheta*, Helsingfors: Societas Orientalis Finnica.

Tavernier, J., (2007), *Iranica in the Achaemenid Period (ca. 550–330 B.C.). Lexicon of Old Iranian Proper names and Loanwords, Attested in Non-Iranian Texts*, Leuven: Peeters.

Tazawa, K., (2009), *Syro-Palestinian Deities in New Kingdom Egypt. The hermeneutics of their existence*, Oxford: British Archaeological Reports.

Thomas, R., (2017), 'The Meaning of *asherah* in Hebrew Inscriptions', *Sem*, 59: 157–218.

Van der Toorn, K., (1992), 'Anat-Yahu, Some Other Deities, and the Jews of Elephantine', *Numen*, 39: 80–101.

Van der Toorn, K., (2016), 'Eshem-Bethel and Herem-Bethel: New Evidence from Amherst Papyrus 63', *ZAW*, 128: 668–80.

Vincent, A., (1937), *La religion des judéo-araméens d'Éléphantine*, Paris: Geuthner.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Vittmann, G., (2003), *Ägypten und die Fremden im ersten vorchristlichen Jahrtausend*, Mainz: Philipp von Zabern.

Vittmann, G., (2017), 'Aramaeans in Egypt', in: A. Berlejung, A.M. Maier, and A. Schule (eds.), *Wandering Arameans: Arameans Outside Syria. Textual and Archaeological Perspectives*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz: 229–79.

de Vogüé, M., (1903), 'Inscription araméenne trouvée en Égypte', *CRAIBL*, 47 (4): 269–76.

Walls, N. H., (1992), *The Goddess Anat in Ugaritic Myth*, Atlanta: Scholars Press.

Wasmuth, M., (2017), 'Die Stele des Djedherbes als kulturelles Zeugnis ihrer Zeit', *Archäologischer Anzeiger*, 48 (1): 85–123.

Yeivin, S., (1958), 'Note sur une pointe de flèche inscrite provenant de la Beqaa (Liban)', *RB*, 65: 585–9.

Zadok, R., (1977), *On West Semites in Babylonia during the Chaldaean and Achaemenian Periods. An Onomastic Study*, Jerusalem: H., J. & Z. Wanaarta.

Zadok, R., (1979), *The Jews in Babylonia During the Chaldaean and Achaemenian Periods according to the Babylonian Sources*, Haifa: The University of Haifa.

Zadok, R., (1988), *The Pre-Hellenistic Israelite Anthroponomy and Prosopography*, Leuven: Peeters.

Abbreviations

A: B. Porten, A. Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt, 1, Letters*, Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1986.

B: B. Porten, A. Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt, 2, Contracts*, Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1989.

C: B. Porten, A. Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt, 3, Literature, Accounts, Lists*, Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1993.

CAD: *The Assyrian Dictionary*, Chicago: Oriental Institute, 21 volumes, 1956–2011.

CG: H. Lozachmeur, *La collection Clermont-Ganneau. Ostraca, épigraphes sur jarre, étiquettes de bois*, Paris – Leuven 2006.

D: B. Porten, A. Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt, 4, Ostraca and Assorted Inscriptions*, Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1999.

DNWSI: J. Hoftijzer, K. Jongeling, *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions*, 2 vols., Leiden: Brill, 1995.

HAHAT: Gesenius, W., *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament*, 18. Auflage, Heidelberg: Springer, 2013.

MD: Drower, E.S., and R. Macuch, *A Mandaic Dictionary*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963.

SAA 2: S. Parpola, K. Watanabe, *State Archives of Assyria, Volume II, Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths*, Helsinki: Helsinki UP, 1988.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

SL: M. Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon. A Translation from the Latin, Correction, Expansion, and Update of C. Brockelmann's Lexicon Syriacum*, Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns and Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2009.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Joanna Wilimowska

Jews in Ptolemaic Egypt in the light of Egyptian non-literary texts[1]

Introduction

The presence of the Jewish population has a long story in ancient Egypt, and it dates back the end of the seventh century BC. This paper shall focus on the Ptolemaic period, which marked a turning point in the history of Jews in Egypt. From the beginning of the Hellenistic period onwards, a significant number of Jewish immigrants arrived in Egypt. They were either veterans of the Ptolemaic army, people seeking better economic opportunities, or those, for example, who fled when the anti-Jewish campaign of Antiochos IV has started around the mid second century BC.[2] Hence, besides Greeks and Macedonians, Jews formed the largest non-native group, which inhabited Egypt in the Ptolemaic era.

A considerable amount of literature has been published on Jews in Egypt including publications by Joseph Mélèze-Modrzejewski, Noah Hacham, and Sylvie Honigman. Prosopographical studies that include data on Jews in Ptolemaic Egypt have been presented in both a monography on foreign ethnics in Late Egypt by Jan Krzysztof Winnicki and the tenth volume of *Prosopographia Ptolemaica* by Csaba A. La'da.[3]

The Jewish presence in Egypt is documented mostly by papyrological and epigraphic material both literary and non-literary texts. The prevailing proportion of these sources have been written in Greek, which was introduced under the

1 This research was financed within the Sonatina grant of the National Science Centre of the Republic of Poland (UMO-2020/36/C/HS3/00261). I would like to thank Łukasz Niesiołowski-Spanò and Kacper Ziemba with whom I have had the pleasure of working on this volume.

2 Mélèze-Modrzejewski, *The Jews of Egypt*, 5–44; Winnicki, *Late Egypt and Her Neighbours*, 180–181, 189–190.

3 Mélèze-Modrzejewski, *The Jews of Egypt*; Hacham, "The Third Century BCE," 130–142; Honigman, "Jewish Communities," 117–135; see also for example: Porten, *Archives from Elephantine*; Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 19– 228; Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*; Muhlestein, and Innes. "Synagogues and Cemeteries," 53–59; Israel-Pelletier, *On the Mediterranean and the Nile*; Clarysse, "The Jewish Presence in Graeco-Roman Egypt," 303–325; prosopographical studies: Winnicki, *Late Egypt and Her Neighbours*; La'da, *Foreign Ethnics*.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Ptolemies as the language of royal administration.[4] Greek papyri on Jews have been collected and published with ample historical commentaries in the three volumes of *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum* by Victor A. Tcherikover, Alexander Fuks, and Menahem Stern.[5] Each part included texts datable to different periods of Egyptian history, and Ptolemaic texts are gathered in the first volume of this publication. Greek epigraphic material has been collected in *Jewish Inscriptions of Graeco-Roman Egypt* by William Horbury and David Noy.[6] Besides Greek texts, documentation regarding Jews in Hellenistic Egypt comprises also Egyptian (Demotic and Hieroglyphic), Aramaic, and Hebrew texts. To date, the most comprehensive collection of sources regarding the Jews of Ptolemaic Egypt has been published in 2020 by Noah Hacham, and Tal Ilanas as *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum IV*. This publication included texts written in both Greek and other languages and scripts.[7] From the Persian period onwards Aramaic and Hebrew were used exclusively by Jews in Egypt, therefore these texts offer a valuable insight into the Jewish population from its own perspective.[8] Although, the role of Greek in bureaucracy gradually increased, Demotic Egyptian that was still used as the major script of official documents under the Ptolemies.[9] Analysis of Egyptian and Semitic evidence will complete the picture of the Jewish population in Egypt drawn by Greek sources.

Many publications devoted to Graeco-Roman Egypt focus on Greek texts that form the largest group of evidence. Consequently, there has been little discussion on non-Greek texts regarding the Jewish presence in Ptolemaic Egypt. This paper shall attempt to fulfil this research gap by concentrating on Demotic and Hieroglyphic non-literary documentation regarding Jews. The main goal of this study is to provide an overview on the Egyptian texts datable to the Ptolemaic period that refer to the Jewish population. This chapter also included a list of individuals who has been recognized as Jews in the Egyptian material (Table 1 below). Furthermore, this study seeks to explore the cross-cultural interactions between Jews and other ethnic groups of the society that emerge from the Egyptian sources.

---

4 Depauw, *A Companion to Demotic Studies*, 41–46; Thompson, "Literacy and Power," 67–83; Thompson, "The Multilingual Environment," 395–417.

5 *CPJ* I–III.

6 *JIGRE*.

7 Hacham and Ilan, "Introduction," *CPJ* IV, 2–19.

8 Winnicki, *Late Egypt and Her Neighbours*, 180–189; Thompson, "The Multilingual Environment," 395–417.

9 For the Demotic script in Egypt, see Depauw, *A Companion to Demotic Studies*, 19–47.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Sources

At a minimum, there are 18 texts written in Egyptian scripts (15 Demotic and three Hieroglyphic texts) that provide us with information about the Jewish population in Ptolemaic Egypt.[10] Among collected sources, four bilingual documents can be distinguished: three receipts inscribed on ostraca (*CPJ* IV 523, 524, and 543a) and papyrus, which contains a text of memorandum (*CPJ* IV 616). Texts of *CPJ* IV 524, 543a and 616 consist of two elements: Demotic main part and Greek addenda such as a signature or subscription. An ostracon published as *CPJ* IV 523 contains two salt-tax receipts: the first text is Aramaic, and the second is Demotic.

The Egyptian material regarding Jews in Hellenistic Egypt is spread across many publications, but 17 out of 18 texts discussed within this paper have been collected and published or republished in *CPJ* IV.[11] Additionally, this study analyses a census list originating from the Fayum area (*P.Count* 9, dated after 251 BC), which was omitted in *CPJ* IV. Our sources comprise 11 ostraca (receipts, accounts, lists, and a letter), four papyri (two census lists, a contract, and memorandum), and these texts have been written in Demotic. Three Hieroglyphic texts concerning Jews in Ptolemaic Egypt are inscriptions.[12]

The documentation discussed in this paper originates from several sites located in both Upper and Lower Egypt: five documents come from Thebes, three from Edfu, three come from different villages of the Fayum area, two from Oxyrhynchos,

10 The third century BC: *CPJ* IV 608 (Leontopolis, 299–100 BC); *CPJ* IV 618 = *P.Köln Gr.* XV 637 (Fayum, 285–204 BC); *P.Count* 9 (Fayum, after 251 BC); *CPJ* IV 524 = Wängstedt, "Demotische Ostraca," 72 (Edfu, 244 BC); *O.Mattha* 134 = *CPJ* IV 523 (Apollonopolis, 243 BC); *P.Count* 2 = *CPJ* IV 596 = *P.Lille Dem.* III 99 (Ghoran, 229 BC); the second century BC: *CPJ* IV 543a = *BGU* VI 1454 (Thebes, 167 BC); *CPJ* IV, Appendix, 295–296 (Hermonthis, 162 BC); *CPJ* IV 544 = Kaplony-Heckel, "Theben-Ost II," 48 (Thebes, 160 BC); *CPJ* IV 545a = Kaplony-Heckel, "Theben-Ost II," 48 = *P.Brooklyn Dem.* 144 (Thebes, 156 BC); *O.Mattha* 233 = *CPJ* IV 545c (Thebes, 153/2 BC); *CPJ* IV 617b = Thissen, "Logistische Probleme," 291–299 (Oxyrhynchos, 150–100 BC); *CPJ* IV 167 (Hermonthis, 145 BC); *CPJ* IV 617a = Bresciani et al., "Ostraka Demotici," 47–49 (Oxyrhynchos, 137 BC); the first century BC: *CPJ* IV 541 = Devauchelle, "Lettre de réclamation," 82–83 (Edfu, 100–1 BC); *CPJ* IV 549 = Kaplony-Heckel, "Theben-West und Theben-Ost," 589 (Thebes, 88 BC); *CPJ* IV 170 (Tanis, 80–51 BC); imprecisely dated: *CPJ* IV 616 = Baetens and Angles, "A Demotic Memorandum," 281–294 (Techtho, 249/146/135/82 BC).

11 A Demotic contract (*CPJ* IV 597c, Mnemoneia, 222 BC) which belongs to a group of texts related to Dositheos son of Drimylos have been omitted in this paper, although it has been included in *CPJ* IV. Dositheos son of Drimylos is mentioned in the opening formula of the contract, and he performed the function of the priests of Alexander. He is often identified with Dositheos son of Drimylos who appear in 3 *Macc* 1,3. However, his Jewishness has been widely discussed and questioned by scholars, e. g. Fuks, "Dositheos son of Drimylos," 205–209; Mélèze-Modrzejewski, *The Jews of Egypt*, 56–65; Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism*, 222–229.

12 *CPJ* IV, Appendix, 295–296 (Hermonthis, 162 BC); *CPJ* IV 167 (145 BC); *CPJ* IV 170 (80–51 BC).

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

two from Hermonthis, and there is one text from Tanis, one from Hermopolis, and one from Leontopolis. These documents are unequally distributed over time: six texts are dated to the third century BC, eight to the second century BC, while only three texts are datable to the first century BC. Furthermore, there is one imprecisely dated Demotic memorandum, which originates probably from Techtho (Dashtut) in the Herakleopolite nome.[13] Therefore, material collected here suffers from two major drawbacks. First, Jews are mentioned only by a limited number of Egyptian texts, while second is that material collected here is scattered over time and space. Both factors made this material quite difficult to analyse, however it can still offer an interesting view into social interactions between Jews and Egyptians.

Jews in Egyptian sources

Texts analysed within this paper include references to 27 individuals who can be identified as Jews. This group comprises only Jews who played an active role in texts, for example, as authors and recipients of these documents. So, they acted as parties of contracts, financial transactions, and they were taxpayers. All these individuals are listed in Table 1 below. In antiquity, it was a common practice to use names of fathers, mothers and even grandparents for identification purposes and many Jewish names that are considered in this study often include patronymics.[14] Overall, based on Egyptian material, it was possible to distinguish over 40 individuals of the Jewish origin and this number comprises both individuals who are mentioned as acting in person and their identifiers.

All individuals listed in Table 1 below are mentioned exclusively by Demotic texts. Hieroglyphic inscriptions discussed here relate to the entire groups of Jews and do not include any personal names. The Jewish identity of individuals, who appears in Demotic texts, was established based on onomastics, and with the support of the textual and archaeological contexts of documents.[15] Most individuals bore names that were frequently used among Jews in Hellenistic Egypt, for example: Simon, Isaak, Dositheos, Joseph, Abietes, and Shabtai.[16] In the case of individuals with

13 For the provenance, dates and detailed bibliographical information of listed sources see note 11 above.

14 Depauw and Broux, "Identification in Graeco-Roman Egypt," 35–55.

15 This study follows suggestions of texts' editors in terms of the Jewish origin of people who are mentioned by texts, see especially Hacham and Ilan, "Introduction," *CPJ* IV, 2–19.

16 See Table 1: Simon (*P.Count* 9; *CPJ* IV 543a = *BGU* VI 1454); Isaak (*CPJ* IV 545a = Kaplony-Heckel, "Theben-Ost II," 48 = *P.Brooklyn Dem.* 144; *O.Mattha* 233 = *CPJ* IV 545c); Dositheos (*CPJ* IV 543a = *BGU* VI 1454; *CPJ* IV 549 = Kaplony-Heckel, "Theben-West und Theben-Ost," 589); Joseph (*CPJ* IV 545a = Kaplony-Heckel, "Theben-Ost II," 48 = *P.Brooklyn Dem.* 144; *CPJ* IV 545a = Kaplony-Heckel, "Theben-Ost II," 48 = *P.Brooklyn Dem.* 144; *CPJ* IV 617b = Thissen, "Logistische Probleme,"

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

non-Jewish names, their ethnicity was determined mostly based on the Jewish names of their fathers, who were mentioned as identifiers for example: Platon, son of Shabtai, and Aristomenes, son of Joseph.[17] Platon and Aristomenes are Greek names, while Shabtai and Joseph are widely attested among Jews in Egypt. Hence, based on the fathers' names, both Platon and Aristomenes were probably Jews who bore Greek names.

It is possible to identify at least two Jewish families based on the Demotic material. A household record (*P.Count* 9) found in Gurob in the Fayum mentions a certain Simon and his family: mother Hetitia, wife Theophile, and his slave named Melas.[18] The editors of *CPJ* IV omitted this text because the Jewish origin of this family is uncertain, and it can be suggested solely based on onomastics. The name Simon poses certain problems with its interpretation. Simon (Σίμων) is a Greek name, which was used by the Jews in the Hellenistic period primarily due to its similarities to the biblical name Simeon. It is frequently emphasised by scholars that this name is attested also in the non-Jewish context. Thus, not every individual who bear this name can be considered as a Jew.[19] On the other hand, editors of *P.Count* 9 consider Simon and his family as Jews, and I follow this interpretation.[20] Both Simon and Theophile were common names among Egyptian Jews.[21] Especially, names with a prefix "theos" as in the case of Theophile and Theodoros were frequently carried by Jews. In Jewish context, these names probably constituted a modified form of Greek and Egyptian theophoric names, that traditionally were associated with the name of a deity.[22] Names with the element "theos" were probably used by Jews as a way of expressing their monotheistic beliefs. Thus, these names were preferred by Jews because in their eyes, they referred to the one God.[23] And these factors support the view that both Simon and Theophile were Jews.

291–299); Abietes (CPJ IV 541 = Devauchelle, "Lettre de réclamation," 82–83); Shabtai (*CPJ* IV 543a = *BGU* VI 1454 ; *CPJ* IV 544 = Kaplony-Heckel, "Theben-Ost II," 48); for using the name of "Shabtai" in Hellenistic Egypt, see Hacham, and Ilan, "Introduction," *CPJ* IV, 9–13. For Jewish names as social markers, see Cohen, "Jewish Names," 97–128; Honigman, "Noms sémitiques," 63–118; Honigman, "Jewish Communities," 121–125; Hacham, "The Third Century BCE," 132–134.

17 Both examples are attested by *CPJ* IV 543a = *BGU* VI 1454.

18 *P.Count* 9 (Fayum, after 251/150 BC).

19 Cohen, "Jewish Names," 112–117.

20 Clarysse, and Thompson, *Counting the People*, 147–148.

21 See the list of Jews and their names provided by Winnicki, *Late Egypt and Her Neighbours*, 202, 218–219, 231.

22 *P.Count* 9, note to ll. 32–35, 249; Clarysse, and Thompson, *Counting the People*, 147–148; Clarysse, "The Jewish Presence in Graeco-Roman Egypt," 310.

23 For theophoric names in Hellenistic Egypt, see Clarysse, and Thompson, *Counting the People*, 332–341.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Regarding Simon's mother, Hetitia is not a Jewish name, and the Greek origin of this name is more possible. However, she is also considered in this study as a Jewish woman, because she is thought to be the mother of a Jew. Additionally, the Jewish presence in the Fayum is frequently attested in different sites of this area and texts reveals that Jews formed a relatively large group of local community. For example, it is assessed that in the village of Trikomia Jews constituted approximately 20% of the total population.[24] This may serve as another argument to support the idea that Simon and his family belonged to the Jewish community, and therefore they should be considered within this study.

Two Demotic ostraca dated to the mid second century BC attest a Jewish family from Thebes, but the entire documentation regarding this family comprises also Greek sources.[25] The family tree have been already thoroughly discussed and reconstructed by Willy Clarysse, with some remarks added by Noah Hacham.[26] Based on evidence regarding this family, it is possible to identify six male members. Isaak, Jesus, Straton, and Joseph played an active role in these texts, but it also was possible to identify another Joseph who appeared only as an identifier.[27] Moreover, Greek texts also attests another member of this family, Straton who was a son of Straton and the brother of Isaak.

In our texts, there are four women who possibly were of the Jewish ethnicity. In addition to Hetitia and Theophile who were certainly Jewish women, sources inform us also about a certain Tapoeris wife of Shabtai and about another woman whose name is unfortunately lost. Tapoeris is mentioned by two Edfu ostraca dated around the mid third century AD. She was a wife of Shabtai, a man whose Jewish origin is based on the linguistic analysis of both documents.[28] However, Tapoeris is an Egyptian name and the Jewish origin of woman who appeared in Edfu texts remains questionable. She can be considered either as an Egyptian wife of Shabtai or as a Jewish woman who bear an Egyptian name.[29] The fourth Jewish woman

---

24 *P.Count* 22 = *CPR* XIII 1 (Trikomia, 254–231 BC); *P.Count* 23 = *CPR* XIII 2 (Lysimachis, Tikomia, Lagis, 254–231 BC); Winnicki, *Late Egypt and Her Neighbours*, 243–246; Clarysse, "Jews in Trikomia," 193–203; Muhlestein, and Innes, "Synagogues and Cemeteries," 53–59; Clarysse, "The Jewish Presence in Graeco-Roman Egypt," 308–312.

25 Demotic ostraca: *CPJ* IV 545a = Kaplony-Heckel, "Theben-Ost II," 48 = *P.Brooklyn Dem.* 144 (156 BC); *O.Mattha* 233 = *CPJ* IV 545c (153/152 BC); Greek texts: *O.Bodl.* I 158 = *CPJ* I 77 (158 BC); *O.Bodl.* I 163 = *CPJ* I 78 (155 BC); *O.Wilcken* II 731 = *CPJ* IV 545b (153 BC); *O.Bodl.* I 164 = *CPJ* I 79 (151 BC).

26 Clarysse, "A Jewish Family," 7–9; Hacham, "A Jewish Family," 219–220; Clarysse, "The Jewish Presence in Graeco-Roman Egypt," 306–308.

27 Table 1, nos. 18–21.

28 Table 1, no. 7; *CPJ* IV 524 = Wängstedt, "Demotische Ostraca," 72 (244 BC); *O.Mattha* 134 = *CPJ* IV 523 (243 BC); Muhs, "Demotic and Aramaic Ostraca," 147–50.

29 *CPJ* IV 523, note to l. 6.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

appears in a Demotic marriage contract originating from the Fayum area.[30] Her name is lost, yet the name of her father Isaak is preserved. It is clearly a Jewish name, which implies the ethnic origin of the woman's family.

Individuals who are recognized as Jews within this study performed different functions and occupations. Most of them were engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry. Three Demotic receipts from Thebes inform about the entire groups of Jews who were farmers.[31] A population register dated to 229 BC records Protogenes, son of Ioudas, an owner of a livestock who paid the pasturage-tax for at least 50 sheep.[32]

Egyptian texts show that Jews were also responsible for providing certain goods for various purposes. Abram and Shabtai from Leontopolis (Tell el-Yahudiya) have been recorded among the brick suppliers.[33] They could have been responsible for either transporting the bricks or making them. The document is partially lost, so the type of building that was built with these bricks remain unknown. According to one possible interpretation, bricks were provided for the construction of the Jewish Temple in Leontopolis, unfortunately, there is no evidence to support this view.[34]

Furthermore, two texts of the Demotic ostraca archive from Oxyrhynchos give us an account of people responsible for providing supplies to the military outpost.[35] The outpost was located somewhere on the desert, probably on the route between Oxyrhynchos to the Bahariya Oasis. These records include references to three members of a Jewish family who supplied the military outpost with grain and water.[36]

Jews performed also public and privileged occupations. A Demotic memorandum originating from the village of Techtho informs about Yeshua, apparently a Jew, who held the office of the royal scribe in this village.[37] Doctor was another privileged occupation held by Jews in the Ptolemaic period. For example, a Demotic household record originating from the Fayum area attests a certain Simon who was an oculist, and Jewish identity was determined based on onomastics.[38]

---

30 *CPJ* IV 618 = *P.Köln Gr.* XV 637 (Fayum, 285–204 BC).

31 *CPJ* IV 543a = *BGU* VI 1454 (Thebes, 160 BC); *CPJ* IV 544 = Kaplony-Heckel, "Theben-Ost II," 48 (Thebes, 156 BC); *CPJ* IV 549 = Kaplony-Heckel, "Theben-West und Theben-Ost," 589 (Thebes 88 BC).

32 *P.Count* 2 = *CPJ* IV 596 = *P.Lille Dem.* III 99 (Ghoran, 229 BC).

33 *CPJ* IV 608 (Leontopolis, 299–100 BC).

34 *CPJ* IV 608, commentary; for the Jewish Temple in Leontopolis, see Hayward, "The Jewish Temple at Leontopolis," 429–443; Gruen, "The origins and objectives," 67–70.

35 Kaplony-Heckel, "Wasser für den Aussenposten," 229–38; Thissen, "Logistische Probleme," 291–299.

36 *CPJ* IV 617b = Thissen, "Logistische Probleme," 291–299 (150–100 BC); *CPJ* IV 617a = Bresciani et al., "Ostraka Demotici," 47–49 (137 BC).

37 *CPJ* IV 616 = Baetens and Angles, "A Demotic Memorandum," 281–294 (Techtho, Ptolemaic period).

38 *P.Count* 9 (Fayum, after 251 BC); Clarysse, and Thompson, *Counting the* People, 162–164.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Egyptian evidence offers at least one example of a Jew who presumably served as a soldier. A letter from Edfu mentions a certain Abietes, based on onomastics possibly a Jew, who is additionally labelled in this text as Mede (*Mdy*).[39] Designations that referred to the ethnic origin such as "Hellene", "Macedonian", or "Persian" are commonly attested in Greek and Demotic papyri dated to the Ptolemaic period. All ethnic designations mentioned by these texts have been collected by Csaba A. La'da.[40] These designations were used to describe a formal status of individuals and they are preserved primarily in official documents. Initially, from the third to the mid second century BC, ethnic designations referred to the real ethnic background of individuals. However, gradually these labels lost their original meaning, which referred to ethnicity, and they were transformed into occupational and tax categories.[41] As Katelijn Vandorpe shows, the term "Mede," and its Greek equivalent of "Persian" (Πέρσης) were used regarding mercenaries in Upper Egypt, especially after setting up an army camp in this area around the mid second century BC.[42] Abietes is mentioned by text datable to the first century BC, so he probably was a Jewish soldier who stationed in this area.

Jews in social and cultural interactions in Ptolemaic Egypt

Based on Demotic and Hieroglyphic sources it is possible to trace social and cultural interactions between Jews and other ethnic groups of society, particularly Greeks and Egyptians. As it was shown in previous section, Egyptian texts shed light on the Jewish naming practices, their public and professional activities, and their attitude towards customs and beliefs that were cultivated by other groups of population. Analysing these aspects will enable a discussion on the integration of Jews into Ptolemaic society. Sylvie Honigman notes that depending on the region, there were significant differences in cultural and socio-economic integration of Jews into the local communities. These differences were determined primarily by the ethnic composition of these regions; thus, ethnic factor profoundly shaped the local social relations. In Upper Egypt (particularly in Edfu and Thebes), which was dominated by the native Egyptian population, Jews were integrated into military and administrative systems. Despite this, they were able to maintain their naming traditions over centuries. On the other hand, Jews from Herakleopolis abandoned their traditional customs, laws, and even names in favour of the Greek names and

39 *CPJ* IV 541 = Devauchelle, "Lettre de réclamation," 82–83 (Edfu, 1st c. BC).

40 La'da, *Foreign Ethnics*.

41 La'da, "Ethnicity, occupation," 183–189; Thompson, "Hellenistic Hellenes," 304–316.

42 Vandorpe, "Persian soldiers," 87–108.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

traditions.[43] In the Fayum area, where Greek and Macedonian immigrants formed a significant proportion of the population, Jews were recorded in tax registers among the *Hellenes* (Ἕλληνες, *Wynn*). This term was used for tax purposes to describe a tax-category, which initially denoted individuals originating from the Greek ethnical background. *Hellenes* enjoyed special fiscal privileges, and gradually representatives of other ethnic groups were assigned to this category, for example, non-Greeks whose occupations were associated with tax exemptions.[44] Labelling Jews as *Hellenes* seems to be suggestive of a Jewish integration into the local community. These observations regarding various patterns in shaping relations between Jews and other ethnic groups under the Ptolemies are discernible on a limited scale also in the Egyptian material.

The language of our evidence constitutes the main bridge between the Jewish and Egyptian sides of society. Although, the number of Demotic and Hieroglyphic texts regarding Jews is negligible, especially in comparison with the Greek material, the use of Egyptian scripts in the writing implies that to a certain extent Jews were familiar with the Egyptian language.[45] There is at least one text mentioning a Jewish scribe from the Herakleopolite nome, who probably was able to read both Greek and Demotic.[46] All Demotic texts collected within this paper were written for the official purposes and often for the use of Jews. Most of these texts originate from Edfu and Thebes, sites predominantly settled by the Egyptians. Although, Demotic was gradually being replaced by Greek in everyday life, it was commonly used in official and private texts, particularly in the beginning of the Ptolemaic period.[47] Literacy in the Demotic script among Jews became necessary at some point since it facilitated their functioning in society, especially in community dominated by the native population.

As stated before, onomastics played the significant role in determining the Jewish ethnicity of individuals who are mentioned by Demotic texts. However, onomastics also shed light on the interactions between various ethnic groups within the society. Documents mention approximately 24 different proper names of individuals who have been identified as Jews, and this number comprises the filiations. It is not always the case that Jews bore exclusively the Semitic/Jewish names. There are seven Semitic (Hebrew and Aramaic) names recorded in Demotic texts and these

43 For detailed analysis of regional differences, see Honigman, "Jewish Communities," 117–135.

44 *P.Count* 26 = *CPJ* IV 589 = *CPR* XIII 4 (254–231 BC) Clarysse, "Jews in Trikomia," 193–203; for the tax-category *Hellenes*, see Clarysse and Thompson, *Counting the People*, 138–147; Clarysse and Thompson, "P.Count 2 Continued," 162–189.

45 Hacham, and Ilan, "Introduction," *CPJ* IV, 2.

46 *CPJ* IV 616 = Baetens and Angles, "A Demotic Memorandum," 281–294.

47 Depauw, *A Companion to Demotic Studies*, 22–25.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

names served as a quite reliable indicator of the Jewish ethnicity.[48] Nevertheless, Greek names were very popular among the Jewish population and our sources attest at least ten Greek names (e. g. Protogenes, Tobias, Platon, Dositheos, and Straton) that were born by Jews.[49] Scholars argue that adopting Greek names by Jews constituted a clear sign of their interaction with the Greek culture. Recent research regarding naming practices under the Ptolemies has revealed that it was a common trend to give names related to the ruling dynasty (e. g. Arsinoe, Berenike) and it is noticeable also among Jews.[50] Demotic texts mention three different Egyptian names: Tapoeris, Shabtai, and Psenshabtai that were widely used by both the Egyptian and non-Egyptian people, including Jews.[51] The onomastic analysis shows that Jews clearly relinquished their traditional Semitic names, adopting Greek and Egyptian names that were popular in their local communities. This is particularly reflected by the mixing of names, as for example Protogenes son of Ioudas, and Straton son of Jesus. In both cases, the fathers' names are Hebrew, but the sons bear Greek names implying that these families presumably abandoned traditional Semitic names.[52]

The Jewish-Egyptian interactions are reflected also by mixed marriages. There are preserved at least two examples of mixed marriages in the Demotic material, unfortunately both are disputable. The first is provided by Demotic/Aramaic ostraca, which concerns Tapoeris, wife of Shabtai.[53] As stated before, it is impossible to determine whether she was a Jewish woman bearing an Egyptian name or an Egyptian woman who had married a Jew. Bearing in mind that texts mentioning Tapoeris originate from Edfu, which was predominantly inhabited by the Egyptians, both interpretations are equally likely. A Jewish-Egyptian intermarriage is presumably attested also by a Demotic contract from the Fayum area.[54] Unfortunately, the document is illegible and names of supposes remain unknown. However, the bride's father was named Isaak, which was a Jewish name, and, on this basis, it can be assumed the bride and her father were Jews. Because the husband's name is lost, there are two possible interpretations of this document. According to first interpretation, this text is an example of a mixed marriage between an Egyptian

---

48 Cohen "Jewish Names," 97–128.

49 For all Greek names mentioned by Demotic texts, see Table 1.

50 Clarysse and Thompson, *Counting the People*, 318–341; Honigman, "Jewish Communities," 117–135; Clarysse, "The Jewish Presence in Graeco-Roman Egypt," 310.

51 *CPJ* IV, "Introduction," 9–13.

52 Protogenes, son of Ioudas: *P.Count* 2 = *CPJ* IV 596 = *P.Lille Dem.* III 99 (Ghoran, 229 BC); Straton son of Jesus: *CPJ* IV 545a = Kaplony-Heckel, "Theben-Ost II," 48 = *P.Brooklyn Dem.* 144 (Thebes, 156 BC).

53 *CPJ* IV 524 = Wängstedt, "Demotische Ostraca," 72; (Edfu, 244 BC); *O.Mattha* 134 = *CPJ* IV 523 (Edfu, 243 BC).

54 *CPJ* IV 618 = *P.Köln Gr.* XV 637 (Fayum, 285–204 BC).

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

man and a Jewish woman. The marriage contract was issued in Demotic, which probably implies that the groom was an Egyptian. Another interpretation states that both parties of the contract were Jews, and this fact may also lead to interesting conclusions. The contract was written in Demotic, and the marriage was arranged according to Egyptian traditions. Hence, if both sides of the contract were Jews, this document would be an excellent example of adopting Egyptian culture and laws by Jews in the Ptolemaic period.[55]

Demotic documents were issued for official purposes, and they concern various financial transactions, as well as legal and administrative matters. The relatively significant level of Jewish integration into the political and socio-economic organization of the state emerge from these sources. Primarily, Jews performed various public functions; and as stated before, they were scribes, soldiers, and doctors.[56] Due to their profession, these individuals enjoyed a privileged status within the society, at least at the local level, and for example, they were entitled to certain tax-exemptions.[57] Furthermore, Jews were responsible for providing various goods for public institutions. There are two texts attesting that Jews were responsible for providing supplies of grain and water for the military outpost.[58] Sources comprise also a payment receipt for the food that was provided to an ibis-shrine. This receipt was issued for a certain Isaak son of Straton, who have been identified as a Jew.[59] Isaak probably cultivated the part of the land owned by the ibis-shrine, which practically meant that he was working for the temple of the Egyptian cult. Hence, it is a peculiar example to illustrate the interaction between Jews and the Egyptian tradition and culture.

On the other hand, Hieroglyphic inscriptions datable to the Ptolemaic period show the negative picture of Jews. Three inscriptions that have been edited and published in *CPJ* IV (nos. 167, 170 and *Appendix: Bucheum stele* 8) include references to a group of Jews. *CPJ* IV 167 and the *Bucheum Stele 8* are two epitaphs of the Buchis bulls. The Buchis bull was the sacred incarnation of the God Montu, which was worshipped at Hermonthis.[60] The *Bucheum Stele 8* is earlier text datable to 163 BC, while *CPJ* IV 167 was engraved presumably around 145 BC. Both texts

55 *CPJ* IV 618, commentary.

56 See also previous section; scribe: *CPJ* IV 616 = Baetens and Angles, "A Demotic Memorandum," 281–294 (Techtho, Ptolemaic period); soldier: *CPJ* IV 541 = Devauchelle, "Lettre de réclamation," 82–83 (Edfu, 1st c. BC); oculist: *P.Count* 9 (Fayum, after 251 BC).

57 *P.Count* 9 (Fayum, after 251 BC); Clarysse, and Thompson, *Counting the* People, 147–148.

58 Supplies for the military outpost: *CPJ* IV 617a = Bresciani et al., "Ostraka Demotici," 47–49 (Oxyrhynchos, 137 BC); *CPJ* IV 617b = Thissen, "Logistische Probleme," 291–299 (Oxyrhynchos, 150–100 BC).

59 *O.Mattha* 233 = *CPJ* IV 545c (Thebes, 153/2 BC), see *CPJ* IV 545c, commentary; Clarysse, "A Jewish Family," 8; Clarysse, "The Jewish Presence in Graeco-Roman Egypt," 306–307.

60 Dodson, "Bull Cults," 95–100.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

have been issued according to a standard convention, which was usually applied in the funerary inscriptions of the sacred bulls, mostly a record of the Buchis' life. Additionally, they contain references to the "foreigners of *Yahu*", who previously occupied the temple of Amun of Opet but, as inscriptions mention, the foreigners had already left the temple. The presence of these hostile foreigners was probably the main reason why no proper funerary rituals for the Buchis could have been performed in the temple immediately after the Bull's death. The "foreigners of *Yahu*" have been recognized as Jews by the editors of *CPJ* IV, primarily because *Yahu* was the name of the Jewish God, and this name is commonly attested among the Jews of Elephantine.[61] These inscriptions presumably pertain to the invasion of Antiochus IV Epiphanes in 169 BC. The "foreigners" belonged to the troops of Antiochus stationed in the temple, and they might have been of Jewish origin. As it seems, they were presented in a negative way because they were foreign soldiers who had violated the temple, not because they were Jews.[62] The third Hieroglyphic inscription (*CPJ* IV 170) originates from Tanis and dates between 80–51 BC.[63] This biographical text has been engraved on a statue and it also contains references to the Jewish violation of the temple of Amun. The text of inscription directly mentions that Jews were expelled from the temple, and it can be presumed that they had committed abominations. There is another hieroglyphic inscription (D88 = Cairo *JdE* 67094), which presumably describes the same event, but it does not include any references toward Jews.[64] This text mentions that the temple was violated and settled by certain foreigners, presumably soldiers of a foreign army; but they are not referred to as Jews in this inscription.

Some scholars suggest that Hieroglyphic inscriptions reflect the negative attitude of Egyptian population towards Jews. According to one possible interpretation, these texts provide us with false accusations against the Jewish population. Jews are indicated in these texts as being responsible for a violation of the temple primarily due to religious or cultural tensions between Jews and Egyptians.[65] This interpretation may be supported by other documentary evidence. Strained relations between Jews and Egyptians are also attested by a Greek papyrus mentioning an Egyptian priest, who as documents states, hated Jews.[66] Thus, the Jewish-Egyptian conflict is discernible primarily in the temple and religious context. In this light,

61 *CPJ* IV 167, commentary; Porten, *Archives from Elephantine*, 105–122.

62 Thiers, "Civils et militaires," 493–516; Fischer-Bovet, *Army and Society*, 266–267; *CPJ* IV 167, commentary.

63 Zivie-Coche, "Un compagnon de Panemerit," 533–564.

64 Zivie-Coche, "Travaux récents sur le Tell Sân El-Hagar 2," 349–439; Zivie-Coche, "Travaux récents sur le Tell Sân El-Hagar 3," 235–289; Fischer-Bovet, *Army and Society*, 268.

65 *CPJ* IV 167, 170, commentary.

66 *SB VI* 9564 = *CPJ I* 141 (1st c. BC).

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Hieroglyphic inscriptions discussed within this study may constitute evidence to attest the social tensions between different ethnic groups under the Ptolemies.[67] On the other hand, Hieroglyphic texts clearly refer to a group of foreigners, probably soldiers who invaded Egypt. Unlike Demotic material, which inform us about Jews who inhabited Egypt and were quite well integrated into society, Hieroglyphic inscriptions include references to Jews from outside of Egypt. To a certain extent, it may explain why Demotic and Hieroglyphic texts show different pictures of Jews and their interactions within Ptolemaic society.

Conclusions

Although, a negligible number of Demotic and Hieroglyphic texts regarding Jews is known today, these texts support the study on interactions between Jews and other groups of society in Ptolemaic Egypt. A close analysis of sources shows that the Jewish population was active in different spheres of political, social, and economic life under the Ptolemies. Texts confirm that Jews often decided to abandon their own traditions in naming practices in favour of Greek and Egyptian habits, and they used names that were popular among the local communities. To a certain degree, Jews adopted the Egyptian traditional law as it is seen in the light of Demotic marriage contracts that concerned marriages arranged according to Egyptian rules. Jews were probably also familiar with the Egyptian language written in Demotic script, that was a widely used under the Ptolemies. The ability of writing and reading Demotic guaranteed a proper functioning in society predominated by the native Egyptians. Moreover, Jews performed significant public functions, which implies that they often occupied a relatively prominent position within the society.

There is also evidence to attest the social and cultural tensions between Jews and Egyptians. It seems that they occurred primarily in the religious sphere, because all texts regarding this problem were issued in the temple context. The negative picture of Jews is provided exclusively by Hieroglyphic inscriptions that, as it seems, pertain to the Jews who were not members of Ptolemaic society. Although some scholars still suggest that these inscriptions may reflect the hostile attitude of the native Egyptians towards the Jewish community, this picture is drawn only based on Hieroglyphic texts. Demotic documents do not reveal any indications of social tensions between Egyptian and Jews. One possible explanation is that Demotic texts concerns Jews who were integrated into the fabric of society, and for this reason any social tensions are visible in these texts. Yet, one needs to bear in mind that this paper is focused only of the Egyptian documentation, and the great proportion

67 For anti-Semitism in Ptolemaic Egypt, see Mélèze-Modrzejewski, *The Jews of Egypt*, 135–157.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

of texts written in other languages (especially Greek, Aramaic and Hebrew) have been omitted here. Nevertheless, the analysis of Egyptian texts adds another brick to research on the history of Jews in Egypt.

Table 1 The Jews of Ptolemaic Egypt in Demotic and Hieroglyphic texts

No.	Name	Source	Place	Date
1	Abram	*CPJ* IV 608	Leontopolis (Tell el-Yahudiya)	299–100 BC
2	Shabtai	*CPJ* IV 608	Leontopolis (Tell el-Yahudiya)	299–100 BC
3	NN daughter of Isaak	*CPJ* IV 618 = *P. Köln Gr.* XV 637	Fayum	285–204 BC
4	Simon	*P.Count* 9	Fayum	after 251 BC
5	Hetitia	*P.Count* 9	Fayum	after 251 BC
6	Theophile	*P.Count* 9	Fayum	after 251 BC
7	Tapoeris wife of Shabtai	a) *CPJ* IV 524 = Wängstedt, "Demotische Ostraca," 72 b) *O.Mattha* 134 = *CPJ* IV 523	Apollonopolis (Edfu)	a) 244 BC b) 243 BC
8	Protogenes son of Ioudas	*P.Count* 2 = *CPJ* IV 596 = *P.Lille Dem.* III 99	Ghoran	229 BC
9	Tobias son of Simon	*CPJ* IV 543a = *BGU* VI 1454	Diospolis Magna (Thebes)	167 BC
10	Aristomenes son of Joseph	*CPJ* IV 543a = *BGU* VI 1454	Diospolis Magna (Thebes)	167 BC
11	Platon son of Shabtai	*CPJ* IV 543a = *BGU* VI 1454	Diospolis Magna (Thebes)	167 BC
12	Simon son Abietes	*CPJ* IV 543a = *BGU* VI 1454	Diospolis Magna (Thebes)	167 BC
13	Shabtai son of Abdi	*CPJ* IV 543a = *BGU* VI 1454	Diospolis Magna (Thebes)	167 BC
14	Dositheos son of Shabtai	*CPJ* IV 543a = *BGU* VI 1454	Diospolis Magna (Thebes)	167 BC
15	Aratos son of NN	*CPJ* IV 543a = *BGU* VI 1454	Diospolis Magna (Thebes)	167 BC
16	Iapit son of Oupesia	*CPJ* IV 544 = Kaplony-Heckel, "Theben-Ost II," 48	Diospolis Magna (Thebes)	160 BC
17	Shabtai son of Han-niyah	*CPJ* IV 544 = Kaplony-Heckel, "Theben-Ost II," 48	Diospolis Magna (Thebes)	160 BC
18	Isaak son of Straton	a) *CPJ* IV 545a = Kaplony-Heckel, "Theben-Ost II," 48 = *P.Brooklyn Dem.* 144 b) *O. Mattha* 233 = *CPJ* IV 545c	Diospolis Magna (Thebes)	a) 156 BC b) 153/2 BC
19	Jesus son of Joseph	*CPJ* IV 545a = Kaplony-Heckel, "Theben-Ost II," 48 = *P.Brooklyn Dem.* 144	Diospolis Magna (Thebes)	156 BC

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

No.	Name	Source	Place	Date
20	Straton son of Jesus	*CPJ* IV 545a = Kaplony-Heckel, "Theben-Ost II," 48 = *P.Brooklyn Dem.* 144	Diospolis Magna (Thebes)	156 BC
21	Joseph son of Jesus	*CPJ* IV 545a = Kaplony-Heckel, "Theben-Ost II," 48 = *P.Brooklyn Dem.* 144	Diospolis Magna (Thebes)	156 BC
22	Joseph son of Psenshabtai	*CPJ* IV 617b = Thissen, "Logistische Probleme," 291–299	Oxyrhynchos	150–100 BC
23	Psenshabtai	*CPJ* IV 617b = Thissen, "Logistische Probleme," 291–299	Oxyrhynchos	150–100 BC
24	Abi[ ] son of Psenshabtai	*CPJ* IV 617a = Bresciani et al., "Ostraka Demotici," 47–49	Oxyrhynchos	137 BC
25	Abietes the Mede	*CPJ* IV 541 = Devauchelle, "Lettre de réclamation," 82–83	Apollonopolis (Edfu)	100–1 BC
26	Dositheos son of Shabtai	*CPJ* IV 549 = Kaplony-Heckel, "Theben-West und Theben-Ost," 589	Diospolis Magna (Thebes)	88 BC
27	Yeshua	*CPJ* IV 616 = Baetens and Angles, "A Demotic Memorandum," 281–294	Techtho (Dashtut)	249 or 146 or 135 or 82 BC

Abbreviations

BGU **VI** — Schubart, Wilhelm, and Ernst Kühn. *Aegyptische Urkunden aus den Königlichen (later Staatlichen) Museen zu Berlin, Griechische Urkunden VI Band: Papyri und Ostraka der Ptolemäerzeit*, 1922. Nos. 1211—1303 are papyri; nos. 1304—1499 ostraca

CPJ **I** — Tcherikover, Victor A., and Alexander Fuks. *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum*. Volume I. Cambridge (MA): The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, Harvard University Press, 1957.

CPJ **II** — Tcherikover, Victor A., and Alexander Fuks. *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum*. Volume II. Cambridge (MA): The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, Harvard University Press, 1960.

CPJ **III** — Tcherikover, Victor A., Alexander Fuks, Menahem Stern, and David M. Lewis. *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum*. Volume III. Cambridge (MA): The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, Harvard University Press, 1964.

CPJ **IV** — Hacham, Noah, and Tal Ilan. *Coprus Papyrorum Judaicarum*. Volume IV. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2020.

CPR **XII** — Harrauer, Hermann. *Corpus Papyrorum Raineri XIII. Griechische Texte IX*. Wien: Verlag Brüder Hollinek, 1987.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

JIGRE	Horbury, William, and David Noy. *Jewish Inscriptions of Graeco-Roman Egypt*, Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
O. Mattha	Mattha, Girgis. *Demotic Ostraka from the collections at Oxford, Paris, Berlin, Vienna and Cairo*. Le Caire: Imprimerie de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1945.
P. Brooklyn Dem.	Hughes, George R., Brian P. Muhs, and Steve Vinson. *Catalog of Demotic Texts in the Brooklyn Museum*. Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2005.
P. Count.	Clarysse, Willy, and Dorothy Thompson. *Counting the People in Hellenistic Egypt. Volume 1. Population registers (P.Count)*. Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
P. Köln Gr. XV	Armoni, Charikleia, Thomas Backhuys, Robert W. Daniel, JannikKorte, Klaus Maresch, GesaSchenke, Alkestis A. Spinou and Wolfgang Wegner, eds., *Kölner Papyri 15 (P.Köln XV)*, Leiden, Boston: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2017.
P. Lille Dem.	de Cenival, Francoise. *Papyrus démotiques de Lille III*. Le Caire: L'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1984.
SB	Preisigke, Friedrich, Friedrich Bilabel, Emil Kiessling, and Hans-Albert Rupprecht. *Sammelbuch Griechischer Urkunden aus Ägypten*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1915–.

Bibliography

Baetens, G., and P.-L. Angles, (2018), 'A Demotic Memorandum to the Village Epistates with a Greek Subscription (P. dem. mon. 5).' *Chronique d'Égypte*, 93: 281–294.

Barclay, J. M. G., (1996), *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora. From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE – 117 CE)*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark.

Bresciani, E., M. P. Giangeri Silvis, S. Pernigotti, and M. Muszynski, (1976), 'Ostraka Demotici da Ossirinco', *Studi Classici e Orientali*, 25: 37–88.

Clarysse, W., (1994), 'Jews in Trikomia', in *Proceedings of the 20th International Congress of Papyrologists*, A. Bülow-Jacobsen (ed.), Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press: 193–203.

Clarysse, W., (2002), 'A Jewish Family in Ptolemaic Thebes', *The Journal of Juristic Papyrology*, 32: 7–9.

Clarysse, W. (2020), 'The Jewish Presence in Graeco-Roman Egypt: The Evidence of the Papyri since the Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum', in: A. Salvesen, S. Pearce, and

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

M. Frenkel (eds.), *Israel in Egypt: The Land of Egypt as Concept and Reality for Jews in Antiquity and the Early Medieval Period*, Leiden, Boston: Brill: 303–325.

Clarysse, W., and D. J. Thompson, (2006), *Counting the People in Hellenistic Egypt. Volume 2: Historical Studies*. Cambridge – New York – Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.

Clarysse, W., and D. J. Thompson, (2018), 'P.Count 2 Continued: A Ptolemaic Population Register from the Arsinoite Nome', in: K. Donker van Heel, F.A.J. Hoogendijk, and C.J. Martin (eds.), *Hieratic, Demotic and Greek Studies and Text Editions. Of Making Many Books There Is No End: Festschrift in Honour of Sven P. Vleeming (P.L.Bat. 34)*, Leiden, Boston: Brill: 162–189.

Cohen, N. G., (1976), 'Jewish Names as Cultural Indicators in Antiquity', *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period* 7, 2: 97–128.

Collins, J. J., (2000), *Between Athens and Jerusalem. Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora*, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Depauw, M., (1997), *A Companion to Demotic Studies*. Bruxelles: Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth.

Depauw, M., and Y, Broux, (2017), 'Identification in Graeco-Roman Egypt: The modalities of expressing filiation', in: K. Donker van Heel, F.A.J. Hoogendijk, and C.J. Martin (eds.), *Tell me who you are: labelling status in the Graeco-Roman World, U schyłku starożytności. Studia Źrodłoznawcze* 16, Truskaw – Warszawa: 35–56.

Devauchelle, D., (1990), 'Lettre de réclamation à Edfou (ostracon démotique Edfou 1001)', *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale*, 89: 81–88.

Dodson, A., (2005), 'Bull Cults', in: S. Ikram (ed.) *Divine Creatures. Animal Mummies in Ancient Egypt*, Cairo, New York: The American University in Cairo Press: 72–105.

Fischer-Bovet, Ch., (2014), *Army and Society in Ptolemaic Egypt*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fuks, A. (1953–4), 'Dositheos son of Drimylos: A Prosopographical Note', *The Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 7–8: 205–209.

Gruen, E. S., (1997), 'The origins and objectives of Onias' temple', *Scripta Classica Israelica* 16: 67–70.

Gruen, E. S., (1998), *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Hacham, N., (2017), 'A Jewish Family in Ptolemaic Thebes: A Reconsideration', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 202: 219–220.

Hacham, N., (2018), 'The Third Century BCE: New Light on Egyptian Jewish History from the Papyri', in: M.M. Piotrkowski, G. Herman, and S. Dönitz (eds.), *Sources and Interpretation in Ancient Judaism. Studies for Tal Ilan at Sixty*, Leiden, Boston: Brill: 130–142.

Hayward, R., (1982), 'The Jewish Temple at Leontopolis: A Reconsideration', *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 33: 429–443.

Honigman, S., (2003), 'Noms sémitiques à Edfou et Thèbes', *The Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 40, 1/4: 63–118.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Honigman, S., (2009), 'Jewish Communities of Hellenistic Egypt: Different Responses to Different Environments', in: L.I. Levine, and D.R. Schwartz (eds.), *Jewish Identities in Antiquity. Studies in Memory of Menahem Stern*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck: 117–135.

Israel-Pelletier, A., (2018), *On the Mediterranean and the Nile. The Jews of Egypt*. Indiana: Indiana University Press.

Kaplony-Heckel, U., (1990), 'Theben-West und Theben-Ost (31 demotischer-rḫ=w Ostraka aus- dem British Museum)', in: S. Israelit-Groll (ed.), *Studies in Egyptology. Presented to Miriam Lichtheim*, Volume 2, Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University: 517–624.

Kaplony-Heckel, U., (1994), 'Wasser für den Aussenposten (Das demotische Archiv der Oxyrhynchos-Ostraka)', in: B. Menu (ed.), *Les problems institutionnels de l'eau en Égypte ancienne et dans l'antiquité méditérranéenne*, Le Caire: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale: 229–38.

Kaplony-Heckel, U., (1999), 'Theben-Ost II Zwölf neue r-rx=w-Quittungen und fünf Kurz-Quittungen aus dem Acker-Amt', *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 126, 1: 41–54.

La'da, C. A., (1994), 'Ethnicity, occupation and tax-status in Ptolemaic Egypt', *Egitto e Vicino Oriente*, 17: 183–189.

La'da, C. A., (2002), *Foreign Ethnics in Hellenistic Egypt*. *Prosopographia Ptolemaica* X [*PP* X]. Leuven, Paris, Dudley (MA): Peeters.

Mélèze-Modrzejewski, J., (1997), *The Jews of Egypt. From Rameses II to Emperor Hadrian*. Princeton University Press.

Muhlestein, K., and I. Courtney, (2012), 'Synagogues and Cemeteries: Evidence for a Jewish Presence in the Fayum', *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections*, 4,2: 53–59.

Muhs, B., (2006/7), 'Demotic and Aramaic Ostraca from Early Ptolemaic Edfu, not Thebes', *Enchoria*, 30: 147–50.

Porten, B., (1968), *Archives from Elephantine: The Life of an Ancient Jewish Military Colony*. Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Thiers, Ch., (1995), 'Civils et militaires dans les temples. Occupation illicite et expulsion', *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale*, 95: 493–516.

Thissen, H.-J., (2014), 'Logistische Probleme im Aussenposten', in: A. Dodson, J.J. Johnston, and W. Monkhouse (eds.), *A Good Scribe and an Exceedingly Wise Man. Studies in Honour of W. J. Tait*, London: Golden House Publications: 291–299.

Thompson, D. J., (1994), 'Literacy and Power in the Ptolemaic Egypt', in: A.K. Bowman, G. Woolf (eds.), *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 67–83.

Thompson, D. J., (2001), 'Hellenistic Hellenes: The Case of Ptolemaic Egypt', in: I. Malkin (ed.), *Ancient Perceptions of Greek Ethnicity*, Cambridge (MA), London: Harvard University Press: 301–322.

Thompson, D. J., (2009), 'The Multilingual environment of Persian and Ptolemaic Egypt: Egyptian, Aramaic, and Greek', in: R.S. Bagnall (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology*, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press: 395–417.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Vandorpe, K., (2008), 'Persian soldiers and Persian of the Epigone. Social mobility of soldiers-herdsmen in Upper Egypt', *Archiv für Papyrusforschung*, 54, 1: 87–108.

Wängstedt, S. V., (1969), 'Demotische Ostraca aus ptolemäisch-römischer Zeit', *Orientalia Suecana* 18: 69–100.

Winnicki, J. K., (2009), *Late Egypt and Her Neighbours. Foreign Population in Egypt in the First Millennium BC*. Journal of Juristic Papyrology, Supplements XII. Warsaw: University of Warsaw, and the Raphael Taubenschlag Foundation.

Zivie-Coche, Ch., (1998), 'Un compagnon de Panemerit. Sân 91–200, OAE 3003', in: Ph. Brissaud and Ch. Zivie-Coche (eds.), *Tanis: Travaux récents sur le tell Sân el-Hagar*, Paris: Noêsis: 533–564.

Zivie-Coche, Ch., (2001), 'Travaux récents sur le Tell Sân El-Hagar 2. Les statues de Panemerit, prince de Tanis sous le règne de Ptolémée Aulète', *Cahiers de Tanis*, 15: 349–439.

Zivie-Coche, Ch., (2004), 'Travaux récents sur le Tell Sân El-Hagar 3. Panemerit et Pikha^as, évergètes de la ville', *Cahiers de Tanis*, 18: 235–289.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Case Studies

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Urmas Nõmmik

The Righteous, the Wicked and Creation Theology

Changing Perspectives in Genesis, Isaiah and Job[1]

Introduction

One way of discussing the cultural contacts and contexts of Judea and its neighbours in the Second Temple Period is to focus on one specific group and its actual or imaginative opponents. A suitable option is definitively the opposition of צדיקים 'the righteous' and רשעים 'the wicked', which is remarkably popular in the Hebrew Bible. The following paper will look at the growing self-confidence of the righteous and the change in their identity in the Second Temple Period. Our point of departure for reconstructing the literary development will be the motif of the destruction of a hostile city, as it is mainly known from Gen. 19.[2] We will proceed into the books of Isaiah and Job. In addition, the development cannot be understood without including the impact of the emerging creation theology[3] during the same period. Irrespective of the exact place of settlement of a group of the righteous, the universalistic perspective of the one and only Creator changes how the righteous perceive and recognise their social, political, religious or ethnic neighbours. Moreover, in a universal world, the particularism of the righteous surfaces. Their identity as a party of the special ones – or gradually even the chosen ones – manifests itself in specific group identities in the Hebrew biblical texts contending with the progressive widening of the geographical and cultural horizon in the Persian and especially in the Hellenistic period.

---

1 This work was supported by the Estonian Research Council grant (PRG938).

2 The paper is a development of observations made by Nõmmik on Gen. 18–19 (2012; 2022) and Job (2010; 2014).

3 The concept of creation theology should be preferred over the idea of monotheism. The latter notion is problematic since the possibility of absolute monotheism in real life is doubtable, and the exact degree of monotheism should then always be specified. Furthermore, in didactic and reflective literature, much of the so-called monotheism goes back to the idea of creation. In the Hebrew Bible, mythological language, divine or semi-divine beings are not excluded, but none can contest the one and only God, the Creator. The creation theology plays, thus, a crucial role in the turn of wisdom from presenting practical life experiences and balanced societal relations to the praise of creation and the Creator. Many scholars, particularly Leo G. Perdue (2007), have underlined the importance of creation in interpreting the Hebrew biblical wisdom literature.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Despite the Hebrew biblical studies being unconcerned or sceptical towards the question of צדיקים 'the righteous' as a social, political and religious entity, a party or at least a movement in the Second Temple Period, there are enough grounds to maintain it. Indeed, we possess only indirect literary evidence in texts from the Hebrew Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls, but the solid religious identity behind the notion צדיקים supports a particularistic identity rather than a national.[4] The righteous are not all Israelites but a group within them. Another reason for postulating a party or a movement is redaction-critical: in many Hebrew biblical texts, particularly in the Psalms, the extrapolations and redactions of the righteous amount.[5] There has been a remarkable intention to shape biblical texts and reshape the understanding of piety in own interest. In redaction-critical terms, the tendency seems to be strong, especially in the first half of the Hellenistic period, being the first sign of party-building in the emerging Jewish society, which was later crowned by several religious and political parties in the Maccabean time and after. The younger phase of the history of the righteous is attested in many Qumran texts, mainly from the 2nd and 1st century BCE. Hence, the point of departure for the following article is the existence of a religious movement of the righteous in the Hellenistic period in Jerusalem and its surroundings. The members of respective group(s) also acted as scribes responsible for editing many influential texts that later became biblical books. The premise helps to focus on the likely inner dynamic of the theological development of the group.

The methodological approach of the paper makes recourse to two methods. The first one combines form-criticism with redaction-critical analysis. Biblical poetic texts often reveal balanced structures and symmetries if considering only one literary layer at a time, for example, only the earliest layer or only a specific interim layer of the text. Another methodological impulse can be designated as 'motif criticism', combining tradition-criticism with redaction-critical analysis and folklore studies. Combinations of motifs seem to be as relevant for the study of the emergence of biblical texts as the study of, e. g., word pairs in poetology. Changing perspectives can be traced far better when not tracking single motifs but motif pairs or motif groups, and be more attentive towards alien motifs that mostly are younger and attest to a change in perspective.[6]

4 See the discussion and further literature on particularistic identity and its changes in Nõmmik and Põldsam (2018), cf. Holt (2019).

5 Regarding the Book of Psalms as the 'Prayerbook of the Righteous', the decisive redaction-critical thesis has been delivered by Levin (1993a). It was later developed by others, e. g., Nõmmik (1999) and Marttila (2006); cf. a different but important discussion by Holt (2019).

6 The author uses the method in his monograph on the form and function of the earliest layers in the ancestral narratives in Genesis (Nõmmik 2023).

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Genesis 18.22b-33: the righteous in Sodom

The history of the motif of the confrontation of the righteous and the wicked starts with the second eminent destruction story in the Hebrew Bible after the Deluge, which is the Sodom and Gomorrah account. The most important text is the dialogue between Yahweh and Abraham in Gen. 18.22b-33, which belongs to a small cycle of Abraham and Lot episodes in chs 13* + 18–19*. The cycle once had its beginning in an originally separate story about the destruction of Sodom.[7] From a tradition-historical perspective, it belongs to a rather old story type of destroying a hostile city and saving a legendary protagonist, attested in several Ancient Near Eastern diluvian compositions, including the one with Noah in Gen. 6–8.[8]

It is essential to note that the narrative reveals itself in different versions. One to five cities seem to be in focus in the older literary versions of the story type. Later, the whole world was flooded, and the whole of humanity was destroyed. The Sodom story has likely been initially a local legend, with Lot, the inhabitants of Sodom, the sun god and two divine companions as actors. The legend has later gone through a long chain of changes and redactions. It has been reworked into a cycle together with Abraham, and then into a story about the destruction of two cities, Sodom and Gomorrah resp. the whole region. Only after the reworking into a cycle, a set of extrapolations was introduced that aimed at the ethnical aetiologies of Moab and Ammon, which included the crucial episode about the origin of Moab and Ammon in Gen. 19.29-38 and remarks on Lot's family and sons-in-law in vv. 12-14 (except 12a and 13a). The youngest extrapolations of Gen. 19, including the aetiology of Moab and Ammon, are not a product of the monarchic period but of later editors who wanted to geographically and politically contextualise Israel's origin.[9]

The dialogue between Abraham and Lot in Gen. 18:22b-33 immediately before the Sodom episode is one of the youngest extrapolations of the Abraham-Lot stories.[10] It attests to intensive hermeneutics of the case of Sodom in the Second Temple Period. Many have understood the bargaining of Abraham as a theological struggle about the omnipotence of God. In v. 25, Abraham says:[11]

7 For essential literary- and redaction-critical reconstruction, see Kilian (1966), Levin (1993b: 143–4, 153–6, 159–67); cf. the observations of Blum (1984: 282–6).

8 The story type is discussed by Nõmmik (2023: 196–222).

9 An important role has been played by the Yahwistic author/editor in the sixth century or later; the Yahwist was probably the one to rework the Abraham-Lot cycle into the epic of Israel and to add ethnic aetiologies; on Yahwist as an editor, see Levin (1993b).

10 The research on the dialogue has been summoned by Nõmmik (2012: 195–8).

11 Translation by Westermann (1985: 284, English J. J. Scullion), with adjustments.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

חללה לך מעשׂת כדבר הזה להמית צדיק עם־רשׁע והיה כצדיק כרשׁע חללה לך השׁפט כל־הארץ לא יעשׂה משׁפט:	Far be it from you to do such a thing, to kill the righteous with the wicked; treat the righteous as the wicked; far be it from you, the judge of all the earth, not to do what is right?

But the dialogue can also be interpreted as a validation of the identity of the righteous. The bargaining ends with the amount of ten righteous persons for whose sake Sodom will not be swept away. Ten is a group, a party, the smallest amount of the righteous to save a city. Sodom will be destroyed; hence, not enough righteous persons could be found in the town. There is no pious group yet established; the time has not come. The stress is on later times when groups of the righteous could be found in many cities. This is why השׁפט כל־הארץ 'the judge of all the earth' is involved in the story, the cities in the whole world matter. If to remind the generic affinity of the Sodom story to the diluvian compositions – as mentioned above – the righteous recognising 'the judge of all the earth' pretend to save the whole world.

The piety presumed by the righteous becomes universal. The judge of the earth is, in fact, the one who created the world. Only God the Creator can have the right and duty to judge the creation. The righteous claim the lasting protection of Yahweh, the other side of the coin being the doom of the wicked. The editors of Gen. 18–19 definitively saw themselves being on the side of the righteous, whereby, hence, Abraham appears to be their antecedent. Through Abraham, and indirectly also through Lot, many nations of the world will share the twin fates of the righteous and the wicked since both groups will occur among the members of the nations.

The Abraham stories have the potential of a conspicuous universalistic ambition in many places. It is particularly evident in one of the youngest texts in Genesis, in ch. 14, coming from the Hellenistic time.[12] Abra(ha)m is depicted as a legendary king; he leads a large number of troops, moves through vast areas, and triumphs over many kings, but in the end, he receives a blessing from the priestly King Melchizedek in Salem (Jerusalem), to whom Abra(ha)m has given one tenth of his gathered spoils. The very same king proclaims in Gen. 14.19:[13]

ברוך אברם לאל עליון	Blessed be Abram by El-Elyon,
קנה שׁמים וארץ:	the creator of heaven and earth.

The El-Elyon is the Creator. There is no doubt that the relationship between God and Abraham was depicted as extraordinary sometime in the Hellenistic period (apart from Gen. 14 see other chapters in Abraham stories roughly coming from the same age, such as Gen. 15, 20 or 22). The addition of the righteous in

12 On the redactional and late character of Gen. 14, see Blum (1984: 462–4, n. 5), Levin (1993b: 146) and Witte (1998: 329–31).

13 Translation by Westermann (1985: 186, English J. J. Scullion).

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Gen. 18.22b-33, which I would date into the Hellenistic period, takes advantage of the relationship and claims a particular position of the group of the צדיקים.

In the Second Temple Period, the history of the motif of the confrontation of the righteous and the wicked starts with an adaptation of the strategic point right before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Step by step, an old legend with local heroes from monarchic times became part of changing perspectives in the Hellenistic period. The theology of the one and only Creator brought Israel to the arena of the universal drama. The group of the righteous recognised the dramatic moment and intervened here, in Gen. 18 as scribes extrapolating old stories; their fate and particular relation to God were suddenly free to be connected to the most strategic moments just before significant "historical" events recounted in those old stories.

Isaiah: the righteous escape Jerusalem and Babylon

As already pointed out, the motif of the catastrophe of Sodom and Gomorrah was a part of lively discussions in the Second Temple Period.[14] The Book of Isaiah offers several further instances of strategic scribal interventions regarding the righteous and the wicked. Sodom (and Gomorrah) strategically appear in the introductory chapter, Isa. 1, and at the beginning of two larger sections, Isa. 2–12 and 13–23, in Isa. 1.7, 9, 10 and 3.8-9 and 13.19. Some mentions might be glosses, others programmatic insertions. The passage in Isa. 3.8-9 is worth considering. The cities of Jerusalem and Sodom and human sins are all brought together.[15]

כי כשלה ירושלם	8	Yes, Jerusalem stumbled
ויהודה נפל		and Judah fell,
כי־לשונם ומעלליהם אל־יהוה		because their speech and their deeds were against Yahweh,
למרות עני כבודו:		defying the eyes of his glory.
הכרת פניהם ענתה בם	9	Their respect of person testified against them
וחטאתם <u>כסדם</u> הגידו לא כחדו		and they proclaimed 'their sin'[16] like <u>Sodom</u>: they did not hide them.
אוי לנפשם		Woe to them,
כי־גמלו להם רעה:		for they brought down disaster upon themselves.

There has been a certain doubt that the mention of Sodom in v. 9b is a gloss since וחטאתם הגידו לא כחדו 'and they proclaimed their sin: they did not hide them' can

14 Fields (1997: 158–71) holds the destruction of Sodom as being 'prototypical of divine judgement'.

15 Translation by Kaiser (1983: 67, English J. Bowden), with adjustments.

16 The word וחטאתם has to be vocalised as a noun, see BHS.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

be read as a normal colon.[17] Still, even a gloss exactly attests to the tendency to compare Jerusalem's fate to the fate of Sodom.[18]

Surprisingly, immediately after these verses, in vv. 10–11, the righteous will be blessed and the wicked condemned. Once again, the righteous try to hook themselves up to a woe oracle against some historically significant locality, such as Jerusalem in this time. They change the perspective of the catastrophe of 586 because, in the received Masoretic text, the צדיקים seem to be those who escape Jerusalem's destruction.[19]

אשרי צדיק כי־טוב	10	'Blessed'[20] is the righteous man for it is well with him,
כי־פרי מעלליהם יאכלו:		because they enjoy the fruit of their deeds.
אוי לרשע [כי] רע	11	Woe to the wicked man, [for][21] it goes ill with him,
כי־גמול ידיו יעשה לו:		because he is recompensed according to the deeds of his hands.

Almost unanimously, commentators ascribe the passage to wisdom theology. But wisdom should be differentiated by distinguishing between traditional wisdom literature and Second Temple piety. The Second Temple's pious literature is a synthesis of various genres and forms. Still, since the synthesis has overwhelmingly affected the didactic, reflective and psalm literature, it gives the impression that the confrontation of the righteous and the wicked also belongs to the basics of wisdom.

A further significant Isaianic text worth discussing links the ruin of the wicked to the downfall of Babylon and with the phenomenon of the Day of Yahweh poems.

17 In BHS, the editors suspect a gloss, similarly Duhm (1902: 24), Marti (1900: 38), Wildberger (1980: 118), Clements (1980: 49) and Becker (1997: 164). Not expressively so by Kaiser (1983: 67, 72–3).

18 There is every reason to think of vv. 8-9 in general as an addition: Becker (1997: 164–5) argues for this, Kaiser (1983: 67–8) and Williamson (2006: 240: exilic) favour it; many have thought that the colon 9b is a gloss, see Marti (1900: 38–9) and Clements (1980: 47).

19 Translation by Kaiser (1983: 67, English J. Bowden), with adjustments. Verses 10-11 are an extrapolation, regardless of the two options of being added before – so Kaiser (1983: 72–4) – or after vv. 8-9 – so Duhm (1902: 24), Marti (1900: 39), Wildberger (1980: 119), Clements (1980: 47), Becker (1997: 162–3), Beuken (2003: 110); Williamson (2006: 258–9); cf. Sweeney (1996: 109–10, 112); they are definitively added after vv. 1-7 (Kaiser, *ibid.*), where Jerusalem's destiny is in focus (v. 1). Williamson (*ibid.*) underscores with Koenen that 'the present setting of these verses in advance of 13–15 leads to a reading of those verses which will identify the oppressors and the poor there with the wicked and the righteous here, a familiar line of thought in early Judaism'. Clements (1980: 49) addresses the verses: 'Since it was not the divine will to destroy the righteous with the wicked (cf. Gen. 18:23), there must be hope for Jerusalem and its inhabitants if they pursued righteousness.'

20 Read instead of אמרו in MT congratulation formula אשרי; see BHS, Duhm (1902: 24), Marti (1900: 39), Wildberger (1980: 118), Kaiser (1983: 67, n. 10), and Williamson (2006: 255–7). Sweeney (1996: 108) and Watts (2004: 64) do not favour the emendation.

21 Parallelism and poetical form strongly presuppose a כי also here, see BHS, Marti (1900: 39), Wildberger (1980: 118), and cf. Williamson (2006: 258).

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Babylon was undoubtedly a city with a global reputation in the Persian time and at the beginning of the Hellenistic time. The woe oracle against Babylon in Isa. 13–14* serves as the beginning of the Isaianic oracles against nations and includes one of the masterpieces of Ancient Hebrew prophetic texts, the taunt against the king of Babylon in 14.4-21*. The chapters are complex. We are particularly interested in the poem Isa. 13.9-22* immediately preceding the taunt in Isa. 14*. The poem has been seen as an originally autonomous unit later connected to the core of Isa. 14*[22] or added in several steps to the composition of Isa. 13–14*[23].

The poem in vv. 14-22 has a complicated literary history.[24] It probably started with the Day of Yahweh poem in vv. 9-10 + 13 that consisted of three well-composed two-bicola strophes and was framed by the words יום 'day,' יהוה 'Yhwh,' עברה 'wrath,' and חרון 'anger' (vv. 9a-b, 13c-d).[25]

הנה יום־יהוה בא אכזרי	9	Behold, the day of Yahweh comes, cruel,
ועברה וחרון אף		with wrath and fierce anger,
לשום הארץ לשמה		to make the earth a desolation
וחטאיה ישמיד ממנה:		and to destroy its sinners from it.
כי־כוכבי השמים וכסיליהם	10	When (the stars of)[26] the heavens and their constellations
לא יהלו אורם		do not give their light;
חשך השמש בצאתו		the sun is dark at its rising
וירח לא־יגיה אורו:		and the moon does not shed its light.
על־כן שמים ירגזו	13	Therefore the heavens 'will tremble'[27]
ותרעש הארץ ממקומה		so that the earth is shaken out of its place,
בעברת יהוה צבאות		at the wrath of Yahweh Sebaoth
וביום חרון אפו:		in the day of his fierce anger.

The apocalyptic depiction of the day of doom was then, in the second step, specified with a poem on Babylon in vv. 14-16 + 19-22. It is difficult to say whether it happened at once with three four-bicola strophes or step by step[28], but the middle

---

22 Typically Sweeney (1996: 229–35), cf. Marti (1900: 117) and Wildberger (1980: 506).

23 Isa. 13:9-22 comes in its present form from the sixth century according to Sweeney (1996: 229–35), cf. Wildberger (1980: 511); Kaiser (1980: 2) suggests a post-exilic origin in its present form, and Clements (1980: 135–7) divides the verses between the sixth (vv. 17-22 related to the Deutero-Isaiah layer) and fourth century (vv. 9-16).

24 No other comparable reconstruction of the following literary history is known to me.

25 Translation by Kaiser (1980: 7, English R. A. Wilson), with adjustments.

26 The colon 10a is overlong, and the possibility exists that the word כוכבי is a gloss, so Duhm (1902: 87) and Marti (1900: 119–20).

27 Because of the context, the first person singular Hiphil verb ארגיז in 13a is probably a mistake and should be emended into third person plural ירגזו Qal; cf. Septuagint and see BHS; Marti (1900: 120), Clements (1980: 136), Wildberger (1989: 503), Kaiser (1980: 7).

28 At least one gloss seems to be there in v. 16.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

strophe in vv. 19-20 directly compares Babylon with Sodom and Gomorrah and adjusts the Day of Yahweh poem to the taunt in Isa. 14*.[29]

והיה כצבי מדח	14	It will come about: like a gazelle cut off from its fellows
וכצאן ואין מקבץ		or like sheep with none to gather them,
איש אל־עמו יפנו		every man will turn to his own people,
ואיש אל־ארצו ינוסו:		and every man will flee to his own land.
כל־הנמצא ידקר	15	Whoever is found will be thrust through,
וכל־הנספה יפול בחרב:		and whoever is caught will fall by the sword.
ועלליהם ירטשו	16	Their infants will be dashed to pieces <...>;
ונשיהם תשגלנה:		<...> and their wives ravished.[30]
והיתה בבל צבי ממלכות	19	And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms,
תפארת גאון כשדים		the splendour and pride of the Chaldeans,
כמהפכת אלהים		will be as when God overthrew
את־סדם ואת־עמרה:		Sodom and Gomorrah.
לא־תשב לנצח	20	It will never be inhabited
ולא תשכן עד־דור ודור		or dwelt in from generation to generation,
ולא־יהל שם ערבי		no Arab will pitch his tent there
ורעים לא־ירבצו שם:		no shepherds will pasture there.
ורבצו־שם ציים	21	But demons will lie down there,
ומלאו בתיהם אחים		and its houses will be full of owls;
ושכנו שם בנות יענה		there ostriches will dwell,
ושעירים ירקדו־שם:		and there hairy ones will dance.
וענה איים באלמנותיו	22	Jackals will cry in his towers,
ותנים בהיכלי ענג		and wild dogs in the palaces of pleasure.
וקרוב לבוא עתה		Its time is close at hand,
וימיה לא ימשכו:		and its days will not be prolonged.

Comparison is even more intensive than the direct mention of Sodom and Gomorrah in v. 19. It is complemented by a rare and late *terminus technicus*, which is strictly for the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah מהפכה in v. 19c, occurring only in Jer. 49.18 ≈ 50.40, Amos 4.11 (the phrase כמהפכת אלהים את סדם ואת עמרה connecting the passages with Isa. 13.19), Deut. 29.22 and Isa. 1.7 (Fields 1997: 163). The otherwise very common verb ישב 'to inhabit' in v. 20a is another word connecting the Isaiah passage to the Lot and Sodom story Gen. 19:1, 25, 29-30 and both Jeremiah passages. The first comparison in Jer. 49.18 is applied to Edom, and the second in Jer. 50.40 to Babylon. They both mark a significant shift

29 Translation by Kaiser (1980: 7–8, English R. A. Wilson), with adjustments.

30 The relatively balanced structure of strophes suggests that in v. 16, a gloss לעיניהם ישסו בתיהם 'before their eyes, their houses will be plundered,' has been added later, confusing the later understanding of the cola by Masoretes; by removing it, a normal bicolon remains. Marti (1900: 120) suspects a loss of some words.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

in tradition, becoming independent from Gen. 19 and free for the comparison of Sodom's destruction to any other crucial political entity, notably Babylon.[31] But as for the vocabulary, another specific word for the destruction of Sodom ספה Niphal 'be swept away' applied exactly in Gen. 19.15, 17 occurs in Isa. 13.15b (and see in Qal also in Gen. 18.23-24). Furthermore, the catalogue of common vocabulary in Abraham-Lot-Sodom cycle Gen. 13* + 18-19* includes a rare verb אהל 'to tent, to camp, pitch a tent' both in Qal and Niphal only in Gen. 13.12, 28 and Isa. 13.20c; רעים 'shepherds' in Gen. 13.7-8 and Isa. 13.20d; נוס 'to flee' in Gen. 19.20 and Isa. 13.14d.

After this enormous insertion, the text was historicised by adding vv. 17-18.[32] As enemies of Babylon, the Medes are now pinpointed. There has been some discussion about whether the Medes are both the Medes and the Persians (Wildberger 1989: 520) and whether events of the sixth century are being referred to; since Xerxes, between 480 and 476, was the first to go physically against Babylon, i. e. to violently crush a revolt (Beuken 2007: 58).[33] The perspective has clearly been changed in the passage vv. 17-18, from the apocalyptic day of doom to the more specified destruction of Babylon, and from Babylon to something that reflects real history. 'Real' with reservations because the Medes seem to mark a much later perspective, perhaps from a couple of hundred years later, when the dynamics of oral history have blurred any event and any historical actor in the past.[34]

הנני מעיר עליהם את־מדי	17	Behold, I am stirring up the Medes against them,
אשר־כסף לא יחשבו		who have no regard for silver
וזהב לא יחפצו־בו׃		and do not delight in gold.
וקשתות נערים תרטשנה	18	And bows, young men will shatter them,
ופרי־בטן לא ירחמו		their eyes will not pity children;
על־בנים לא־תחוס עינם׃		they will have no mercy on the fruit of the womb.

But interestingly, the fourth step in the literary emergence of the Isaianic passage appears in vv. 11-12 where the wicked, the רשעים, get punished. The three bicola are an amalgam of wisdom language and the צדיקים-piety, somewhat similar to specific passages in the book of Job. This can be particularly underlined by the word pair פז and כתם אופיר for fine gold and gold of Ophir occurring once in the famous hymn to Wisdom Job 28 (vv. 16-17) and the word אנוש 'man' which marks very young

31 Fields (1997: 166–7) underlines the archetypal function of Sodom's destruction in exactly these passages. He also (pp. 170–171) analyses Isa. 13.19-22 as an example of 'the perpetuity of destruction resulting from divine judgement'.

32 Not according to Wildberger (1989) and Beuken (2007). Verses 17-19 form the third divine saying according to Beuken (2007: 54).

33 Cf., however, the discussion on sources by Briant (2002: 535, 544–6).

34 Translation by Kaiser (1980: 7–8, English R. A. Wilson).

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

editorial additions in Job, without exception.[35] Another characteristic element is the series of synonyms רשעים 'the wicked,' זדים 'the arrogant,' and עריצים 'the ruthless' that make the passage sound like a polemic against the rulers and the elite. This, once again, is known from certain redactions of the book of Job, see particularly 27.7-10, 13-23.[36] Verses 11-12 in Isa. 13 read as follows:[37]

ופקדתי על־תבל רעה	11	I will punish the world for its evil,
ועל־רשעים עונם		and the wicked for their iniquity;
והשבתי גאון זדים		I will put an end to the pride of the arrogant,
וגאות עריצים אשפיל:		and lay low the haughtiness of the ruthless.
אוקיר אנוש מפז	12	I will make men more rare than fine gold,
ואדם מכתם אופיר:		and mankind than the gold of Ophir.

The universalistic ambition of the righteousness redactions is exposed again. They like to be connected to universal depictions, such as the Day of Yahweh poem and the motif of destroying a meaningful city, such as Babylon.

If we follow the trace of the keyword Babylon, we come to the passages dealing with Kasdaim, the Chaldeans in Isaiah. But there again, a perspective changed by the righteous strikes the eye. Additions that indicate the doom of the wicked have been added to the book of Isaiah in its very advanced shape. A programmatic and significant extrapolation appears in 48.22.[38]

צאו מבבל	20	Go forth from Babylon!
ברחו מכשׂדים		Flee from the Chaldeans!
בקול רנה הגידו		Declare this with a shout of joy,
השמיעו זאת		proclaim it,
הוציאוה עד־קצה הארץ אמרו		send it forth to the end of the earth, say:
גאל יהוה עבדו יעקב:		Yahweh has redeemed his servant Jacob.
ולא צמאו בחרבות הוליכם	21	He leads them through deserts but they thirst not.
מים מצור הזיל למו		Water from rocks he makes flow for them,
ויבקע־צור ויזבו מים:		He cleaves the rocks and the waters gush out.
אין שׁלום אמר יהוה לרשׁעים:	22	There is no peace, says Yahweh, for the wicked.

Verses 20-21 belong to probably the oldest layers in Deutero-Isaiah.[39] Verses 17-19 are younger. But the last verse, v. 22, has been added even later, whether

35 All examples belong to extrapolations: 4.17; 5.7; 7.1, 17; 9.2; 10.4-5; 13.9; 14.19; 15.14; 25.4, 6; 28.4, 13; 32.8; 33.12, 26; 34.6; 36.25; regarding these passages cf. the works of Witte (1994), Kaiser (2006) and Nõmmik (2014).

36 It is the righteousness redactions. See for the list of all potential extrapolations further below.

37 Translation by Kaiser (1980: 7, English R. A. Wilson).

38 Translation by Westermann (1969: 204, English D. M. G. Stalker), adjusted.

39 Van Oorschot (1993: 159–67) regards the verses as part of the first redaction layer, the Jerusalem redaction, all other verses in Isa. 48 being younger, and similarly Hermisson (2003: 296–307).

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

inspired by a similar clause in Isa. 57.20-21 or added together with the latter.[40] Verse 22 divides the text of Deutero-Isaiah into approximately two halves and is not a sporadic gloss. It takes up the topic of peace and piousness from vv. 18-19 and turns it against the wicked. Babylon and the Chaldeans have been named in v. 20, which is probably not a coincidence. Through the extrapolation, it seems as if the righteous victoriously march out of Babylon, while the wicked have to share Babylon's destiny. Claus Westermann (1969: 205), Hans-Jürgen Hermisson (2003: 308–9) and others (e. g., Koenen 1994: 203) have suggested that the wickedness is not related to some members of Israel but to both the righteous and the wicked in general. There is no doubt that the perspective is universalistic, but seen through particularistic eyes. The party of the righteous escapes destruction.

The passage in Isa. 57.20-21 already mentioned is the following. Note the similar clause in v. 21:[41]

והרשעים כים נגרש	20	But the wicked – like the tossing sea,
כי השקט לא יוכל		when it cannot come to the rest.
ויגרשו מימיו רפש וטיט:		Its waters toss up mire and dirt.
אין שלום אמר אלהי לרשעים:	21	There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked.

Whether v. 21 alone or likely with v. 20, the notice on the wicked has been added to the text, otherwise talking about idolatry and its consequences (Westermann 1969: 330–1, Whybray 1975: 211).

The motif of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah has become a catalyst for the righteous and their redactions of the Hebrew Bible. What can be seen is a gradual takeover of the following important historical events related to the most important cities. The righteous escape the catastrophe of Jerusalem, and they march out of Babylon before its downfall. It goes without saying that only the God who created the whole universe is capable of saving the right persons.

40 Verse 22 is a very late addition according to van Oorschot (1993: 17–8, n. 90) and Hermisson (2003: 307–9); Steck (1991: 197) dates it to the end of the fourth century; v. 22 has been added together with 57.21 according to Westermann (1969: 204–5) and Whybray (1975: 134, 211); v. 22 has been taken from 57.21 according to Duhm (1902: 330), Marti (1900: 326), McKenzie (1968: 96) and Koenen (1994: 200–1). Rather differently, v. 22 has an 'integral role in chapter 48' according to Goldingay and Payne (2006: 150); similarly, Korpel and de Moor (1998: 398–9) suggest that 57.21 is taken from 48.22, i. e. 48.22 is an integral part of ch. 48.

41 Translation by Westermann (1969: 326, English D. M. G. Stalker), with adjustments.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Job: the ultimate judgement of the wicked

The book of Job written and edited several times in the 5th-2nd century (cf. Witte 2021: 45–6) has a specific universalistic ambition. The story and the dialogue are virtually brought back into a legendary era, long before Moses. Hence, Israel is not mentioned at all; Torah appears only once as a general notion of 'instruction' (22.22). The name Yahweh is mentioned only in the frame story and in the introduction to the divine speeches but not – apart from once in a very late addition 12.9[42] – in the speeches of Job and friends. In particular the dialogue has universalistic ambition. A closer analysis of the content and the tradition-historical backdrop of the speeches of the friends Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar results in an unsurprising observation that they are different. It seems to belong to the program of already the first author of the dialogue that the friends have different basic assumptions, legitimations and traditional backdrops.[43] In the case of Bildad, Mesopotamian traditions can be detected, and even before looking at the introduction to his speeches, where it is said that he comes from Sūḫi at the river Euphrates; in the case of Zophar, many connections to the Aramaic Ahiqar tradition are discernible. Only Eliphaz is depicted as a kind of pastoral carer who seems to be rather universalistic in his speech. Edom has, however, been often suggested as his place of origin.[44] The reason for the friends to come from different directions might be the idea of the author of the dialogue that the wisdom of all the world opposes the acute distress situation of Job. If considering the dialogue without the frame story, as has likely been the case with the first version of the Book of Job,[45] in the divine speech in the end, the arguments of neither Job nor his friends are advocated. In his hymnic speech, God demands his praise and plays down all human effort to get close to the divine knowledge. After that, the human protagonists of the dialogue do not speak anymore. The whole human experience is, thus, opposed to the divine revelation, creation and wisdom. Humans never fully understand divine deeds and can only praise God as the Creator.[46]

---

42 Verse 9 has been considered as part of shorter or longer addition or series of additions to Job 12–14, e. g., 12.4–13.2 by Kaiser (2006: 25), 12.7–13.2 by Witte (1994: 191) and Syring (2004: 168), 12.7-25 by Fohrer (1963: 244–6), 12.4-10 by Duhm (1897: 66), 12.7-10, 13 by Hölscher (1952: 33–4), 12.7-10 by de Wilde (1981: 165–6).

43 Different characters have been maintained already in the end of the nineteenth century, e. g., by Budde (1896: xiv); for detailed distinction and discussion see Nõmmik (2010).

44 For tradition historical backdrop, see Nõmmik (2010: 235–69).

45 This has been discussed in detail by Syring (2004).

46 So the conclusion of my dissertation (Nõmmik 2010: 284–6, 299–301), see also Uehlinger 2007: 161–2; Witte 2021: 53.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

The primary outset of the dialogue has specific reasons. Besides the significant impulse from the Ancient Near Eastern traditions regarding the suffering and lamenting, one of the more time-dependent is related to the outcomes of the information revolution provoked by the Persian period. Contact to far lands was made possible by an advanced royal road and postal networks as well as the Aramaic language in the Western part of the empire. Geographical and cultural horizons were constantly widening, and the mythological world was perpetually in retreat. Job's dialogue can be considered a reaction to the rapid expansion of the limits of the known world and the issue of missing God. A growing (physical) distance to God was experienced even more vital in light of the emergence of universal creation theology. In the Hebrew Bible, the distant God is indirectly attested by the relatively young designation אלה שמיא 'God of heaven' in the book Daniel (2.18-19, 37-38, etc.) and by a growing number of angels mediating the word and the will of the distant God, like in a series of late additions in Hebrew biblical and contemporary texts. Likewise, the authors of Job let him cry for God and discuss his fate with his friends given the absence of divine intervention (symptomatically Job 13.24). But then, God still reveals himself to Job by saying that no human can understand the realm and depth of divine creation. On the other hand, paradoxically, the divine speech Job 38–39* suggests that God is still there and truly is aware of everything.

Another development the Book of Job indirectly reflects is the growing impact of the emerging creation theology on piety. Again, if the one and only God creates the whole universe, all peoples and lands have to admit it. Similarly to the books of Ruth and Jonah, the main protagonist of Job is not an Israelite and does not live in Israel, but is at the same time an exemplary pious man. Fear of God in Job is understood as a universal phenomenon. But logically then, also wickedness. The righteous groups must have been challenged by how to ensure the downfall of the wicked in the whole known world, i. e. Hellenistic world, and not only in Jerusalem.

Against this backdrop, a series of extrapolations by scribes focusing on the righteous order in the world is of particular interest. The list of larger and smaller additions includes passages from fourteen chapters of the 42 in the book: 5.9-17 likely in many steps; 11.8-9; 17.8-10(11-12); 20.10-11, 26b; 22.12, 17-18; 24.5-8, 13-25; 27.7-10, 13-23; 30.1b-8; 31.1-3, 11-12, 15, 18, 23, 28, 33-34, 38-40(?); 38.13b, 14a, 15; 40.1-2, 7-14, and an edition of the Elihu speeches by dividing his speech into many and adding passages, likely such as 32.11-17; 34.16-28; 36.8-15; 37.7, 10-11. The passages belong to a group of scribal additions partly designated by Job researchers as righteousness redactions.[47] The phenomenon has not been

47 This list is suggested by me, but many of these extrapolations have been acknowledged as righteousness redactions by Witte (1994: 183–9; 2021: particularly pp. 56–9), Kaiser (2006: 117–8, 125–7),

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

particularly systematic, more than one scribal hand was involved, and some passages come from scribes imitating the righteousness redaction. The keyword צדיקים is one of the features of the redactions, but even more is the keyword רשׁעים 'the wicked'.

The most striking example is an apparent insertion at the beginning of the first part of the first divine speech in Job 38.13b, 14a, 15.[48] The entire strophe of interest is in vv. 12-17, which initially had four bicola instead of six:[49]

המימיך צוית בקר	12	Have you ever, since your life began, commanded the morning,
ידעתה שחר מקמו:		and made the dawn to know its place,
לאחז בכנפות הארץ	13	that they might seize the corners of the earth,
וינערו רשׁעים ממנה:		and the wicked might be shaken from off it?
תתהפך כחמר חותם	14	It becomes like sealed clay,
ותצבע כמו לבוש:		'and it is dyed'[50] like a garment.
וימנע מרשׁעים אורם	15	Then from the wicked their light is withheld,
וזרוע רמה תשׁבר:		and the raised arm is broken.
הבאת עד־נבכי־ים	16	Have you reached the springs of the sea,
ובחקר תהום התהלכת:		and have you walked in the deeps of the abyss?
הנגלו לך שׁערי־מות	17	Have the gates of Death been revealed to you,
ושׁערי צלמות תראה:		and have you seen the gates of the Shadow?

In the original version, שׁחר 'the dawn' seizes the corners of the earth and dyes them like a garment. God has commanded it, not Job. Similarly, Job has not gone to the deep and the gates of death. The depiction was initially related to the farthest corners of the universe. An editor added a statement on the wicked who will be shaken off the edge of the earth and, almost apocalyptically, lose light. In this case, there is no question whether all the wicked persons in the world, despite their being Israelites or pagans, are meant – indeed, every single wicked person is condemned

van Oorschot (2007: 182–3) and Nõmmik (2010; 2013); for a group of theological redactions, see Syring (2004: 168), and for further discussion on redaction issues in Job, see Mende (1990), Pilger (2010) and Vermeylen (2015).

48 If some cola in the strophe 38.12-17 are defined as secondary by scholars, then 13b and 15 belong most usually to the set (Witte 2021: 617); Duhm (1897: 183), Hölscher (1952: 88) and Kaiser (2006: 69–70) additionally hold 14b for an extrapolation; Kaiser ascribes the cola to the righteousness redaction. Clines (2011: 1103) gives all good literary- (and in fact also redaction-) critical reasons regarding vv. 13b and 15 but solves the problem by interpreting the text as 'original allusions to stars and constellations', thus following G. R. Driver.

49 Translation by Dhorme (1967: 580–3, English H. Knight).

50 The word ויתיצבו 'and they stand' has to be emended, and one of the best ways, particularly in the light of the original parallel colon 13b, is into ותצבע 'and it is dyed', like it is, since BHK, done by many, e. g., by BHS, Dhorme (1967: 581–2), Fohrer (1963: 492), de Wilde (1981: 363) and Clines (2011: 1057).

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

from the very beginning of the universe. The redaction is similar to another at the end of the creation psalm 104; in its final strophe, immediately before the final praise, in v. 35, the only negative bicolon of the psalm has been inserted to ensure the perishing of the wicked.

The development almost victoriously reached the finish. The combination of the motif of the downfall of the wicked with the motif of the destruction of a corrupt city resulted in an ultimate, universal judgement of the wicked people, wherever they occur in the world. They are condemned from the very beginning of the universe. Indeed, in the Dead Sea scrolls, the ultimate destination of the development was reached by maintaining the fatal predestination of the wicked.[51]

Conclusion

The paper has sketched a short history of the motif of the downfall of the wicked in the context of creation theology. Significant milestones in the literary history, from an escape of the righteous from a hostile city to the ultimate condemnation of the wicked already during the creation of the universe, brought about the overthrow of the wicked in connection, firstly, with the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and later with the catastrophe of Jerusalem in 586 and the expected downfall of Babylon. Combining the particularistic perspective of the righteous with the universalistic approach of creation theology resulted in a general criterion for evaluating human beings from the point of view of a fear of God. After that, other criteria follow, such as belonging to a particular social, religious, political or ethnic group, affecting thus the perception of different groups by the righteous. The righteous in the Hellenistic period understood themselves as people of the Torah, divided into many groups spreading worldwide. In all quarters of the world, they came into contact and conflict with the wicked people and desperately asked for a divine solution to the problem. The creation theology was of help. Paradoxically, the development affected also Jerusalem. In the late Second Temple Period, the city was not the only centre of the people of the Torah anymore; it was one of many where groups of the righteous were confronted with the wicked (e. g., the Hellenised elite).

51 Among many studies, see Merrill (1975). Furthermore, according to Fields (1997: 166–7, n. 38), 1QpHab IX–X alludes to Sodom's destruction in connection to the 'priest', most probably to the הכהן הרשע 'the wicked priest' who is the usual enemy of the מורה צדק 'Righteous Teacher'.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Bibliography

Baltzer, K., (1999), *Deutero-Jesaja*, KAT 10,2, Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus.

Becker, U., (1997), *Jesaja – von der Botschaft zum Buch*, FLRANT 178, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Beuken, W. A. M., (2003), *Jesaja 1–12*, trans U. Berges, HTKAT, Freiburg et al.: Herder.

Beuken, W. A. M., (2007), *Jesaja 13–27*, trans U. Berges and A. Spans, HTKAT, Freiburg et al.: Herder.

Blum, E., (1984), *Die Komposition der Vätergeschichte*, WMANT 57, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag.

Briant, P., (2002), *From Cyrus to Alexander. A History of the Persian Empire*, trans P. T. Daniels, Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns.

Budde, K., (1896), *Das Buch Hiob*, HK II/1, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Clines, D. J. A., (2011), *Job 38–42*, WBC 18B, Nashville et al.: Thomas Nelson.

Clements, R. E., (1980), *Isaiah 1–39*, NCB, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans; London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott.

Dhorme, É., (1967), *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, trans H. Knight, Nashville et al.: Thomas Nelson.

Duhm, B., (1897), *Das Buch Hiob*, KHAT 16, Freiburg i. B. et al.: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck).

Duhm, B., (1902), *Das Buch Jesaia*, HKAT 3/3, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Fields, W. W., (1997), *Sodom and Gomorrah. History and Motif in Biblical Narrative*, JSOTSup 231, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

Fohrer, G., (1963), *Das Buch Hiob*, KAT 16, Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn.

Goldingay, J. and D. Payne, (2006), *Isaiah 40–55*, vol. 2, ICC. London et al.: Bloomsbury.

Hermisson, H.-J., (2003), *Deuterojesaja. 2 Teilband Jesaja 45,8–49,13*, BKAT 11/2, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag.

Hölscher, G., (1952), *Das Buch Hiob*, HAT 17, Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck).

Holt, E. K., (2019), "'Let the righteous strike me; let the faithful correct me": Psalm 141 and the Enclave of the *S.addiqîm*', *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*, 33, 2: 185–202.

Kaiser, O., (1980), *Isaiah 13–39. A Commentary*, 2nd ed., trans R. A. Wilson, OTL, London: SCM Press.

Kaiser, O., (1983), *Isaiah 1–12. A Commentary*, 2nd ed., trans J. Bowden, OTL, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.

Kaiser, O., (2006), *Das Buch Hiob. Übersetzt und eingeleitet*, Stuttgart: Radius.

Kilian, R., (1966), *Die vorpriesterlichen Abrahamsüberlieferungen. Literarkritisch und traditionsgeschichtlich untersucht*, BBB 24, Bonn: Peter Hanstein.

Koenen, K., (1994), *Heil den Gerechten – Unheil den Sündern! Ein Beitrag zur Theologie der Prophetenbücher*, BZAW 229, Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter.

Korpel, M. C. A., and J. C. de Moor, (1998), *The Structure of Classical Hebrew Poetry: Isaiah 40–55*, OTS 41, Leiden et al.: Brill.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Levin, C., (1993a), ‘Das Gebetbuch der Gerechten. Literargeschichtliche Beobachtungen am Psalter’, *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 90 (4): 355–81; published anew in *Fortschreibungen, Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament*, BZAW 316, Berlin: De Gruyter: 291–313.

Levin, C., (1993b), *Der Jahwist*, FRLANT 157, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Marti, K., (1900), *Das Buch Jesaja*, KHAT 10, Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck).

Marttila, M., (2006), *Collective Reinterpretation in the Psalms. A Study of the Redaction History of the Psalter*, FAT II, 13, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.

McKenzie, J. L., (1968), *Second Isaiah. Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, AB 20, Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company.

Mende, T., (1990), *Durch Leiden zur Vollendung. Die Elihureden im Buch Ijob (Ijob 32–37)*, Trierer Theologische Studien 49, Trier: Paulinus-Verlag.

Merrill, E. H., (1975), *Qumran and Predestination. A Theological Study of the Thanksgiving Hymns*, STDJ 8, Leiden: E. J. Brill.

Nõmmik, U., (1999), ‘Die Gerechtigkeitsbearbeitungen in den Psalmen. Eine Hypothese von Christoph Levin formgeschichtlich und kolometrisch überprüft’, *Ugarit-Forschungen* 31: 443–535.

Nõmmik, U., (2010), *Die Freundesreden des ursprünglichen Hiobdialogs. Eine form- und traditionsgeschichtliche Studie*, BZAW 410, Berlin, New York: De Gruyter.

Nõmmik, U., (2012), ‘Remembering a Memorable Conversation: Genesis 18:22b–33 and the Righteous in the Persian Period’, in: E. Ben Zvi and C. Levin (eds.), *Remembering and Forgetting in Early Second Temple Judah*, FAT 85, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck: 195–208.

Nõmmik, U., (2014), ‘Thinking of Water in the Book of Job: A Fluvial Introduction to the Job Literature’, in: E. Ben Zvi and C. Levin (eds.), *Thinking of Water in the Early Second Temple Period*, BZAW 461, Berlin, New York: De Gruyter: 279–98.

Nõmmik, U., (2023), *Die Erzelternerzählungen im Lichte höfischer Erzählkunst. Motivkritische Studien zu den Überlieferungen von Lot, Isaak, Rebekka und Jakob*, FAT 161, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.

Nõmmik, U., and A. Põldsam, (2018), ‘Psalm 86, Its Place in the Psalter, and Group Identity in the Second Temple Period’, *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 130, 3:398–417.

Van Oorschot, J., (1993), *Von Babel zum Zion. Eine literarkritische und redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung*, BZAW 206, Berlin, New York: De Gruyter.

Van Oorschot, J., (2007), ‘Die Entstehung des Hiobbuches’, in: T. Krüger, M. Oeming, K. Schmid, and C. Uehlinger (eds.), *Das Buch Hiob und seine Interpretation. Beiträge zum Hiob-Symposium auf dem Monte Verità vom 14.–19 August 2005*, ATANT 88, Zürich: Theologischer Verlag: 165–84.

Perdue, L. G., (2007), *Wisdom Literature. A Theological History*, Louisville, London: Westminster John Knox Press.

Pilger, T., (2010), *Erziehung im Leiden. Komposition und Theologie der Elihureden in Hiob 32–37*, FAT 2/49, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Steck, O. H., (1991), *Der Abschluß der Prophetie im Alten Testament. Ein Versuch zur Frage der Vorgeschichte des Kanons*, BThSt 17, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag.

Sweeney, M. A., (1996), *Isaiah 1–39 with an Introduction to Prophetic Literature*, FOTL 16, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans.

Syring, W.-D., (2004), *Hiob und sein Anwalt. Die Prosatexte des Hiobbuches und ihre Rolle in seiner Redaktions- und Rezeptionsgeschichte*, BZAW 336, Berlin, New York: De Gruyter.

Uehlinger, C., (2007), 'Hiob im altorientalischen Kontext', in: T. Krüger, M. Oeming, K. Schmid, and C. Uehlinger (eds.), *Das Buch Hiob und seine Interpretation. Beiträge zum Hiob- Symposium auf dem Monte Verità vom 14.–19 August 2005*, ATANT 88, Zürich: Theologischer Verlag: 97–163.

Vermeylen, J., (2015), *Les redactions successives du livre de Job*, BETL 276, Leuven et al.: Peeters.

Watts, J. D. W., (2004), *Isaiah 1–33*, revised edn, WBC 24, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Sondervan.

Westermann, C., (1969), *Isaiah 40–66. A Commentary*, trans D. M. G. Stalker, OTL, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.

Westermann, C., (1985), *Genesis 12–36. A Commentary*, trans J. J. Scullion S.J. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House.

Whybray, R. N., (1975), *Isaiah 40–66*, NCB, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans; London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott.

Wildberger, H., (1980), *Jesaja. 1 Teilband Jesaja 3–12*, 2nd edn, BKAT 10/1, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag.

Wildberger, H., (1989), *Jesaja. 2 Teilband Jesaja 13–27*. 2nd edn, BKAT 10/2, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag.

De Wilde, A., (1981), *Das Buch Hiob*, OTS 22, Leiden: E. J. Brill.

Williamson, H. G. M., (2006), *Isaiah 1–5*, ICC, London et al.: Bloomsbury.

Witte, M. (1994), *Vom Leiden zur Lehre. Der dritte Redegang (Hiob 21–27) und die Redaktionsgeschichte des Hiobbuches*, BZAW 230, Berlin, New York: De Gruyter.

Witte, M., (1998), *Die biblische Urgeschichte. Redaktions- und theologiegeschichtliche Beobachtungen zu Genesis 1,1–11,26*, BZAW 265, Berlin, New York: De Gruyter.

Witte, M., (2021), *Das Buch Hiob*, ATD 13, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Jason M. Silverman

Prolegomena to an Analysis of the Persian "Royal Road" as a Social Network in the Southern Levant[1]

Introduction

Although the Persian road system has long been recognized as extensive, efficient, and effective (e. g. Graf 1993; 1994; Briant 2012), the domains of its relevance for the analysis of the Persian Empire have typically been restricted to military and administrative matters. Now that much more detailed information concerning the intricate systems involved in the institution are available (especially Jacobs, Henkelman, and Stolper 2017), it is apparent that the roads must have also provided a *social* context for interaction among the subject populations of the empire.[2] This paper lays the groundwork for a project that attempts to tease out some of these social implications for the southern Levant, and from there what this might mean more specifically in terms of Yahwists and Greek-speaking populations in Yehud, within the broader satrapy of (Babylon and) Abar-Naharā / Aθurā. Since Alexander largely appropriated Achaemenid structures, the continuation of this system as a social space past 331 should also be considered in future research.

This analysis is based on a very preliminary list of sites for which remains of the Persian era have been excavated or surveyed, in Israel, the West Bank, and a few sites in the Sinai and Jordan.[3] As the goal of this analysis is systemic, I have

1 With contributions by Maija Holappa. This paper was written in the Centre of Excellence in Ancient Near Eastern Empires, PI Saana Svärd. I am very grateful to Rick Bonnie, Raz Kletter, Kirsi Valkama, and Shai Gordin for their assistance in accessing data for collating coordinates for Persian era sites, as well as to Rick for help with using Q-GIS software. Maija Holappa very graciously cleaned the site data, and is currently running the Least-Cost analyses in ArcGIS and QGIS. All errors remain my own. When I first proposed this title to Łukasz Niesiołowski-Spano in fall 2019, I thought it would be a simple, straightforward little topic, and I was actually worried it would not be long enough for the given time slot! This has, over two years later to my chagrin, turned into a monster of a project that has forced me to try to learn multiple new software programs as well as topics. As I have no background in computer science, networks, or statistics, this paper and the forthcoming fuller version of the study must be treated as a first foray into using SNA for the Persian Royal Road.

2 In some ways, this is analogous to Allen's attempt to ask "what had to cohere around" Aršama's letters (Allen 2013, 22).

3 The data was collated from Stern 1982, Tal 2005, the survey reports on IAA website, *'Atiqot* online, *Hadashot Arkeologiyot* online, the list at the end of *NEAEHL*, Edelman 2005, Greenberg and Kleinan 2009, MacDonald 2000, a list compiled by Kirsi Valkama, Zertal 2004; 2008; Zertal and Mirkham

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Fig. 1 Map of the Persian Empire (using Google Earth base)

undertaken no analysis of the nature of any of the given sites other than very broad categories (military- and administration-related sites, settlements, agricultural sites, industrial sites, and all other remains [e. g., tombs, unidentified structural remains, and pottery from surveys]). At the time of writing, my list includes 1506 sites in which some sort of remains has been labeled "Persian era," though the preliminary work presented here only utilizes 1467 for which I could find coordinates—since a large portion of these sites are from surveys, it is certain that not all represent settlements of the Persian era; on the other hand, it is likely that at least some remains have been destroyed by subsequent occupation. Further, since many sites are known by multiple names (ancient, modern, Hebrew, and Arabic, plus differences in transliteration), it is possible I have either conflated some sites or artificially duplicated others. Nevertheless, it is my hope that, despite the very real errors in my data, some basic parameters can be established—by focusing on an overall southern Levantine picture.

2016; Zertal Z"l and Bar 2017; 2019; Bar and Zertal 2021. Sites in the Transjordan were collected and collated by Marta Lorenzon, and I am very grateful to her for sharing this data. The results of the Sinai surveys have never been published, and were handed back to Egypt, therefore I have only been able to add some major sites mentioned by Oren 1982 and Graf 1993. Some sites may be duplicated due to spelling or transliteration differences, names, and/or the conversion from Israeli Grid to GPS WGS84. All coordinates were input into Q-GIS for mapping and spatial analysis. The GPS data for coastlines, rivers, elevations, and roads came from the Ancient World Mapping site (see bibliography).

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

This essay will first present the basic archaeological data I have used and the methods utilized so far, along with maps. I hope to provide an electronic version of the data along with the finished version of the project. Second, I will review the recent literature on the Achaemenid Road System, which takes advantage of the new insights gleaned by the team that has been publishing the Persepolis Fortification Tablets.[4] Third, I will introduce a handful of concepts derived from Network Theory[5] as well as an outline of planned fuller study that is still underway. As an example of the kind of work this project involves, this paper will close with a discussion of the network created by administrative and military sites. As an afterward, the paper will point to the goal of the future, finished study as a lens for discussing the road system as one context for social interaction (e. g., between Greeks and Yahwists) in the southern Levant.

The Archaeological Data

To provide a material basis for this study, I have attempted to collate all excavated and surveyed sites evincing Persian era remains in the Southern Levant for which I could find GPS coordinates. These were compiled in a database, coded in seven broad categories,[6] and fed into QGIS software. This was mapped with the aid of the Ancient World Mapping Center's open data for elevations, coasts, rivers, water, and roads—the latter based on the Roman roads of the Barrington Atlas (an alternate road system based on least-cost analysis is underway for future comparison). Unfortunately, access to the data from the surveys conducted in the north Sinai in the 60s has proven impossible so far, therefore it cannot be included;[7] only the few sites for which I could find coordinates are mapped. For the fuller project, I hope to include sites in southern Lebanon in addition to Tyre and Sidon.

As stated above, my list includes 1506 sites (1467 with coordinates, see fig. 2), of which 460 are "settlements" and 131 are "forts" (of these, 34 sites are classified as both "settlement" and "fort"; see fig 3).

4 For an overview of the project, see Stolper 2017a.

5 With particular attention to how it has been utilized by social historians, particularly Caroline Waerzeggers (2014; 2015).

6 F (forts), S (settlements), A (agricultural sites), P (pottery), I (industrial), T (Transjordanian multi-era sites), and O (other). "Forts" includes not just forts proper, but also waystations and other likely administrative sites. "Settlements" are sites which appear to have been villages or larger. "Agricultural" sites are typically farmsteads. "Industrial" sites include wine and oil production, quarries, and mines. "Pottery" labels sites that appear in surveys but without a clear site nature. "Other" includes finds like graves, glassware, coins, etc. "Transjordan" sites were provided by Marta Lorenzon on the basis of multi-period sites that presumably include the Persian period, but for which I have no other data at present.

7 Oren 1998, 75 claims they found 150 Persian-era sites, but seemingly never published them.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

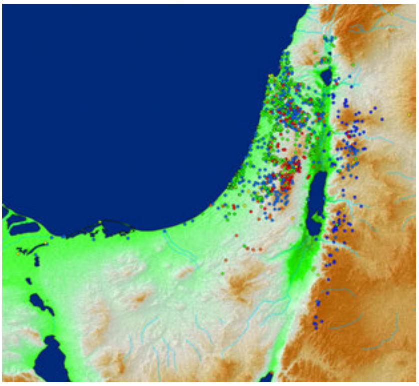


Fig. 2 Map of all sites

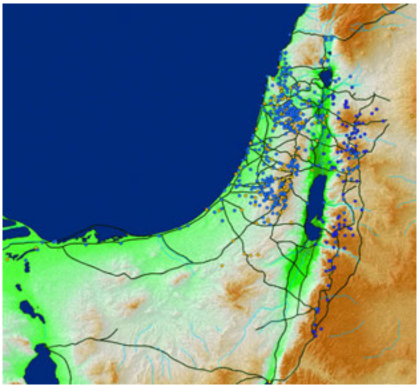


Fig. 3 Map of "Forts" (yellow), "Settlements" (blue), and multi-era sites in the Transjordan (purple) with the Roman Road network (courtesy of the Ancient World Mapping Center)

If only the sites that are more confidently identified as settlements are considered, the average settlement was roughly 6.2 km from an administrative or military site as the crow flies.[8] With all sites considered, the average is slightly higher at roughly 7.2 km. The standard deviations for both mean that 68% of residents' locations were most likely within roughly 15 km of a "fort." If one measures by using the Roman roads, the averages increase to 11.3 km for settlements and 13.7 km for all sites. For the moment, these statistics can be considered likely lower and upper bounds for the distances in the Persian southern Levant (see table 1).

Table 1 Likely Bounds for the historical Persian Sites and their distances

No. of sites	460 < x < 1467
Minimum	0
Maximum	87km < x < 101.2 km
Mean	6.19 km < x < 13.6 km
Median	4 km < x < 8.87 km
Standard deviation (from Mean)	8 < x < 14.2322

We can consider these distances in terms of travel times. If we take the lowest walking speed observed by Levine and Norenzayan, 3.9282 km/hr., then our standard deviation residents lay within a 3.77-hour walk from a "fort."[9] If we take the

8 This does take into account elevation, but not obstacles or roads.

9 Levine and Norenzayan 1999, 190, measure the average walking times for Jordan at 4.195 km/hr and for Syria at 4.1277 km/hr. The slowest pace was recorded for Brazil (the above 3.9282 km/hr).

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

average of the slightly faster range for rural Indonesian speeds given by Azmi et al., 4.71 km/hr., the walking time reduces to 3.1456 hours' walk.[10] With a donkey, the range is more or less the same, while with a horse at walking speed, it reduces to about 2.47 hours.[11] A galloping horse could, however, cover 15 km in less than an hour. This means the majority of sedentary southern Levantine residents were within a half a day's walk or hour harder ride from a "fort." Robinson (1977, 10, 27) claims maximum daily regular foot traffic distance is 5 km, but calculates village settlements as likely linked by a footpath if they are within 5.5 km (1977, 27); this would make our mean settlement slightly beyond 'regular' foot traffic distance. It is worth noting that horses, donkeys, and camels are all attested in the Idumean ostraca and the Bactrian documents (Lemaire 2017, 470; Naveh and Shaked 2012).

Since the actual course of the Persian Roads is technically unknown, this project has to estimate likely parameters for it. In this project two methods are compared for estimating the potential road network. The first is based on a lightly edited shapefile of the Roman roads from the Barrington Atlas,[12] with sites being connected to the nearest road (see fig 04).[13] The second method involves using a least-cost analysis for the topography to create potential paths and connecting sites this way (based on Whitely and Hicks 2003). "Least cost" of branching paths is based on analogue from hydrology (Robinson 1977, 10; Whitley and Hicks 2003, 84). This latter analysis was first attempted by Maija Holappa. This means that the sites collected for this project produce two different sets of network ties. The project analyzes the results of both, in the hope that together they might delimit a range of possible actual Persian road systems, as well as aid in assessing how much the Romans may have altered the preexisting roads.[14] Measurements for travel via the Roman road network are rather artificial, as one can see that one would be unlikely to travel in this manner. Nevertheless, the direct distances between settlements and the distance via the Roman roads for all sites provide approximate lower and upper bounds for the likely real number of Persian sites and their connections along Persian era roads (see Table 1).

However, all of these derive from cities, which are understood to be typically faster than in rural communities.

10 Azmi et al. 2012, 414. Their range for rural walking speeds is 5.22–4.356 km/hr.

11 Sims et al. 1996, 302 give the walking speed of donkeys at 3–4 km/hr and horses at 5–6 km/hr.

12 Ancient World Mapping Center. 2016. "BA Roads." Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. http://awmc.unc.edu/wordpress/map-files/. I tried to edit this file slightly based on Roll 2009 and Mattingly 1996, but as this was imprecise and as I decided to compare with least-cost analysis, the editing was abandoned.

13 With points along road at 500m intervals.

14 Previous work has often assumed that the Persian roads lay underneath the Roman Roads. This is no doubt true for some—perhaps even a majority—of them, but it is of course an inherently anachronistic assumption.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Fig. 4 Extensions to the Roman Road

In the finished project, the networks created by using the Roman roads as ties and the least-cost analysis paths as ties will be compared.

The Achaemenid Royal Road System

The Persian Royal Road as an administrative system is well known from a variety of historical data.[15] To begin this overview of the system, consider an "open letter" from Aršama, satrap of Egypt under Darius II.[16]

15 E. g., Graf 1993; 1994; Briant 2002, 357–371; Briant 2012; Velázquez Muñoz 2012; Jacobs, Henkelman, and Stolper 2017; Henkelman and Jacobs 2021. For the road in Anatolia, see now Sadeghipour and Ghadimi 2020. The latter take their point of departure from proximity to "Achaemenid" sites.

16 On it being an "open letter," i. e., unfolded and unsealed, see Allen 2013, 30, though she suggests maybe "sealing no. 8" was once attached; Tuplin 2020a, 147; Garrison and Kaptan 2020, 39–45.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

> From Aršama to Marduk the official [פקידא] who is in […]; Nabudalani the official who is in Laʿir, Zatuvahyah the official who is in Arzuhin; Upastabara the official who is in Arbel, HL[.], and Matalubaš; Bagafarnah the official who is in Saʿlam; Fradafarnah and Hau[mada]ta the officials who are in Damascus.[17] And now, behold, he whose name is Nakhtḥor, my official, is going to Egypt. As for you, give him rations from my estate which is in your provinces, day by day: white flour, two measures [חפנן][18]; inferior? flour, three measures; wine or beer, two measures; [chees]e?, one. And for his servants, ten m[e]n, to each per day: flour, one measure; fodder in proportion to his horses. And give rations to the (following) men: two Cilicians, one artisan, in all, three (men), my servants who are going with him to Egypt, to each man per day: flour, one measure. Give them this ration from official to official, in accordance with the route [אדונא] which is from province [מדינה] to province, until he shall reach Egypt. And if he should be in one place more than one day, then for those days you shall not give them further rations. Bagasrava knows this order. Rašta is the scribe.
> TAD A6.9 (Driver no.6; translation, Taylor 2020, 35 [2013, 15–16])

This well-known Aramaic document from Egypt nicely illustrates the basics of travel along the royal road: daily waystations along an expected route, precise rations, and officials coordinating these, although it is uncertain whether it is a travel authorization (**viyātika-*, see below) from Aršama as satrap of Egypt or as owner of a private estate. In either case, it illustrates the embeddedness of estates within the larger system (see below). This uncertainty derives from the observations that the mentioned localities do not cover the entire distance from a Trans-Tigrine region to Egypt, as well as the qualifier "from my estate" (cf. Tuplin 2020a, 154–162). Graf has seen this list coincide, nonetheless, with former Neo-Assyrian provincial centers (1994,179). Briant has compared this text to *Letter of Themistocles* 20.27 (Briant 2012,189; cf. Tuplin 2020a, 148), and Folmer within the body of letter orders attested from Aršama and Akhvamazda (Folmer 2017).

A number of material elements and groups of participants can be delimited for the road system. These are the roads themselves, travel authorizations, seals, waystations, milestones, granaries, ration system, and estates, all of which implicated guards, travel guides, express messengers, caravan leaders, road inspectors, "scribes," auditors, and animals.

Roads. For the roads themselves, some level of continuity from the Neo-Assyrian to Roman Empires is often assumed.[19] In the main, they were likely unpaved (Graf

17 Perhaps it is worth noting with Tuplin that two of these officials have Babylonian names and five have Persian names (one is broken; 2020a, 163–4).

18 Seemingly the same as 1 QA; see Tuplin 2020a, 169, 171; Porten 1968, 71.

19 E. g., Graf 1994, 169, 171.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

1994, 173; Briant 2002, 361; Roll and Tal 2008, 220), though some paved sections and rock-cut passages are attested in Fars,[20] and there were some ferries and bridges (E.g. Sumner 1986, 10; Herod V.52.4–5). If the rock-cut passages are any indication, the road width was roughly 5 meters; a stretch of paved road near Gordium roughly 6.5 meters wide has been interpreted as a Persian road, though the paving may be Roman (Graf 1994, 177; Colburn 2013, 37).[21]

Travel authorization (Elam. *halmi*, *miyatukkaš* from OP **viyātika-*,[22] Aram. *htm*). In order to receive victuals while traveling on the road, one required a travel authorization. The Elamite terms are attested over 1500x and 83x, respectively, in the PFT.[23] The Q-texts (travel ration receipts) specify according to whose *halmi* particular rations were dispensed. Later accountants included mentions of whose *halmi* authorized expenditures in later accounts (V and W texts). The closest extant authorization is the letter order above. Since the Elamite texts are essentially concerned with accounting, it is uncertain whether all travelers required specific authorization to stay in waystations overnight, or to be allowed past guarded locations on official roads.

Seals. The use of seals, associated with offices, are ubiquitous on the attested tablets, and would have been on the now missing leather documents as well.[24] In the absence of a sealing on TAD A6.9, Tuplin has wondered if this means Nakhtḥor carried a physical seal of Aršama with him (Tuplin 2020a, 147; cf. Allen 2013, 30). Seals not only represent offices and officers, they represent the existence of workshops of seal engravers and networks for their trade; their importance may be reflected by the Elamite term for authorization, *halmi*, which literally means "seal."[25] The wide-spread use of sealings further implies actors in the system were able to parse them.

Waystations. Regular stations existed along the road, likely a day's travel apart for regular travelers (Herod. V. 52–4, VIII.98; Ctesias F33;[26] Henkelman 2017, 69), but closer to an hour's hard ride for the **fratačiš* (c. 17–24 km; Colburn 2013, 45). Herodotus's name for a post-station, *ἀγγαρήιον* (XIII.98), comes from the Aramaic אגרה, "letter," and, according to Graf, provides the name for a Ptolemaic era service obligation, *angaria* (Graf 1994, 172). These stations would have required "local staff," as do any modern hotels. One might also image that larger

20 See Kleiss 1981; Sumner 1986, 17; Stronach 1978,166–7; Graf 1994, 175; Colburn 2013, 37.

21 Graf 1994, 188 estimated that the total mileage covered by the system was c. 12,874 km (8000 miles).

22 Tavernier 2007, 410–11; Henkelman 2008, 143.

23 From OCHRE database.

24 Cf. Daskyleion (Kaptan 2002; Garrison 2017, 550) and the seal of Aršama (PFS 2899; Garrison 2017, 559–562).

25 Hallock 1969, 40.

26 Translated in Llewellyn-Jones and Robson 2010, 215.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

stations might attract providers of additional foodstuffs or niceties beyond the ration system.

Road markings/milestones. Although primarily attested archaeologically by the likely derivative Hellenistic and Indian systems, it is probable that the royal road was marked regularly by travel time between waystations (Henkelman 2017, 63–80). Though eminently practical from an administrative point of view, their visibility would also be a constant reminder to local populations of embeddedness in a far larger system.

Storehouses/ granaries. The commodities of the rationing system required local storage throughout the empire. Henkelman has compared the excavated granaries at Čogā Miš (Elam), Tell Jemmeh, Tell eš-Shariʿa, Tell Ruqueish (southern Levant), and Seyitömer Höyuk (Phrygia), with the highest attested grain deposits in the PFT (113k–167k liters; Henkelman 2017, 84–97). He finds the storage capacities to be more or less similar. In the later Persian period one was most likely at Khirbet el-Qom / Makkedah (cf. Lemaire 2017, 471). Most production from estates and of local taxes in kind likely remained in local storehouses, some of which then was distributed at nearby waystations.[27]

Provisioning system/ rations. As in the letter above, travel provisions regularly included grain of varying kinds and qualities, wine or beer, and more rarely other types of food. Animals also received fodder (see below). Status was explicitly marked: a few higher officials received varying large amounts of flour as well as alcohol, adult men received 1.5 QA, and servants 1 QA per day. Note that in A6.9 above, Nakhtḥor received 5 QA of flour and 2 QA of wine/beer, while his servants received 1 QA (Tuplin 2020a, 169, 171). This means that local provinces would need to be able to provide at least some of these commodities for waystations in their territory; it may be possible to link the Yehud jar-stamps to this need.[28]

Estates and land-grants. The letter of Aršama quoted above raised one aspect of estates within the road system—how fuzzy the lines between the state administration and ‘private’ elite estates were in practice.[29] However one decides this issue, another important aspect of the wide-ranging system of royal grants of land rights was to ensure the provision of staples and services for the royal road system. The rations discussed above needed to be provided to the waystations; some of these required processing (e. g., flour and the flour grinding tax, Jursa and Schmidl 2017, 726; Henkelman 2017, 126, n. 118). The roads also required maintenance, some of which likely came from work obligations on nearby land (see below). This makes these land grants and their owners and possessors part of the road system.

27 Cf. Kleber 2021.

28 Lipschits and Vanderhooft 2011, 761 also reject that the commodities were for “export.”

29 cf. Henkelman 2010, 668–674; Tuplin 2017, 617, n. 7; 622; in their introduction, the editors of CLeO 17 call these estates “semi-private” (Jacobs, Henkelman and Stolper 2017, xxv).

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

In addition to the material elements of the system, a wide variety of people regularly traversed it. Besides military personnel, among these were guards, "police," various kinds of messengers, travel guides, road inspectors, officials, work groups, and various kinds of animals. This implies a variety of *social* networks overlapping with the material road network.

Guards. Greek writers and the Persepolis tablets provide a number of different terms for individuals whose duties appear to include keeping the roads safe.[30] One can assume that fortified sites, treasuries, and granaries had stationed guards.[31] A few are attested as traveling as well.[32] *Nuškira,* "keeper, guard," sometimes appears in Q-texts (PF 1371, with a *halmi* of Parnaka; PF-NN 0456; PF-NN 1417, escorting *kurtaš* [see below]). Officials called *ukbazanuya*, **upajaniya,* appear in five texts, both ration and travel texts.[33] Hallock glossed the word as "drivers?", but Tavernier analyzed the word as "police officer" (Tavernier 2007, 432). They appear to travel with groups of men and servants, sometimes across provincial borders (PF 1348 Susa to Karmania).

**Dāti-māra/ KASKAL hašira*, road inspectors (literally "road counters")—apparently either a subset or specific duty of a larger corps of "lance bearers"—are attested in 33 PF texts.[34] They traveled in groups, inspecting the roads. Henkelman adduces that their remit was broader than just the road *per se*, with lance bearers attested counting workers and even maintaining the road's width (Henkelman 2017,72–7). The latter comes from BM 79746 and BM 74463,[35] which reveal the duty for landholders along the royal road to maintain it—in this case the Sippar temple (See the texts and interpretation in Jursa 1995, 153–4, 157). The consequence of these traveling inspectors is recurrent interaction between all landholders adjacent to the road system and groups of royal officials tasked with surveying roads, plots of land, and work groups. Similar to Henkelman's argumentation for the administration overall (2017), these latter officials show how integrated variously

30 Briant 1991, 73–4; Briant 2002, 368–9.

31 Hallock (1969, 688) notes "fortress guards" (PF 1591, 1812, Fort. 0857-102, PF-NN 0543); cf possibly also royal tombs (PF-NN 1700, 1848; Henkelman 2003, 105, n. 5), and *pilu* guards (Fort. 1665-001).

32 Hallock (1969, 417) read *da-ú-bat-ti-iš* in PF 1487 (similar forms in PF 1250, 1902, PFNN 433, 1285) as "police officer?" and was followed by Graf (1994, 174). Tavernier (2007, 418), however, read it as **dahyupatiš*, "governor."

33 PF 1061, 1079, 1348; PF-NN 0806; Fort. 109-101. All four except for the last, which has a decent amount of wine.

34 Graf 1994, 174; Tuplin 1997, 406–9; Tavernier 2007, 419; Henkelman 2017, 72–7. For a list of the 33, see the latter, 73, n. 43; cf. PFa 19, 22, 30 on the previous page.

35 According to the BM website, BM 74463 was excavated by Rassam in 1882 (Sippar), and BM 79746 was bought in 1889. Both date to Cyrus. Both translated in Jursa 1995, along with three Neo-Babylonian texts on the Royal Road. This shows that at least some of the system pre-dated the Persian version of it.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

disparate aspects were in practice—roads, land tenures, work groups, and work obligations.

Messengers. The Persian system seemingly use at least two types of messenger, a fast and a regular system.

**fratačiš / Pirradaziš*, "express messenger" appears roughly 80x in the PFT (e. g., Hallock 1969,42; Tavernier 2007, 421; Herod. VIII.98; PFAT 18; PFNN 1809). Colburn has calculated a maximum speed for these messengers at roughly 230 km/day, on the basis of comparison with the Pony Express (2013, 46–47).[36]

Asgandes*, (regular?) messengers [Aramaic *'zgd'*,[37] Greek ἀστάνδης;[38] Briant 2002, 270]. This position was not without status, if the tradition of it being borne by Darius III before his accession is true (Plut. *Alex* 18.4). Other semantically similar terms are also sporadically attested (azdā-kara*, "herald" TAD A6.1 [Tavernier 2007, 417]; **harzapanta* "messenger" [Tavernier 2007, 425]).

Guides and chaperones. In eight texts a **kārapatiš / karabattiš* appears.[39] Hallock suggested "caravan leader" (1969,42; Graf 1994, 174); Tavernier merely gives "guide" (2007,426). The lesser remunerated officials called *šaulu* were glossed as "travel assistant" (Hallock 1969,44, 13x, cf. PF 1463).

**Paristāva / Barrišdama,* "travel guide" or "chaperone" (Hallock 1969,42; Graf 1994, 174; Tavernier 2007, 428; 57x, e. g., PF 1409). Especially for longer journeys, knowledge of the regional roads was no doubt necessary; supervision cannot be ruled out, either.

Accounting. *Teppir/ Sēpiru*, officials and translators (Tavernier 2017, 348–355). Throughout the empire, large numbers are attested in various locations, various duties, and various linguistic affinities to their names; some only work for one higher official (Tavernier 2017, 369). Insofar as the road system is concerned, these officials translated orders, converted them to writing, and participated in the several layers of accounting (orders, memoranda, journals, auditing; Tavernier 2017, 379–382), working with scribes of the local language when necessary. They would have been encountered at granaries, treasuries, waystations, and forts.

**ganzabara*, "treasurer." Henkelman has suggested that treasuries would have each had a treasurer, with lower-level treasurers responsible at sites of production (Henkelman 2017, 98, 105; cf. Briant 2002, 428–429).

Stolper has also presented a dossier of nine tablets that appear to evince responsibility for accurate record-keeping as many as seven years after the fact (Stolper

36 Graf 1994, 167 already mentioned the comparison, but only in passing.

37 Bactria A5 (Naveh and Shaked 2012, 104). Cf. Targum Onqelos to Gen 32:4.

38 Plutarch *Alex.* 18.4; *On the Fortune of Alexander* 326e, 340c.

39 PF 1340, 1341, PFNN 398, 580, 1268, 2560, PT 47, 58. Cameron had suggested "ass drivers" (1948, 157–8, 172).

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

2017). Investigators would travel across jurisdictions to question officials concerning missing documents, data, or individuals (E.g., PFa 28, Stolper 2017, 744).

Workers. **Grda- / Kurtaš*. Though the largest number of *kurtaš* by far are attested in the heartland, they are attested moving around the empire, and thus it is not unreasonable to see groups of workers—however one defines their social status—as frequent users of the road system.[40]

**Dāmidātakāna / Dmydtknn*, appear in a Bactrian list (C4, line 18), glossed as "livestock (?) attendants" by Naveh and Shaked (2012, 203).

Animals. Obviously, a system which made use of the famous express messengers was able to provision the requisite horses. Quite a number of PFT evince rations for horses (e. g., PF 1672, 1770, 1944).[41] More than twenty texts also mention extra rations for animals, possibly related to road journeys.[42] Beyond rations, hay, and water, however, such a system requires large institutional support, especially in terms of people: not only breeders, trainers, and grooms, but also blacksmiths and other artisans for the necessary horsey items.[43]

Henkelman (2017, 56) has argued that camel breeding was conducted on an "industrial" scale for use in the system. Not only is this implied by an anecdote in Arrian (*Anabasis* VI.27.6) and rations for 12 camels in PF-NN 0431 (2017, 187–190), but Henkelman also adduces the Bactrian satrap Axvamazda's letter (ADAB A1) and finds of camel bones as evidence—including one of the sites in the above database, Tell Jemmeh.[44] He even credits the vernacular names for the types of camels—Arabian and Bactrian—to the Achaemenid context where both were used (2017, 60, n. 23). For the present purposes the systematic use of camels along the network highlights how the imperial institution had ramifications outside narrowly administrative concerns, within a broader pattern of long-distance trade. The spread of the camel's popularity is part of this broader narrative.

Dogs

The system also on occasion could accommodate the needs of canine companions. Eight tablets (PF 1264, PF 1265, PF-NN 0317, PF-NN 0965, PF-NN 1242, PF-NN 1020, Fort. 0444-101, Fort. 1993-102) document rations for groups of dogs, nor-

40 Cf. Silverman 2015 and the references cited there.

41 "Horse" (written ANŠE.KUR.RA or variants) is listed 804 times in OCHRE.

42 Using the term **hada-jana-* or **hada-čāna-*; see Hallock 1969, 49; Tavernier 2007, 407–8. E.g., PF 1638, 1705, 1948; PF-NN 0263, 732, 756, 952, 1135, 1692.

43 More broadly on systems dealing with quadruped rearing, see Briant 1979.

44 See Henkelman 2017, 57, n. 15 for a list of relevant PF texts. Tell Jemmeh, p. 59.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

mally at 1.5 QA per day (the same as minor officials, but more than servants).[45] The texts include both memoranda and accounting texts.[46] One "short text" (U) further documents one Miruda, a dog breeder? (see n. above). Hallock thinks the two ration texts he published document hunting trips, since the groups of dogs are large and accompanied by men and their servants (Hallock 1969, 40). One text, however, documents a group of only 4 dogs travelling on a *halmi* from (Queen) Irdabama, all the way from India to Susa.[47] These dogs receive only 1 QA (so, perhaps puppies?). Parnaka and Ziššawiš also issued *halmi* for dogs (Fort. 1993-102; PF-NN 1242). A man in Persian dress is depicted as a dog handler on a lekythos.[48] While hunting is a possible context, others deserve consideration.[49] Dogs are attested as used in warfare (in Iran as well as in Greece), so they could be interpreted with a military function.[50] However, the *Vīdēvdād* (13.8–18, 49; cf. Boyce 1995) distinguishes between "cattle-protecting" and "house-protecting" dogs, so a broader range of (officially supported?) Iranian uses cannot be excluded.[51] Perhaps it is worth

45 PF 1264 and 1265 (Hallock 1969, 360) noted in passing in Briant 2012, 193. Written UR.lg (cf. Hinz and Koch 1987, 2: 1244). In PF 1264 Bakukka is called a "dog carrier" (*kutira*; Hinz and Koch 1987, 1:548, "Träger, Wart"). Another text, PF 1904, might imply there was a broader institutional support for dogs (breeding?). Hallock does not translate the title of the official, Miruda, who receives beer rations in this text. But the word, *tukkira*, is used of "makers" of other things (e. g., PF 1852, stone masons, Fort.1248-103 copper workers; Hinz and Koch 1987, 1: 353 translate it "Klopfer."). I imagine this must, in combination with "dog," mean "dog breeder." Unfortunately, the OP word for "dog" is not attested, but it appears in Median (**spaka*-) and Avestan (*span*-). Tavernier (2007, 563) gives the expected OP form as *sa(ka). Cf. a payment for the "dogs of Pasi" in C3.26 col ii line 27; Tuplin 2020b, 297 n. 22.

46 S1, Q, and P memoranda, V and W accounting.

47 PF-NN 0317.

48 The Xanophantos Lekythos, Hermitage P.1837-2 (Poggio 2020, 92, 99).

49 Some classical writers do describe various types of Iranian hunting dogs; Strabo, *Geog.* XV. 30–1 writes of fierce hunting dogs in Gandhara; the poet Grattius, in a list of types of hunting dogs (lines 150–210), mentions the Median, Persian, and Hyrcanian types (Grattius 1934, 167); if ancient attribution of animal origins is as reliable as modern, these probably say little about actual Iranian hunting dogs. Aelian *On Animals* 3.2 mentions fierce Carmanian dogs, but does not specify their purpose; cf. Omidsalar and Omidsalar 1995). The *Vīdēvdād* 13 and the much later *Gr. Bundahišn* (13.18), distinguish between four types of dogs, guard dogs, herding dogs, vagrant dogs, and puppies[?]. These functions continue even in Islamic Iran (Digard 1995).

50 Aelian *On Animals* 7.38 writes of Hyrcanian war dogs, and Herodotus 7.187 describes Indian dogs in Xerxes's invasion force. Note that the origin of the war dogs in Herodotus match the origin of Irdabama's dogs in PF-NN 0317. Aelian also (6.25) gives two anecdotes of the faithfulness of the dogs of Cyrus the Younger and Darius III during their deaths in battle, but this is a classical trope; cf. Omidsalar and Omidsalar 1995.

51 All of *Fargard* 13 is on the 'dog' (which includes other species), which it breaks down into four types, but the herding and guarding types are given the most space. The Avestan version of the *Vīdēvdād* is most likely of Achaemenid date; see, e. g. Skjærvø 2003–4, 36–7.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

noting that this text also mandates the proper qualities and quantities of food for dogs, as well as length of puppy-rearing.[52] This is without considering any religious connotations.[53] Root has taken the finds of limestone dog sculptures (mastiffs) in the Persepolis terrace to confirm their cultural significance.[54] Similar breeds of dog are still used as guard and herding dogs in Iran, Afghanistan, and Kurdistan.

Table 2 Tablets mentioning dog rations

Text	Type	Date	Dogs	Ration	Halmi
PF-NN 0317	Q	X/Darius 22	4	1 QA	Irdabama
PF-NN 0965	S1	X/Darius 28	1	1.5 QA	
PF-NN 1242	P	I-II/Darius 28	16	1.5 QA	Ziššawiš
PF-NN 1020	W	[broken]	?	2[x] QA	
PF 1264	P	VII/Darius [broken]	68	1.5 QA	
PF 1265	P	[broken]	26	1.5 QA	
Fort. 0444-101	V	XI/[broken]	24, 20	broken	
Fort. 1993-102	V	[broken]/Darius 20	35		Parnaka
Cf.					
PF 1904	U	Darius 25	n/a	n/a	

All four of these potential interpretations—hunting, warfare, herding, and household—imply sets of networks intersecting with the system. The generally large numbers of dogs mean behind these snapshots must be institutions of dog-breeding, training, and distribution. The animals travel at the behest of the upper echelons of the empire, but appear to travel accompanied by both "free men" (*šalur*) and servants (*puhu*). If hunting parties are one aspect, these would have provided opportunities for elites nearby waystations to join traveling dignitaries at the local hunting park.[55] War dogs would no doubt remind observers of the teeth behind the

52 *Vd.* 13.20–28. Cf. Boyce 1995. While this text says dogs should receive milk, fat, and meat, the attested rations are not so rich.

53 On the Zoroastrian regard of dogs, cf. Boyce 1995.

54 Root 2002, 208. According to Schmidt, they likely had collars, and resembled similar sculptures from Ptolemaic Egypt. They were apparently moved from the tower entrance of the Apadana to storage in antiquity. See Schmidt 1953, 73, 102B; 1957, 69–70 and plate 36a–b. A version with the head reconstructed in Curtis and Razmjou 2005, 100. According to Sami 1966, 99–100, an incomplete one was found in between two entrance halls and is now in the Persepolis Museum, while a complete one is in Tehran (he does not mention the latter's find site).

55 Cf. The lower "hunting freeze" of the Mourning Women Sarcophagus from Sidon, which depicts the use of dogs for the hunt (Poggio 2020, 94, 99). Poggio strongly emphasizes the social structure evidenced by hunting, but that goes beyond the present scope.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Pax Persica. Both herding and guard dogs may have encouraged pastoral lifeways in appropriate regions.

All of the material and human elements to the road system delineated above imply repeated interactions of multiple kinds between the road system and the provinces through which it passed. It is worth the effort, therefore, to consider methods which may help to elucidate some of the potential social ramifications of this system beyond an intuitive impression. With that goal, the paper can now turn to some aspects of social network theory.

Network Theory and the Royal Road

Social Network Analysis is a venerable tradition within the social sciences, recently making inroads into ancient history.[56] Network analysis offers the potential to explore the relationships between local actors and larger social structures, which are often hard to detect at the point of the primary data itself. The application of the idea of a network to a road system is fairly obvious. The above sketch of the Achaemenid royal road system should have made it clear that the relevant network that this road would have represented involved the communities around it, as well. How might concepts from the body of network theory be helpful in analyzing this?

Networks. A (social) network is a collection of nodes (or actors) and the ties between them (or edges).[57] "Actors" may be people, groups, organizations, locations, or anything between which one wishes to explore connections; networks may deal with one or more than one type of relation (one or two-mode networks).[58] The analysis involves creating matrices that are used to create relational graphs as well as to conduct statistical queries. Meta-data for each actor can also be recorded. For this project, I am treating Persian-period sites as the actors or nodes in a network, as a proxy for the individuals who would have lived and worked at the sites. Because the nature of the existing data for Persian sites in the southern Levant, **I am analyzing two different sets of nodes**: one based on a more limited set of "forts" and "settlements," and one with "forts" and all sites, the assumption being that these two provide a reasonable range for estimating the real historical network.

56 See, e. g., the pioneering work Waerzeggers 2014; 2015; and the current work in ANEE, e. g., Alstola et al. 2019. In the context of the Achaemenid Empire, see also Samuels 2016.

57 See, e. g., Prell 2012, 9.

58 Prell 2012, 16–18.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Ties. The actors or nodes in a network are connected by ties. These ties can be undirected (edges, symmetrical) or directed (arcs, asymmetrical),[59] unvalued or valued.[60] SNA makes a distinction between "strong ties" and "weak ties." The former typically represent close social bonds, while the latter acquaintances or other transactional relationships; these may be marked by relative values in a valued graph, or ties coded separately. A series of non-repeating ties is called a path. For this work, ties are understood to be roads (international and local; more detail below). **This project analyzes two different sets of ties**: one based on the Roman Road and one based on least-cost analysis.

Clusters and structural holes. Not all potential ties in a network actually exist. Analysis includes resulting clusters, or groups of highly connected nodes, and structural holes, gaps between such clusters.[61] Clusters tend to consist of stronger ties. Larger groupings, however, admit a variety of criteria for delimitation, depending on the question in focus. There are a number of different methods for finding clusters, and several different methods will be explored and compared below. A key question for this research is whether any clusters might be found that could be correlated with supposed provincial boundaries in this corner of *Abar Naharā*. In other words, might the administrative-legal boundaries have followed network structural properties?

Structural bridges. The ties between clusters are known as bridges. Nodes along such bridges can be powerful—also called "brokers"—as they control the communication between otherwise separate clusters.[62] This simple idea, however, admits some qualifications. At least five different types of bridging can be distinguished on the basis of relative group membership of the bridge (coordinating, consulting, representative, gatekeeper, liaison; cf. Bruggeman 2008, 68–75). I hope this might prove a useful tool for analyzing the importance of individual sites.

Power of "Weak Ties." The importance of strong ties for social groupings is quite intuitive, particularly for the micro level. In a well-known article, Granovetter (1973) argued a more counter-intuitive idea that, on a macro-level, so-called weak ties were more significant than strong ones. His argument hinged on the idea that structural bridges between groups are most often weak ties. In other words, without weak ties, information would merely stay within close clusters. The corollary to this that he draws is that more "marginal" individuals or groups may be key diffusers of ideas if they have weak ties across tighter groupings (Granovetter 1973, 1367). Thus, it is important to consider whether structures that

59 Prell 2012, 12, 11.

60 Prell 2012, 15.

61 Prell 2012, 122.

62 Prell 2012, 123–128.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

provide a context for "weak ties" between groups could not, in fact, be key elements in the relationships between groups. What Granovetter called weak and strong ties, Baldassarri and Diani have characterized as "transactions" and "social bonds" (2007). They argued that transactional ties were key to providing coherence and connectedness within a network, while "social bonds" provided integration and social identity. For the purposes of the present project, the question that arises is this: can we consider the network that was the royal road as a context that in fact produced such weak ties between communities of differing kinds? Or, in the terms of Badassarri and Diani, could the royal road be a conduit for transactions preventing clusters of communities from splintering into discrete networks? To consider this question, we need a way to distinguish types of relations.

Royal Road, Attested Sites, and Constructing Networks

Though the above network concepts are relatively intuitive, the practical coding of the historical information into network-usable data is not as straightforward.

Above it was noted that there is uncertainty in the number of real historical nodes (settlements, forts, all attested sites) as well as in the actual path of the historical road network. Further, although the concept of a road system as a network is quite intuitive, *what constitutes a tie between sites* is debatable. To deal with this uncertainty, this project constructs eight different networks, seeking to compare the results (see Table 3). There are two sets of nodes (settlements and forts, all sites), and two sets of ties (the Roman roads, least cost analysis paths). In an attempt to assess these resulting networks, each of the four networks are also compared with randomly generated networks with the same densities.[63]

63 Density refers to the percentage of potential ties between actors that actually exist in a network, somewhat indicative of how connected a network is; networks of different sizes are not comparable in this measure, so I am comparing each with randomly generated networks of the same density (cf. Prell 2012, 166–171).

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Table 3 Networks being constructed

Settlements and Forts (I)	"RR1 Network" Settlements and Forts *Roman Roads*	"LC1 Network" Settlements and Forts *Least Cost Analysis Roads*	"RG1 Networks" (rr) Settlements and Forts *Randomly generated ties*	"RG1 Networks" (lca) Settlements and Forts *Randomly generated ties*
All sites (II)	"RR2 Network" All sites *Road Roads*	"LC2 Network" All Sites *Least Cost Analysis Roads*	"RG2 Networks" (rr) All Sites *Randomly generated ties*	"RG2 Networks" (lca) All Sites *Randomly generated ties*
Nodes / ***Ties***	***Roman Roads***	***Least Cost Analysis***	***Randomly generated***	***Randomly generated***

Nodes. Networks type I comprise 559 nodes, representing sites more securely identified as Persian era settlements and administrative sites. This represents the most conservative estimate for Persian era settlement in the Southern Levant. Networks type II comprise 1467 nodes, representing all locations where Persian material has been found (including survey sites) for which I have found GPS coordinates.[64] These represent a maximum estimate for Persian era settlement in the region.

Ties. There are two sets of ties, along the Roman Road network (connecting at the closest point to the site, see fig. 4) and using least-cost analysis.[65] For the purposes of this project, potential routes along the coast have been ignored, under the assumption the Persians did not much travel via the water;[66] future work when the Lebanese data is added might take these additional routes into account.

The ties between sites were calculated as follows: "forts" were connected to other "forts" which were fewer than 230,001 meters from each other along the given road network.[67] This represents the estimated maximum daily reach of a **fratačiš*. The

64 This is important, as I used QGIS to map all the sites with their coordinates using the Ancient World Mapping Center's open data, and this provided the distance information used for calculating ties and tie weights.

65 Process inspired by Whitley and Hicks 2003: they used a least cost path analysis (friction surface/ accumulation cost surface; slope model/hiker function; noting rivers and streams; produces a cost surface; run cost distance and least cost path analysis for each origin and destination; produce single set of polylines for primary pathways; use cost topography to create a "costshed" from sites to primary routes). This analysis is being conducted by Maija Holappa.

66 Understanding maritime networks is complicated, as it depends not only on distance but also on type of ship and weather conditions. See, for example, Leidwanger 2013 and Safadi and Sturt 2019.

67 The length of the tie varies between the two road networks: the length between sites using the Roman Road network is typically longer than that constructed via Least Cost Analysis.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

other sites were connected with other sites within 11001 meters.[68] (the algorithm's margin of error was c. 600 meters; false zeros were replaced by 500). This distance represents an estimated maximum daily walk (doubling Robinson's daily return distance).[69] The resulting networks were checked for duplicates and isolates. If an isolate was found, it was connected to the closest site. The distances between sites (in meters) has been retained as edge weights, both in absolute values and in inverse values. These provide tools for the various network algorithms that emphasize the roles of forts or settlements, respectively.

Randomly Generated Networks. The number of nodes and ties[70] of the four resulting networks above are being used to generate four sets of 1000 randomly generated networks with R,[71] to assess whether the resulting measurements differ significantly from what could be expected of a random network.

I am using several software programs for the Network analysis. Analysis so far was primarily conduced in Gephi, though because the networks of all sites were too large for some analyses in Gephi, I used another program called Cytoscape[72] for these, and re-imported the results into Gephi. The generation and analysis of random networks is being conducted in R.[73]

Outline of Project Research

The full project of treating the Persian roads in the southern Levant as a social network involves five broad stages, of which, at the time of writing this prolegomena, only half of the first three have been conducted. This section will outline the basic steps either already conducted or planned; fuller descriptions (along with more images and details of each analysis) are reserved for the completed study.

68 Using the OD Matrix algorithm in QGIS, then deleting the duplicates and excess values in R.

69 As noted above Robinson (1977, 10) claims that on foot "fair maximum distance to travel to work each day is 5 km" but links settlements together if they are within 5.5 km—"there is a direct route to any other settlement to which it was feasible to travel on a day-return visit" (27).

70 In other words, the randomly generated graphs had the same density as the other two network types, to make testing significance meaningful.

71 R is a freeware statistics software, available at https://www.r-project.org/. I used Stinerock 2018 to learn the software.

72 Shannon et al. 2003, available https://cytoscape.org. It appears that most of the analyses attempted in this paper are in fact doable within Cytoscape, but I only discovered these after trying to learn how to do them in Gephi or R, and have not had the time to re-learn how they might be done in Cytoscape. It is quite possible that would have been faster.

73 So far the networks were generated using the erdos.renyi.game function (Csardi 2020) of the igraph package (Csardi and Nepusz 2006).

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Stage 1. Build the networks. This has largely been described above. The first step involved mapping the sites in QGIS, and then outputting node- and edge-lists readable in Gephi. Outstanding remain GPS coordinates for some sites in Israel and Lebanon, which I hope to add to the database before completion. Efforts to include sites from the North Sinai Survey have been unsuccessful. Networks RR1 and RR2 have been imported into Gephi and Cytoscape, and RG1rr generated in R. LC1, LC2, and RG2rr, RG1lca and RG2lca remain outstanding.

Stage 2. The second stage seeks to answer the question of whether network clustering methods could be useful in the debate over the numbers of provinces and/or provincial borders in the southern Levant. This involves running several different clustering algorithms on each network, then comparing the results between the methods for individual networks and across the four empirical networks. For the RR1 and RR2 networks, the clustering methods utilized so far have been k-means clustering,[74] Girvan-Newman,[75] Louvain,[76] Leiden,[77] Two-Mode Networks,[78] and correspondence analysis.[79] I also intend to use these methods on the 1000 randomly generated networks that match node and tie size, to compare the clustering methods' results to those of chance. The results can then be compared within and across the networks.

Stage 3. The next stage involves site-level analysis. By utilizing several common network measures (degree, weighted degree, closeness centrality, eigenvector centrality, betweenness centrality, bridging centrality, and eccentricity), sites can be compared with each other within each network, and the impact of the different network constructions compared. Since the measures all highlight different sites, I have also been attempting to use Correspondence Analysis to compare the meaningfulness of the various measures. Once this has been done for all four empirical networks, this can hopefully be used to see whether any sites have consistent net-

74 Borgatti et al. 2018, 294, only mentions k-means as a "standard approach" in passing; for an easy-to-read assessment of its usability and drawbacks, see Dabbura 2018. I followed the steps given in <https://www.statology.org/k-means-clustering-in-r/>. I ran the algorithm both with the numbers scaled (as indicated in the instructions) and without scaling.

75 Bruggeman 2008, 39–40; Borgatti et al. 2018, 221–223.

76 Borgotti et al 2018, 298–300; algorithm Blondel et al. 2008. It is available in Gephi as the modularity option under statistics.

77 Traag et al. 2019. This is available in Gephi under Leiden algorithm in statistics, with two quality functions.

78 Using the MultiMode Networks Projection in Gephi, two-mode networks can be broken down into cluster-by-cluster and site-by-site networks and re-clustered with the Leiden algorithm, producing graphs that could be investigated for commonalities in groupings.

79 Morris et al. 2018. Using the "clusterMaker" "make correlation network from node attributes" algorithm in Cytoscape.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

work properties in all four configurations. Similar analysis could be performed within interesting clusters from stage 2, if desired.

Stage 4. With comparative statistics for the four empirical networks in terms of clusters and sites and for the four sets of randomly generated networks in terms of basic network statistics and clusters, it will be possible (I hope!) to assess the relative probability of the networks’ relation to the historical road network. In other words, since RR1 represents an overly conservatively reconstructed network and LC2 an overly liberally reconstructed network, the comparison should help to indicate a range in which one could expect the historical reality to have been.

Stage 5. Once the above stages are completed, it will finally be possible to attempt to use the network for historiography. At this stage it will be possible to address the questions of provincial boundaries and the network possibilities for interaction within or between them. It will be possible to ask if particular sites offered more potential for interactions than others, as well as the possibilities any two given populations had to interact with each other. The original remit given to inaugurate this project was to assess Greek-Judaean interaction in the Levant before Alexander; in stage 5 it should be possible finally to attempt to answer this, perhaps by using studies of pathways between sites of interest. At the end of the project, the data used for the networks will be made freely available for others to utilize.

Sample, preliminary analysis on the impact of the Persian Network within the Southern Levant: Only the ‘Forts’ via the Roman Roads

Since the purpose is to assess the nature and impact of the Persian network in the region, one can first take a look at only those sites labelled Fort or both Fort and Settlement, and connected via the Roman Road as described above.[80] This produces a rather dense graph (90%!) with a diameter of only 4 and an average path length of only 1.118 (see Table 4). The high connectivity defied most attempts to cluster the site (see figs. 5a–c). Leiden only separated out the sites in Egypt, while Girvan-Newman isolated 9 sites at the fringes. Louvain at setting 1 fluctuated between 4 and 6 communities, with the highest modularity only reaching 0.25 with 5 communities.

As can be easily seen in fig. 5c, the current state of the data (missing the north Sinai sites) makes the sites connecting Egypt score highly in betweenness centrality. Depending on which measure one favors, sites worth exploring in terms of their position relative to other forts include Tell es-Samadi (highest degree and Eigenvector), Ruhm Abu Khashaba, Giv’at Shappira, and Tell el-Ful (weighted degree), Defenneh

80 As a reminder “Fort” means anything administrative or military, not just actual forts. The full study will be able to compare it across all networks.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

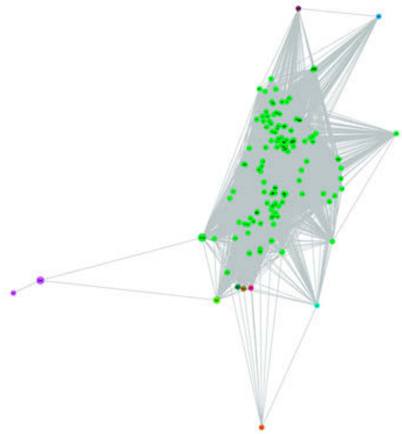


Fig. 5a "Forts" clustered with Girvan-Newman

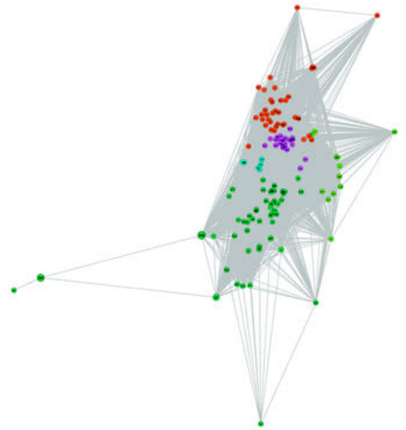


Fig. 5b "Forts" clustered with Louvain (Modularity 1)

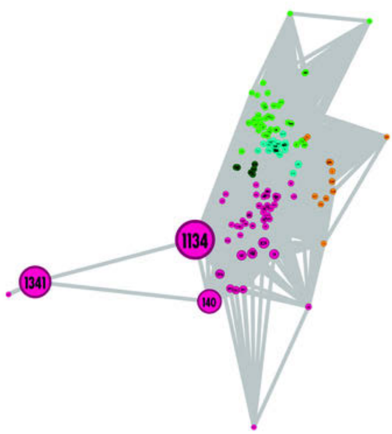


Fig. 5c "Forts" highlighting largest betweenness centrality

(closeness), Tell Qatif (Betweenness), and Be'erotaim (lowest eccentricity); also, Tell Kedwa ranks similarly to the latter two.

Even though networks of different sizes cannot be directly compared, the basic network statistics of the Forts as a network with the statistics of RR1 and RR2 clearly shows the significance of the former. While it is typical for larger networks to be

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

less dense than smaller ones,[81] the forts are *much* more interconnected. Indeed, the ties between forts constituted 79.5% of RR1's ties and 36.6% of RR2's ties. This is of course due to the decision above to connect such sites according to the high-speed messenger system. In continuing analysis it may be worth exploring a lower threshold for defining a tie in the Persian network representing the daily travel distance of, e. g., a regular messenger.[82]

Table 4 Basic Network statistics of Forts only, RR1 and RR2 networks

	Forts only	**RR1**	**RR2**
Nodes	131	559	1467
Ties	7666	9640	20953
Density	0.900	0.06181	0.01949
Av. Degree	117.038	34.490	28.566
Graph Diameter	4	9	14
Av. Path Length	1.118	3.091	3.7132
Clustering Coefficient	0.951285144	0.6150905433009264	0.6641258413166357

In both RR1 and RR2, the Girvan-Newman and Louvain methods treated the forts differently.[83] Girvan-Newman clustered most of the forts into one cluster, while Louvain did not segregate them out. Converting the clustering methods into partitions in Gephi showed the relative impact of the forts on overall connectivity rather dramatically. In RR1 and RR2 deleting the forts from the Newman Girvan clusters removed almost all inter-cluster connections (see figs 6–9); removing them from Leuven partitions was not so simple, as they did not constitute a cluster apart. However, running Leuven on both RR1 and RR2 *after* deleting the forts produced similar (but not identical) groups as Girvan-Newman with the fort-cluster deleted.

81 Borgotti et al. 2018, 175.

82 This would require building *another* network, and I have not had time to do that for this prolegomena.

83 In the fuller project, a wider range of methods and parameters are compared than here. For the present purpose of illustrating just the forts on their own, this is sufficient. In particular, Louvain and Leiden were run using no weights, distance weights, and inverse weights. Edge weights made no difference to the Girvan-Newman algorithm.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

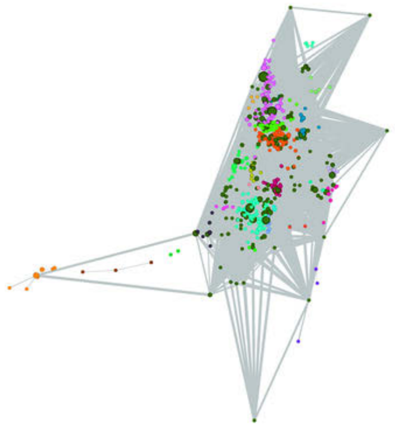


Fig. 6a RR1 Girvan-Newman Clusters

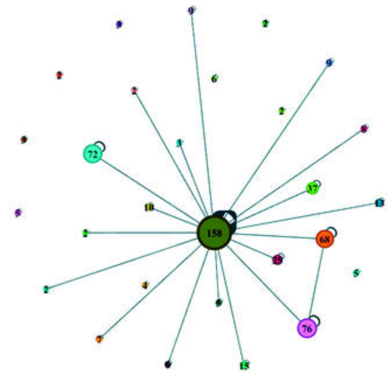


Fig. 6b RR1 Girvan-Newman as Partition

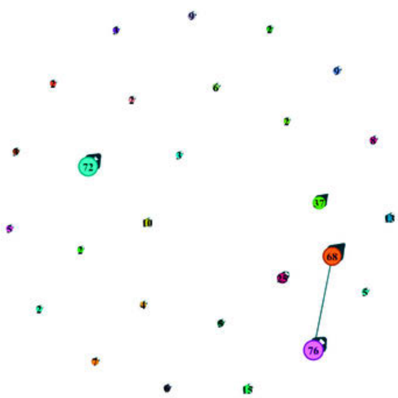


Fig. 6c RR1 Girvan-Newman Partition without Fort cluster

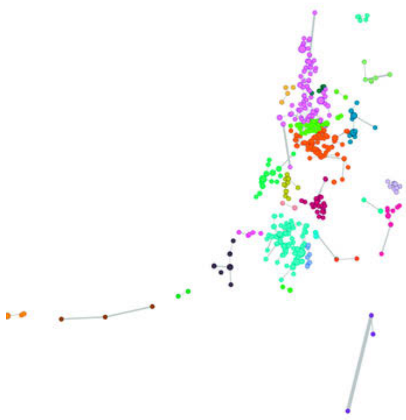


Fig. 6d RR1 Girvan-Newman clusters without Forts

Removing the longer ties between the forts (keeping the nodes and the same ties as settlements, i. e., under 11001 meters) dramatically reduces overall connectivity as well, as predictable considering the high percentage of overall ties they represent. Fig. 10 shows the impact on connectivity between the Louvain (modularity 0.8) clusters on RR2 of removing these longer distance ties (compare this to fig. 9a). Without these longer ties, RR1 fragments from 10 into 102 components, while RR2 devolves into 70 components, compared to just 16 with the long ties. Even just as

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

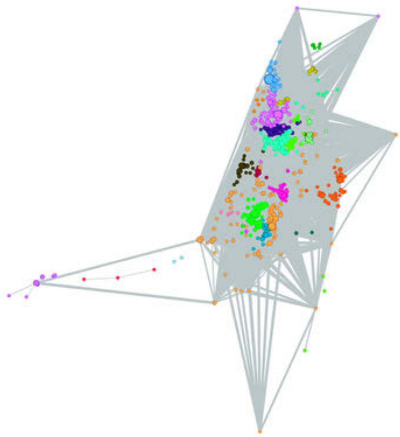


Fig. 7a RR1 Louvain (Mod1) Clusters

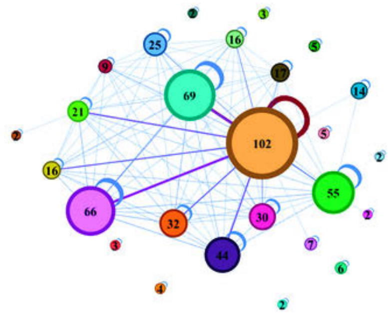


Fig. 7b RR1 Louvain (Mod1) Partition

a rough impression, it seems obvious that the network of forts provides a higher level of inter-connectivity to the RR networks than they would have without it. Since this is based on administrative ties, one might be justified in considering these as examples of "weak ties" that connect otherwise disparate clusters. Indeed, the impact of removing ties over a certain threshold might suggest the value of attempting to compare different networks using different assumptions concern daily travel time for both regular settlements and the administrative sites. Further work on the project will compare other archaeological studies of road networks (e. g., Hendrickson 2007).

On first glance, the highest ranked sites in all three networks also differ, both in terms of the various standard centrality measures within each network and between the networks. Because I was uncertain how to compare the various measures, I tried running Correspondence Analysis on the measures for RR1 in CAinterprTools in R.[84] Oddly enough, it found the most discriminating measure to be the bridging *coefficient* (not bridging *centrality*);[85] this shows up 917 Tel Miski followed by 923 H. Moran. I am not confident this has any meaning, however; I am still learning how to do CA properly. In the meantime, for the purposes of this prolegomena, it is worth noting the different sites in the Forts only, RR1, and RR2 networks that

84 See the code in https://rdrr.io/cran/ca/man/ca.html. I used the package ca and its ca() function and the plot.ca() function. See Greenacre et al. 2020. Alberti 2015; see https://www.rdocumentation.org/packages/CAinterprTools/versions/1.1.0 and the explanations at Alberti 2016.

85 The bridging coefficient is used to calculate the bridging centrality.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

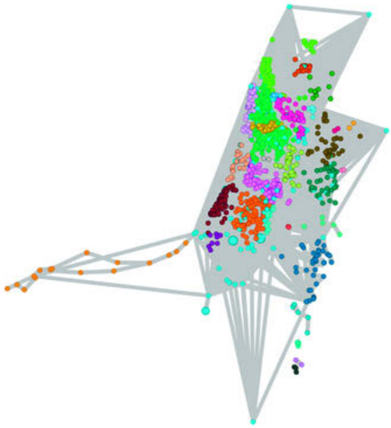


Fig. 8a RR2 Girvan-Newman Clusters

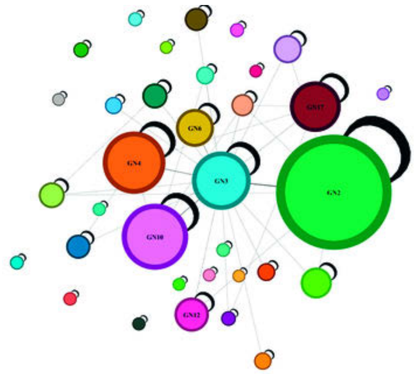


Fig. 8b RR2 Girvan-Newman Partition

Fig. 8c RR2 Girvan-Newman Partition without Forts

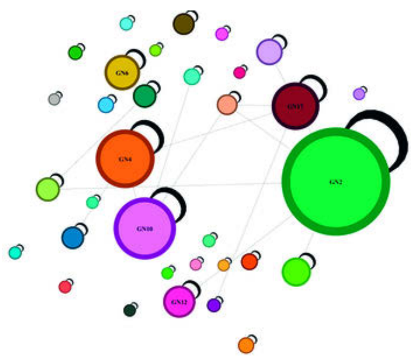


Fig. 8d RR2 Girvan-Newman Clusters without Forts

rank in the top five for betweenness centrality. Betweenness centrality measures how often a node lies on the shortest path between other nodes, and thus it gives an indication its potential for the control over information flow.[86]

Only Akko and Megiddo appear in more than one list, and both are sites one would expect to have been important. However, when the ties over 11km are removed, in RR1 Akko drops to 16th and Megiddo to 20th (1 Abel Beth Ma'acah

86 Borgotti et al. 2018, 201.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

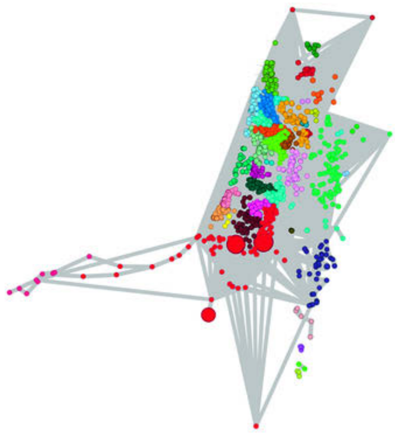


Fig. 9a RR2 Louvain (Mod 0.8) Clusters

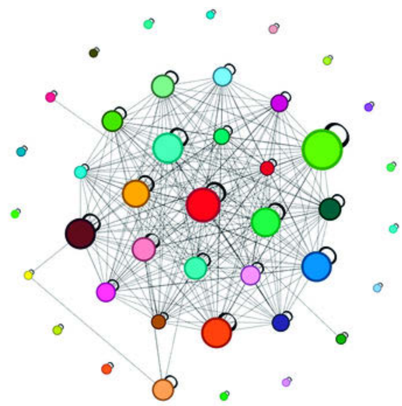
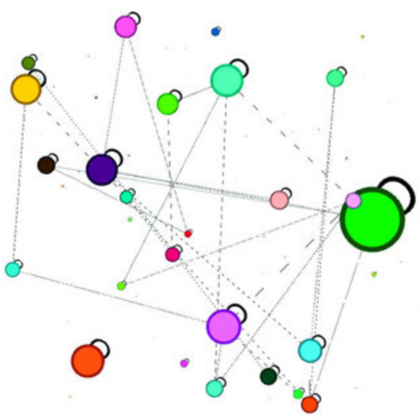


Fig. 9b RR2 Louvain (Mod 0.8) Partitions

Fig. 10 RR2 Louvain (Mod 0.8) without ties over 11001 meters



becomes 1st); in RR2 Megiddo drops to 48th and Akko to 128th (1034 H. Nasha this time comes in first). This clearly demonstrates the impact the administrative ties have on the topography of the network, and on the strategic potential of a particular site.

Similar comparisons can be conducted for clusters of interest, as well. For example, one can take Louvain (Mod 0.8) cluster 33 from RR2, which overlaps with Yehud; within the full RR2 network the highest betweenness is 550 Giv’at Shappira and within the cluster without long ties, the site with the highest betweenness is

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Table 5 Top five sites in Betweenness centrality in Forts only, RR1, and RR2

Betweenness Rank	Forts only	RR1	RR2
1	1134 Tell Qatif	36 Tel Akko	651 Holot Ashdod 61
2	1341 Tell Kedwa	888 Megiddo	36 Tel Akko
3	140 Be'erotaim	1187 Kh. Rasm el-Seba	471 Tell es-Hesi
4	839 Kh. Luzifar	727 Jebel Nimra	895 Tel Mevorakh
5	141 Be'ersheva	378 El-Marma	888 Megiddo

1169 Ramot Forest.[87] (The sites are adjacent, the main impact being a shift from a "fort" site to a survey site, see Fig. 12). Neither of these sites to date has attracted much scrutiny within studies of Persian Yehud, compared to other sites considerably farther down in betweenness ranking.

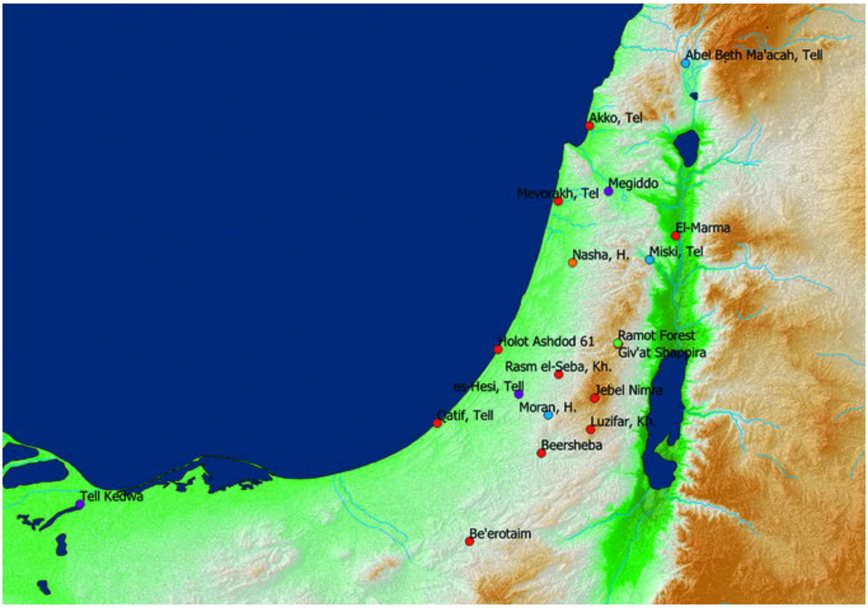


Fig 11 Map of sites mentioned

87 In both cases, this is true if the algorithm is run on the entire network, or just on the extracted cluster.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

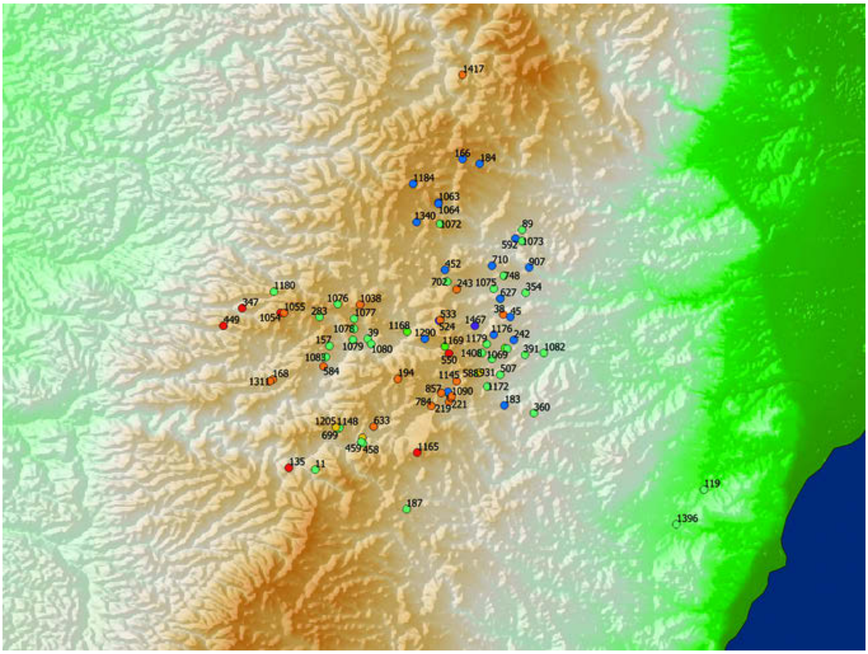


Fig 12 Map of RR2 Louvain (Mod 0.8) Cluster 33

Afterword—Future possibilities

The material presented here only scratches the surface of possibilities for exploring the region in the Persian period; truly, writing the sample analysis of just the "forts" alone raised several new queries for my investigation. Once I can compare the least cost analysis networks and sets of random networks with the Roman Road networks, nearly endless possibilities will open up for exploring particular clusters or sites, as well as the connections between them.[88]

As noted above under the project stages, the initial goal of this project was to provide a new lens for considering social interactions between "Greeks" and Judaeans in Persian-era Levant. The social ramifications, of course, do not end there. Especially with the addition of sites in Lebanon, it may be possible to analyze coalitions of "Phoenician" sites, or the relationships between Yehud and Samerina. Although the nature of survey sites makes a diachronic analysis impossible for all the sites (this study effectively reflecting the network at the end of the Persian period), one may be able to add chronological data to the excavated sites to assess

88 E. g., Hendrickson 2007 offers a variety of ways for assessing road use.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

network changes through time. In light of the workshop's interest in understanding loci for Greek interactions, the latter might be done by augmenting the dataset to include the late Iron Age and early Hellenistic periods to construct a dynamic network model.

Bibliography

Alberti, G., (2015), 'CAinterprTools: An R Package to Help Interpreting Correspondence Analysis' Results', *SoftwareX* 1–2: 26–31. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.softx.2015.07.001.

Alberti, G., (2016), *Correspondence Analysis in Archaeology*. (Accessed 11 Oct 2021). http://cainarchaeology.weebly.com.

Allen, L., (2013), 'The Letter as Object: On the Experience of Achaemenid Letters', *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 56, 2: 21–36.

Alstola, T., A. Sahala, H. Jauhiainen, S. Svärd, and K. Lindén, (2019), 'Aššur and His Friends: A Statistical Analysis of Neo-Assyrian Texts', *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 71: 159–180.

Ancient World Mapping Center (2012a), 'All Rivers', Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. http://awmc.unc.edu/wordpress/map-files/.

Ancient World Mapping Center (2012b), 'Coastline', Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. http://awmc.unc.edu/wordpress/map-files/.

Ancient World Mapping Center (2012v), 'Inland Water', Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. http://awmc.unc.edu/wordpress/map-files/.

Ancient World Mapping Center (2012d), 'Open Water', Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. http://awmc.unc.edu/wordpress/map-files/.

Ancient World Mapping Center (2012e), 'Rivers Polygons', Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. http://awmc.unc.edu/wordpress/map-files/.

Ancient World Mapping Center (2016), 'BA Roads', Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. http:// awmc.unc.edu/wordpress/map-files/.

Azmi, D. I., H. Abdul Karim, and M. Z. Mohd Amin, (2012), 'Comparing the Walking Behaviour between Urban and Rural Residents', *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences* 68: 406–416.

Baldassarri, D., and M. Diani, (2007), 'The Integrative Power of Civic Networks', *American Journal of Sociology* 113 (3): 735–780.

Bar, Sh., and A. Zertal, (2021), *The Manasseh Hill Country Survey Volume 6: The Eastern Samaria Shoulder, from Nahal Tirzah (Wadi Far'ah) to Ma'ale Ephraim Junction*. CHANE 21/6. Leiden: Brill.

Baruah, A. K., and T. Bora, (2018), 'Bridging Centrality: Identifying Bridging Nodes in Transportation Networks', *International Journal for Advanced Networking and Applications* 9 (6): 3669–73.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Blondel, V. D., J.-L. Guillaume, R. Lambiotte, and E. Lefebvre, (2008), 'Fast Unfolding of Communities in Large Networks', *Journal of Statistical Mechanics: Theory and Experiment* 2008 (10): P10008.

Borgotti, S. P., M. G. Everett, and J. C. Johnson, (2018), *Analyzing Social Networks*. 2nd ed. London: SAGE.

Boyce, M., (1995), 'Dog. ii. In Zoroastrianism', *Encyclopedia Iranica* 7 (5), https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/dog#pt2.

Brandes, U., (2001), 'A Faster Algorithm for Betweenness Centrality', *Journal of Mathematical Sociology* 25 (2): 163–77.

Briant, P., (1979), 'L'Élevage Ovin dans L'Empire Achéménide' *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 22 (1): 136–161.

Briant, P., (1991), 'De Sardes à Suse', in: H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg and A. Kuhrt (eds.), *Asia Minor and Egypt: Old Cultures in a New Empire*, Achaemenid History 6. Leiden: NINO: 67–82.

Briant, P., (2002), *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire*. Translated by Peter T. Daniels. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.

Briant, P., (2012), "From the Indus to the Mediterranean Sea: The Administrative Organization and Logistics of the Great Roads of the Achaemenid Empire', in S. E. Alcock, J. Bodel, and R. J. A. Talbert (eds.), *Highways, Byways, and Road Systems in the Pre-Modern World*, Chichester: John Wiley & Sons: 185–201.

Bruggeman, J., (2008), *Social Networks: An Introduction*. London: Routledge.

Colburn, H. P., (2013), 'Connectivity and Communication in the Achaemenid Empire 1', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 56: 29–52.

Csardi, G., (2020), *Generate Random Graphs According to the Erdos-Renyi Model* (version 1.2.6). R. https://rdrr.io/cran/igraph/man/erdos.renyi.game.html.

Csardi, G., and T. Nepusz, (2006), 'The Igraph Software Package for Complex Network Research', *InterJournal* Complex Systems: 1695.

Curtis, J. E., and Sh. Razmjou, (2005), 'The Palace', in: J. E. Curtis and N. Tallis (eds.), *Forgotten Empire: The World of Ancient Persia*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press: 50–103.

Dabbura, I., (2018), 'K-Means Clustering: Algorithm, Applications, Evaluation Methods, and Drawbacks', *Towards Data Science* (blog). September 17, 2018. https://towardsdatascience.com/k-means-clustering-algorithm-applications-evaluation- methods-and-drawbacks-aa03e644b48a.

Digard, J.-P., (1995), 'Dog. iii. Ethnography', *Encyclopedia Iranica* 7 (5): 461–470, https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/dog#pt3.

Edelman, D. V., (2005), *The Origins of the "Second" Temple: Persian Imperial Policy and the Rebuilding of Jerusalem*. Bible World. London: Equinox.

Folmer, M., (2017), 'Bactria and Egypt: Administration as Mirrored in the Aramaic Sources', in: B. Jacobs, W. F. M. Henkelman, and M. W. Stolper (eds.), *Die Verwaltung Im Achämenidenreich / Administration in the Achaemenid Empire*, CLeO 17. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz: 413–454.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Garrison, M. B., (2017), 'Sealing Practices in Achaemenid Times', in: B. Jacobs, W. F. M. Henkelman, and M. W. Stolper (eds.), *Die Verwaltung Im Achämenidenreich / Administration in the Achaemenid Empire*, CLeO 17. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz: 517–580.

Garrison, M. B., and D. Kaptan, (2020), 'Catalogue of Bullae', in: Ch. Tuplin and J. Ma (eds.), *Aršāma and His World: The Bodlein Letters in Context*, Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2:1–45.

Gjesfjeld, E., (2015), 'Network Analysis of Archaeological Data from Hunter-Gatherers: Methodological Problems and Potential Solutions', *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 22: 182–205. https://doi.org/DOI 10.1007/s10816-014-9232-9.

Graf, D. F., (1993), 'The Persian Royal Road System in Syria-Palestine', *Transeuphratène* 6: 149–168.

Graf, D. F., (1994), 'The Persian Royal Road System', in: H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, A. Kuhrt, and M. Cool Root (eds.), *Achaemenid History VIII: Continuity and Change*, Proceedings of the Last Achaemenid History Workshop, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Leiden: Nederlands Institute voor het Nabije Oosten: 167–189.

Granovetter, M. S., (1973), 'The Strength of Weak Ties', *American Journal of Sociology* 78 (6): 1360–1380.

Grattius, (1934), 'Cynegeticon', in: *Minor Latin Poets 1*, translated by J. Wight Duff and A. M. Duff, LCL 284. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press: 143–208.

Greenacre, M., O. Nenadic, and M. Friendly, (2020), *Ca: Simple, Multiple and Joint Correspondence Analysis*. R. https://rdrr.io/cran/ca/.

Greenberg, R., and A. Kleinan, (2009), *Israeli Archaeological Activity in the West Bank 1967–2007: A Sourcebook*. Jerusalem: Ostracon.

Greenland, S., S. J. Senn, K. J. Rothman, J. B. Carlin, Ch. Poole, S. N. Goodman, and D. C. Altman, (2016), 'Statistical Tests, P Values, Confidence Intervals, and Power: A Guide to Misinterpretations', *European Journal of Epidemiology* 31: 337–50. https://doi.org/DOI 10.1007/s10654-016-0149-3.

Hallock, R. T., (1969), *Persepolis Fortification Tablets*. Oriental Institute Publications 92. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Hallock, R. T., (1978), 'Selected Fortification Texts', *Cahiers de La D. A. F. I.* 8: 109–136.

Hendrickson, M., (2007), *Arteries of Empire: An Operational Study of Transport and Communication in Angkorian Southeast Asia (9th to 15th Centuries CE)*. PhD Diss, University of Sydney. http://hdl.handle.net/2123/6135.

Henkelman, W. F. M., (2003), 'An Elamite Memorial: The *Šumar* of Cambyses and Hystaspes', in: W. Henkelman and A. Kuhrt (eds.), *A Persian Perspective: Essays in Memory of Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg*, Achaemenid History XIII. Leiden: Nederlands Institute voor het Nabije Oosten: 101–172.

Henkelman, W. F. M., (2008), *The Other Gods Who Are: Studies in Elamite-Iranian Acculturation Based on the Persepolis Fortification Texts*. Achaemenid History XIV. Leiden: Nederlands Institute voor het Nabije Oosten.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Henkelman, W. F. M., (2010), '"Consumed before the King": The Table of Darius, That of Irdabama and Irtaštuna, and That of His Satrap, Karkiš', in: by B. Jacobs and R. Rollinger (eds.), *Der Achämenidenhof / The Achaemenid Court*, Classica et Orientalia 2. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz: 667–776.

Henkelman, W. F. M., (2017), 'Imperial Structure and Imperial Paradigm: Achaemenid Administrative Structure and System across and beyond the Iranian Plateau', in: B. Jacobs, W. F. M. Henkelman, and M. W. Stolper (eds.), *Die Verwaltung Im Achämenidenreich / Administration in the Achaemenid Empire*, CLeO 17. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz: 45–256.

Henkelman, W. F. M., and B. Jacobs, (2021), 'Roads and Communication', in: B. Jacobs and R. Rollinger (eds.), *A Companion to the Achaemenid Persian Empire*, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons: 719–36.

Hinz, W., and H. Koch, (1987), *Elamisches Wörterbuch*. 2 vols. Archäologische Mitteilungen Aus Iran. Ergänzungsband 17. Wiesbaden: Reimer.

Hwang, W., Y. R. Cho, A. Zhang, and M. Ramanthan, (2006), 'Bridging Centrality: Identifying Bridging Nodes in Scale-Free Networks', in: *Proceedings of the 12th ACM SIGKDD International Conference on Knowledge Discovery and Data Mining*, New York: Association for Computing Machinery: 20–23.

Jacobs, B., W. F. M. Henkelman, and M. W. Stolper (eds.), (2017), *Die Verwaltung Im Achämenidenreich / Administration in the Achaemenid Empire*. CLeO 17. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Jarvis, A., H. I. Reuter, A. Nelson, and E. Guevara, (2008), 'Hole-Filled Seamless SRTM Data V4, International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT)', *Consortium for Spatial Information*. http://srtm.csi.cgiar.org.

Jursa, M., (1995), 'Von Vermessungen und Straßen' *Archiv Orientalni* 63: 153–158.

Jursa, M., and M. Schmidl, (2017), 'Babylonia as a Source of Imperial Revenue from Cyrus to Xerxes', in: B. Jacobs, W. F. M. Henkelman, and M. W. Stolper (eds.), *Die Verwaltung Im Achämenidenreich / Administration in the Achaemenid Empire*, CLeO 17. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz: 715–740.

Kaptan, D., (2002), *The Daskyleion Bullae*. 2 vols. Achaemenid History 12. Leiden: NINO.

Kleber, K., (ed.), (2021), *Taxation in the Achaemenid Empire: Amsterdamer Kolloquium*. CLeO 26. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Kleiss, W., (1981), 'Ein Abschnitt der achaemenidischen Konigstrasse von Pasargadae und Persepolis nach Susa, bei Naqsh-i-Rustam', *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* 14: 45–54.

Leidwanger, J., (2013), 'Modeling Distance with Time in Ancient Mediterranean Sea-faring: A GIS Application for the Interpretation of Maritime Connectivity', *Journal of Archaeological Science* 40 (8): 3302–8. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jas.2013.03.016.

Lemaire, A., (2017), 'The Idumaean Ostraca as Evidence of Local Imperial Administration', in: B. Jacobs, W. F. M. Henkelman, and M. W. Stolper (eds.), *Die Verwaltung Im Achämenidenreich / Administration in the Achaemenid Empire*, CLeO. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz: 469–488.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Levine, R. V., and A. Norenzayan, (1999), 'The Pace of Life in 31 Countries', *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 30 (2): 178–205. https://doi.org/10.1177/ 0022022199030002003.

Lipschits, O., and D. Vanderhooft, (2011), *The Yehud Stamp Impressions: A Corpus of Inscribed Impressions from Persian and Hellenistic Periods in Judah*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.

Llewellyn-Jones, L., and J. Robson, (2010), *Ctesias' History of Persia: Tales of the Orient*. Routledge Classical Translations. London: Routledge.

MacDonald, B., (2000), *East of the Jordan: Territories and Sites of the Hebrew Scriptures*. ASOR Books 6. Boston: ASOR.

Mattingly, G. L., (1996), 'The King's Highway, the Desert Highway, and Central Jordan's Kerak Plateau', *Aram* 8: 89–99.

Morris, J. "Scooter," L. Apeltsin, A. Newman, J. Baumbach, T. Wittkop, G. Su, G. Bader, and A. Tomar, (2018), *ClusterMaker2*. Cytoscape 3.6. https://apps.cytoscape.org/apps/clustermaker2.

Naveh, J., and Sh. Shaked, (2012), *Aramaic Documents from Ancient Bactria from the Khalili Collections*. London: Khalili Family Trust.

Nikzad, M., I. Rezaie, and M. Khalili, (2021), 'Dog Burials in Ancient Iran', *Iranica Antiqua* 55: 49–72.

Omidsalar, M., and T. P. Omidsalar, (1995), 'Dog. i. In Literature and Folklore', *Encyclopedia Iranica* 7 (5): 461–470, https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/dog#pt1.

Oren, E., (1982), 'Ancient Military Roads between Egypt and Cana'an', *Bulletin of the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society* 2: 20–24.

Oren, E., (1998), 'Le Nord-Sinaï à l'époque perse. Perspectives archéologiques', in: D. Valbelle and Ch. Bonnet (eds.), *Le Sinaï durant l'antiquité et le moyen âge: 4000 ans d'histoire pour un désert, Actes du colloque "Sinaï" qui s'est tenu à l'UNESCO du 19 au 21 septembre 1997*, Paris: Editions Errance: 75–82.

Persepolis Fortification Archive Project (2019) *Online Cultural and Historical Research Environment (OCHRE)*. Chicago: University of Chicago. https://voices.uchicago.edu/ochre/.

Poggio, A., (2020), *Dynastic Deeds: Hunt Scenes in the Funerary Imagery of the Achaemenid Eastern Mediterranean*. BAR International Series 2020. BAR. https://doi. org/10.30861/ 9781407356389.

Prell, Ch., (2012), *Social Network Analysis: History, Theory, and Methodology*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Robinson, R., (1977), *Ways to Move: The Geography of Networks and Accessibility*. Cambridge Topics in Geography. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Roll, I., (2009), 'Between Damascus and Megiddo: Roads and Transportation in Antiquity across the Northeastern Approaches to the Holy Land', in: L. Di Segni, Y. Hirschfield, J. Patrich, and R. Talgam (eds.), *Man near a Roman Arch. Studies Presented to Professor Yoram Tsafrir*, Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society: 1*–20*.

Roll, I., and O. Tal, (2008), 'The Route Network of Persian Period Palestine', in: H. Kühne, R. M. Czichon, and F. Janoscha Kreppner (eds.), *Proceedings of the 4th International Congress of the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz: 1:219–227.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Root, M. C., (2002), 'Animals in the Art of Ancient Iran', in: B. J. Collins (ed.), *A History of the Animal World in the Ancient Near East*, Handbuch Der Orientalistik I.64. Leiden: Brill: 169–210.

Sadeghipour, M., and F. Iravani Ghadimi, (2020), 'An Archaeological Approach to Delineate the Course of the Achaemenid Royal Road in Anatolia', *Anatolica* 46: 67–101. https://doi.org/10.2143/ANA.46.0.3288920.

Safadi, C., and F. Sturt, (2019), 'The Warped Sea of Sailing: Maritime Topographies of Space and Time for the Bronze Age Eastern Mediterranean', *Journal of Archaeological Science* 103: 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jas.2019.01.001.

Sami, A., (1966), *Persepolis: Takht-i Jamshid*. Translated by R. N. Sharp. 4th ed. Shiraz: Musavi Printing Office.

Samuels, J. T., (2016), 'A Camel Driver in the Achaemenid Persian Empire: Social Network Analysis of a Non-Elite Professional and the Persepolis Fortification Archive', *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 59 (2): 1–23.

Sapir-Hen, L., (2011), 'Dog Burials at Dor', *Near Eastern Archaeology* 74.3: 138.

Schmidt, E. F., (1953), *Persepolis I: Structures, Reliefs, Inscriptions*. Oriental Institute Publications 68. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Schmidt, E. F., (1957), *Persepolis II: Contents of the Treasury and Other Discoveries*. Oriental Institute Publications 69. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Shannon, P., A. Markiel, O. Ozier, N. S. Baliga, J. T. Wang, D. Ramage, N. Amin, B. Schwikowski, and T. Ideker, (2003), 'Cytoscape: A Software Environment for Integrated Models of Biomolecular Interaction Networks', *Genome Research* 13 (11): 2498–2504. https://doi.org/10.1101/gr.1239303.

Sims, B. G., S. Giménez, and J. Ellis-Jones, (1996), 'Equines in Rural Transport in Güinope, Honduras', *Ceiba* 37 (2): 299–305.

Skjærvø, P. O., (2003–4), 'The Antiquity of Old Avestan', *Nāme-Ye Irān Bāstān* 3 (2): 15–41.

Stern, E., (ed.) (1993, 2008), *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*. 5 vols. Jerusalem: Carta.

Stern, E., (1982), *Material Culture of the Land of the Bible in the Persian Period 538–332 B.C.* Translated by Essa Cindorf. Warminster: Aris & Philips.

Stinerock, R., (2018), *Statistics with R: A Beginner's Guide*. London: SAGE.

Stolper, M. W. (2017a), 'The Oriental Institute and the Persepolis Fortification Archive', in: B. Jacobs, W. F. M. Henkelman, and M. W. Stolper (eds.), *Die Verwaltung Im Achämenidenreich / Administration in the Achaemenid Empire*, CLeO 17. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz: xxxvii–lix.

Stolper, M. W., (2017b), 'Investigating Irregularities at Persepolis', in: B. Jacobs, W. F. M. Henkelman, and M. W. Stolper (eds.), *Die Verwaltung Im Achämenidenreich / Administration in the Achaemenid Empire*, CLeO 17. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz: 741–826.

Stronach, D., (1978), *Pasargadae: A Report on the Excavations*. Oxford: Clarendon.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Su, G., A. Kuchinsky, J. H. Morris, D. J. States, and F. Meng, (2010), 'GLay: Community Structure Analysis of Biological Networks', *Bioinfomatics* 26 (24): 3135–37. https://doi.org/10.1093/bioinformatics/btq596.

Sumner, W. M., (1986), 'Achaemenid Settlement in the Persepolis Plain', *American Journal of Archaeology* 90 (1): 3–31. https://doi.org/DOI: 10.2307/505980.

Tal, O., (2005), 'Some Remarks on the Coastal Plain of Palestine under Achaemenid Rule—an Archaeological Synopsis', in: P. Briant and R. Boucharlat (eds.), *L'archéologie de l'empire Achémémenide: Nouvelles Recherches*, Persika 6. Paris: De Boccard: 71–96.

Taylor, D. G. K., (2020), 'The Bodleian Letters: Text and Translation', in *Aršāma and his World: The Bodlein Letters in Context*, 1: The Bodleian Letters, Oxford: Oxford University Press: 21–49. = Taylor, D. G. K., (2013), 'The Arshama Letters from the Bodleian Library: Vol 2. Texts, Translations, and Glossary', Oxford. http://arshama.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/publications.

Tavernier, J., (2007), *Iranica in the Achaemenid Period (ca. 550–330 B.C.): Lexicon of Old Iranian Proper Names and Loanwords, Attested in Non-Iranian Texts*. Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 158. Leuven: Peeters.

Tavernier, J., (2017), 'The Use of Languages on the Various Levels of Administration in the Achaemenid Empire', in: B. Jacobs, W. F. M. Henkelman, and M. W. Stolper (eds.), *Die Verwaltung Im Achämenidenreich / Administration in the Achaemenid Empire*, CLeO 17. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz: 337–412.

Traag, V. A., L. Waltman, and N. J. van Eck, (2019), 'From Louvain to Leiden: Guaranteeing Well-Connected Communities', *Scientific Reports* 9: article 5233. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-019-41695-z.

Tuplin, Ch., (1997), 'Achaemenid Arithmetic: Numerical Problems in Persian History', in: *Recherches Récentes Sur l'empire Achéménide*, Topoi: Orient-Occident Supplément 1. Paris: De Boccard: 365–421. https://www.persee.fr/docAsPDF/topoi_1764-0733_1997_act_1_1_2791.pdf.

Tuplin, Ch., (2017), 'Serving the Satrap. Lower-Rank Officials Viewed through Greek and Aramaic Sources', in: B. Jacobs, W. F. M. Henkelman, and M. W. Stolper (eds.), *Die Verwaltung Im Achämenidenreich / Administration in the Achaemenid Empire*, CLeO 17. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz: 613–676.

Tuplin, Ch., (2020a), 'The Bodleian Letters: Commentary', in: Ch. Tuplin and J. Ma (eds.), *Aršāma and His World: The Bodleian Letters in Context I: The Bodleian Letters*, Oxford: Oxford University Press: 1:61–283.

Tuplin, Ch., (2020b), 'The Military Environment of Achaemenid Egypt', in: Ch. Tuplin and J. Ma (eds.), *Aršāma and His World: The Bodleian Letters in Context. Volume III, Aršāma's World*, Oxford: Oxford University Press: 291–328.

Velázquez Muñoz, J., (2012), 'Construcción y mantenimiento de los caminos reales Aqueménidas', *Herakleion* 5: 49–69.

Waerzeggers, C., (2014), 'Social Network Analysis of Cuneiform Archives—A New Approach', in: H. D. Baker and M. Jursa (eds.), *Documentary Sources in Ancient near Eastern and Greco-Roman Economic History: Methodology and Practice*, Oxford: Oxbow: 207–233.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Waerzeggers, C., (2015), *Marduk-Remanni. Local Networks and Imperial Politics in Achaemenid Babylonia*. Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 233. Leuven: Peeters.

Wapnish, P., and B. Hesse, (1993), ‘Pampered Pooches or Plain Pariahs? The Ashkelon Dog Burials’, *Biblical Archaeologist* 56: 55–80.

Whitley, Th. G., and L. M. Hicks, (2003), ‘A Geographic Information Systems Approach to Understanding Potential Prehistoric and Historic Travel Time Corridors’, *Southeastern Archaeology* 22 (1): 77–91.

Zertal, A., (2004), *Manasseh Hill Country Survey I: The Shechem Syncline*. CHANE 21/1. Leiden: Brill.

Zertal, A., (2008), *Manasseh Hill Country Survey II: Eastern Valleys and the Fringes of the Desert*. CHANE 21/2. Leiden: Brill.

Zertal, A., and N. Mirkham, (2016), *Manasseh Hill Country Survey 3: From From Naḥal ‘Iron to Naḥal Shechem*. CHANE 21/3. Leiden: Brill.

Zertal Z”l, A., and S. Bar, (2017), *Manasseh Hill Country Survey 4: From Nahal Bezeq to the Sartaba*. CHANE 21/4. Leiden: Brill.

Zertal Z”l, A., and S. Bar, (2019), *The Manasseh Hill Country Survey 5: The Middle Jordan Valley, from Wadi Fasael to Wadi ‘Aujah*. CHANE 21/5. Leiden: Brill.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Yehud / Judea

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Christophe Nihan

The High Priest of Jerusalem and Ptolemaic Administration in the Southern Levant

Once Again on Josephus' Account of the Tobiads

1. Introduction

Josephus' account of the Tobiads in Book 12 of his *Jewish Antiquities* (*Ant.* 12.154–236) has long been regarded as one of our main sources for Ptolemaic administration in the southern Levant in the second half of the third century BCE. What historical information, precisely, may legitimately be generated from this complex source remains however a disputed issue. Although scholars have tended to agree that Josephus used a source (or sometimes even several sources), it is no less clear that this source has been narratively embellished as well as amplified with various biblical parallels.[1] Furthermore, the scholarly consensus was challenged by D.R. Schwartz in a 1998 essay,[2] in which he claimed that Josephus' story belongs to the first decades of the second century, and reflects the political and administrative situation following the dowry pact between Antiochos III and Ptolemy V in 193 BCE. Although this view was soon criticized by G. Fuks,[3] it has since been adopted by some scholars.[4] The present essay contributes to a reexamination of these issues by focusing on the episode at the beginning of Josephus' account of the Tobiads, narrating the conflict between the high priest Onias, king Ptolemy and Joseph, son of Tobias, concerning the payment of the royal tribute. There are two main reasons for this choice: firstly, the episode is instrumental for the dating of the first part of the account; and secondly, it is arguably indicative of a broader change in the Ptolemaic administration of the southern Levant in the second half of the third century BCE. The essay begins by reassessing the problem with Josephus'

1 Compare, e. g., the comments on this issue by Grabbe, *History of the Jews*, 75–78, esp. 76. For a discussion of biblical parallels in Josephus' account of the Tobiads, see, especially, Gera, "Credibility"; note, however, that some of the biblical parallels that he identifies are more evident than others. On the source used by Josephus in his account of the Tobiads, see also below, §2.

2 Schwartz, "Josephus' Tobiads."

3 Fuks, "Josephus' Tobiads Again"; see also the response to Fuks' argument by Schwartz, "Once Again on Tobiad Chronology."

4 See, *inter alia*, Sartre, "Histoire et mémoire(s) des Maccabées"; Honigman, *Tales of High Priests*, 342–343; Gorre, "Des temples, des hommes et des dieux," 90–91.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

chronology, before reexamining the historical information preserved in Josephus' account and its larger implications in the context of the late third century BCE.

2. Onias, Joseph and the Dowry Pact of 193 BCE: Disentangling Josephus' Chronology

The coherence and the chronology of Josephus' account of the Tobiads are notoriously complex, and this is particularly true for the beginning of this narrative. The account is placed in chapter 4 of Book 12. It follows immediately after the account of the conquest of the cities of Coele-Syria by Antiochos III during the Fifth Syrian War (202–200 BCE), which culminates at the end of chapter 3 with the royal decree concerning Jerusalem.[5] At the beginning of chapter 4, Josephus relates the marriage between Ptolemy Epiphanes and the daughter of king Antiochos, Cleopatra, noting in particular that the dowry consisted of the taxes collected over Coele-Syria.[6] He briefly records that, at this time, the Samaritans "did much mischief to the Jews", raiding their territory and taking away slaves,[7] and that "this happened under the high priesthood of Onias" (ἐγένετο δὲ ταῦτα ἐπὶ ἀρχιερέως Ὀνίου). After a brief introduction of Onias himself, Josephus relates in more details his conflict with king Ptolemy. According to this account, Onias had angered king Ptolemy by refusing to pay the tribute (φόρος) which previous high priests of Jerusalem had paid before him.[8] As a consequence of Onias' non-payment, Ptolemy sends an envoy with a message threatening to turn the land of the Judeans into a military colony if the tribute is not paid, which Onias nonetheless declines to do. At this point of the narrative, Josephus introduces Joseph, son of Tobias, and nephew of the high priest Onias through his mother. Joseph rebukes Onias for endangering the whole community through his refusal to pay tribute to the king of Egypt. He also suggests that Onias goes to the king to plead his cause and to negotiate the remission of part or all of his tribute, which Onias however declines to do.[9] Following this, Joseph asks Onias the permission to go himself to the king "on behalf of the nation" (ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἔθνους), to what Onias agrees.[10] The subsequent narrative, in which the high priest Onias no longer plays any active role, recounts how, after arriving in Egypt, Joseph managed to gain the sympathy of Ptolemy,[11] and eventually won the bid

5 *Ant*. 12.129–153.
6 *Ant*. 12.154–155.
7 *Ant*. 12.156.
8 *Ant*. 12.158.
9 *Ant*. 12.162–163.
10 *Ant*. 12.163–164.
11 Ant. 12.167–174.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

for the right to farm taxes in all of Coele-Syria by promising to the king twice the amount announced by the other bidders.[12]

The main issue with the beginning of this account concerns the relationship between Onias' conflict with Ptolemy over the payment of the tribute to the king and the dowry pact between Antiochos III and Ptolemy V Epiphanes, which took place in 193 BCE. In general, scholars have assumed that Josephus' chronology was mistaken, since the story appears to describe events taking place in the last decades of the third century BCE, at least as far as Joseph, son of Tobias, is concerned.[13] These scholars also observed that this conclusion is supported by some of the manuscripts for Josephus' *Antiquities*, which mention at 12.158 that the conflict surrounding the non-payment of the tribute took place under the reign of "Euergetes, who is the father of Philopator" (τὸν εὐεργέτην ὅς ἦν πατὴρ τοῦ φιλοπάτορος).[14] This indication would place the conflict, and the beginning of Joseph's career as tax farmer, as early as under the reign of Ptolemy III (246–222/221 BCE). In his seminal essay from 1998, Schwartz argued on the contrary that Josephus' chronology should be taken seriously. He notes, in particular, that Josephus appears to have good information regarding the dowry pact from 193 BCE, and that the tradition according to which the dowry of Cleopatra, daughter of Antiochos III, consisted in a portion of the income of Coele-Syria is confirmed by other sources like Appian and Porphyry (*apud* Jerome) and is therefore arguably correct.[15] Based on this, Schwartz argues that Josephus' chronology for the Tobiads does not need to be changed. Namely, the dowry pact of 193 BCE conferred to Ptolemy V the rights to continue collecting the revenues of Coele-Syria, despite the fact that the province was no longer under his control. The collection of the royal tax implies a tax farmer, which would be Joseph, son of Tobias. In this interpretation, the whole story of the Tobiads took place under Ptolemy V Epiphanes (204–180 BCE). The mention of Ptolemy III Euergetes in some manuscripts would reflect a later tradition, which in turn gave rise to the modern fiction that Josephus' account of the Tobiads should be located in the third century BCE.[16]

Schwartz's analysis is not without merits, especially as regards his interpretation of Josephus' account of the dowry pact. Nonetheless, the reconstruction proposed faces several significant difficulties, some of which have already been highlighted

12 Ant. 12.175–179.

13 See, *inter alia*, Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews*, 128; Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 268–269; Goldstein, "Tales of the Tobiads"; Schunck, "Hoherpriester", 501–502. For further references, see Brutti, *The Development of the High Priesthood*, 148–149.

14 Manuscripts PLAW: see Marcus, *Josephus*, VII, 82,2.

15 Schwartz, "Josephus' Tobiads," 51. See Appian, *Syr*. 5; Jerome, *In Danielem* 11.17.

16 Ibid., 53–55.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

by G. Fuks in his 2001 response to Schwartz's argument.[17] A first problem has to do with the reference to the high priest Onias. This Onias is presented by Josephus himself as the nephew of the high priest Eleazar, brother of Simon,[18] and the father of another high priest named Simon.[19] Therefore, he can only be Onias II, son of Simon I and father of Simon II, since a Simon III is unknown.[20] Onias II was the grandson of Onias I, who was high priest of Jerusalem under Ptolemy I. According to Josephus,[21] Onias I was already in office at the time of the conquest of the Levant by Alexander in 332 BCE. Due to the lack of sources, we do not know when, precisely, Onias I was succeeded by his son Simon I, nor when Simon's son Onias (= Onias II) was born; presumably, both events took place during the first half of the third century BCE.[22] Furthermore, we may infer from Ben Sira's poem known as "Simon's Praise"[23] that Simon II, the son of Onias II, was already high priest in Jerusalem at the beginning of the second century BCE, and presumably some time earlier. According to another source, 3 Maccabees,[24] Simon II was already high priest when Ptolemy IV Philopator visited Jerusalem following his victory at the battle of Raphia in 217 BCE. In this case, the transition from Onias II to Simon II would already have taken place under Ptolemy IV. At any rate, there is every reason to believe that, at the time of the dowry pact in 193 BCE, Onias II had long been succeeded by his son Simon II.

Moreover, the dating of the Tobiad story in the second century BCE is not only inconsistent with the chronology for Onias, it is also inconsistent with the

17 Fuks, "Josephus' Tobiads Again." For further discussion of Schwartz's thesis, see also Brutti, *The Development of the High Priesthood*, 149–152; Grabbe, *History of the Jews*, 77; most recently Gonzalez, *Guerre et prophétie en Judée*, 284–288.

18 *Ant.* 12.157.

19 *Ant.* 12.237.

20 Schwartz, who had initially ignored this issue in his 1998 essay, addresses it in the context of his response to Fuks: cf. Schwartz, "Once Again on Tobiad Chronology," 149–150. However, his attempt to challenge the identification of the high priest Onias in the account of the Tobiads with Onias II is unconvincing. Schwartz himself eventually acknowledges the possibility that Onias is in effect Onias II (Ibid., 150).

21 *Ant.* 11.347.

22 Onias I may presumably be identified with the high priest Yoḥanan, whose name figures on the Hebrew legend of a small silver fractal coin (YWḤNN HKHN). According to the analysis H. Gitler and C. Lorber the coin should be dated to the end of the fourth century BCE, which implies that Onias I was still in office at this time: Gitler and Lorber, "New Chronology," 69–70; Tal, "Greek Coinage," 257. In this case, the transition from Onias I to Simon I must have taken place somewhere between the end of the fourth and the early third century BCE.

23 Sir 50:1-21.

24 3 Macc 2.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

chronology for Joseph, son of Tobias himself.[25] Josephus mentions twice (at 12.186 and 12.224) that Joseph, son of Tobias, was the tax farmer for Coele-Syria during no less than 22 years. Josephus also mentions that Joseph was too old to celebrate the birth of one of Ptolemy's V sons in Alexandria, which is why he sent his son Hyrcan to replace him,[26] and that he died in the reign of Seleukos IV (187–175 BCE). Ptolemy V's eldest son, Ptolemy VI, was born in 186 BCE, and Joseph must have died at the beginning of the reign of Seleukos I, since Josephus tells us that his son Hyrcan was able to live for seven years in Transjordany before committing suicide upon Antiochos IV's accession to the throne in 175 BCE. All in all, this would place Joseph's death at some point between 186 (the date of the birth of Ptolemy VI) and 180 BCE. Even if Josephus' chronology did not follow the same principle as ours, it is impossible to reconcile these indications with a reconstruction situating the beginning of Joseph's activity as tax farmer *after* the dowry pact of 193 BCE.[27] If Joseph's death is situated between 186 and 180 BCE, his activities as tax farmer must have begun long before the dowry pact, and even before the Fifth Syrian War in 202 BCE. This conclusion is entirely consistent with the classical observation that the account of Joseph's farming activity presupposes a situation in which the Ptolemies still enjoyed military and administrative control over the southern Levant.[28] For instance, Josephus recounts how Joseph uses the military force provided by the Ptolemies in order to compel the citizens of Askelon to pay the royal tribute.[29] This episode makes good sense before the Fifth Syrian War, but hardly afterwards. The dowry pact of 193 BCE arguably implied that Antiochos III shared the revenues of Coele-Syria with Ptolemy V,[30] but not that he would have granted full military and administrative control over the region to the Egyptian

25 This part of the argument is indebted to the research of my former doctoral student, Hervé Gonzalez: see Gonzalez, *Guerre et prophétie en Judée*, 287.

26 *Ant*. 12.196.

27 Schwartz, "Josephus' Tobiads," 57–58, argues that the reference to Joseph's career as lasting for twenty-two years would not belong to Josephus' source but would be his own invention. While this view is possible in principle, the arguments advanced by Schwartz are not especially strong. What is more, this assumption does not solve the problem raised by Josephus' chronology, but only reinforces it.

28 See, e. g., Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews*, 128, 130; more recently Grabbe, *History of the Jews*, 77: "If we ignore Josephus' framework and simply read the story, the setting is clearly Ptolemaic rule of Palestine."

29 *Ant*. 12.181–182.

30 See on this now especially the study by Kaye and Amitay, "Kleopatra's Dowry." Building on Schwartz's 1998 essay, Kaye and Amitay provide a detailed and thorough argument for the historical character of Josephus' account of the dowry pact between Antiochos and Ptolemy. See also Gonzalez, *Guerre et Prophétie en Judée*, 284–286, with further references.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

king.[31] In fact, the opposite is expressly stated by some of the ancient authors who report the tradition of Cleopatra's dowry consisting of Coele-Syria, such as Polybius, according to whom Coele-Syria and Phoenicia were ruled by the Seleucids since the victory of Antiochos III at Panium in 200 BCE.[32]

In short, the problem caused by the fact that Josephus' account of the Tobiads in *Ant.* 12.4. is prefaced with a reference to the dowry pact between Antiochos and Ptolemy cannot be explained away by locating the entire Tobiad story in the early second century BCE. This solution is inconsistent with several aspects of the story, and the only possible conclusion is that Joseph, son of Tobias, must have started his career as tax farmer *before* the Fifth Syrian War. Does this mean that we are back to the traditional scholarly view? Not necessarily so. The traditional scholarly view was based on two related assumptions: firstly, that Josephus used a source in his account of the Tobiads; and secondly, that he misconstrued the chronology of his source, placing the account after the dowry pact of 193 BCE rather than before. The first assumption is certainly correct, not the least because various elements in the narrative differ from Josephus' usual style and ideology.[33] The second assumption, however, is not necessary. As N. Kaye and O. Amitay have convincingly argued in an article from 2015, chronology is not the only organizing principle that is used by Josephus, and there are several examples in Book 12—and of course elsewhere in his *Antiquities*— where Josephus departs from chronology "in favor of other organizational principles".[34] In other words, just because Josephus places the story of the Tobiads after the dowry pact does not yet imply that he is considering a chronological succession between these events. Kaye and Amitay conclude their detailed discussion of the evidence with the following statement:

> Thus, the fact that the datum [the dowry pact] precedes the TT [Tales of the Tobiads] in Josephus' work is not enough to argue that the events recorded in the datum also precede the events recorded in the TT.[35]

---

31 As correctly noted by Schwartz, "Josephus' Tobiads," 51: "Josephus refers, as we have seen, not to rule in general but only to taxes."

32 Polybius 28. 1. 3.

33 With only few exceptions, there is a broad agreement regarding the view that Josephus used an earlier source. Even scholars who are critical of Josephus' chronology as well as of many details in the account do not dispute the existence of such a source: compare, e. g., Gera, *Judaea and Mediterranean Politics*, 54–55. This source has often been dated to the second century BCE, although a slightly later date in the first half of the first century has also been advanced. The earlier theory according to which Josephus made use of not one but two sources (for this view, see, e. g., Momigliano, "I Tobiadi") tends to be rejected in more recent studies.

34 Kaye and Amitay, "Kleopatra's Dowry," 136–141.

35 Kaye and Amitay, "Kleopatra's Dowry," 140.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

A closer look at the wording used by Josephus in the opening paragraphs of chapter 4 confirms this insight. As a matter of fact, Josephus does *not* say that the story of the Tobiads is chronologically posterior to the dowry pact between Antiochos III and Ptolemy V. He begins his account in chapter 4 with the dowry pact between Antiochos III and Ptolemy V because it continues his narrative of these two kings in chapter 3; in this regard, as H. Gonzalez rightly observes, one could say that the dowry pact forms as much the conclusion of chapter 3 as the beginning of chapter 4.[36] Josephus then synchronizes the dowry pact with the high priesthood of Onias II, who also happens to be a protagonist in the subsequent account of the Tobiads. In other words, what connects the dowry pact with the narrative of the Tobiads is that they both took place, according to Josephus, when Onias II was high priest in Jerusalem. In this narrative and historiographical pattern, the story of Joseph son of Tobias can be placed at any point during the high priesthood of Onias. It does not have to be posterior to the dowry pact, and can in fact predate it by many years. In this regard, the manuscript tradition at 12.158 identifying the Egyptian king with Ptolemy III Euergetes is perfectly consistent with Josephus' narration, whether this tradition is genuine or not.

Summing up the discussion so far: the classical interpretation locating the Joseph's career as tax farmer in the last decades of the third century BCE is almost certainly correct. Whether Joseph began his career under Ptolemy III or Ptolemy IV is difficult to say on the basis of the evidence provided by Josephus himself, but it was certainly before the reign of Ptolemy V and the Fifth Syrian War. On the other hand, the classical assumption that Josephus misconstrued the chronology of his source is unnecessary. Contrary to a scholarly fallacy which goes back to M. Holleaux,[37] Josephus' presentation of the events does not automatically indicate that he was locating the story of Joseph after the dowry pact of 193 BCE. Josephus' only misconstrual in this presentation concerns the synchronization between the dowry pact and the high priesthood of Onias II, since the evidence discussed above indicates that it was in fact his son Simon II who was high priest of Jerusalem at the time of the dowry pact. However, this misconstrual is consistent with Josephus' general chronology for Onias, since elsewhere in Book 12 he synchronizes Onias II's death with the death of Antiochos III and the accession of Seleukos IV to the throne in 187 BCE.[38]

36 Gonzalez, *Guerre et prophétie en Judée*, 287.

37 Holleaux, "Un passage." On the lasting influence of Holleaux's argument for reading of the dowry pact and the account of the Tobiads as forming a chronological sequence, see the discussion by Kaye and Amitay, "Kleopatra's Dowry," 136–141.

38 See *Ant.* 12.224–225.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

3. Josephus' Account of the Tobiads, the High Priest of Jerusalem and Ptolemaic Administration in Judea

Once it has been clarified that Josephus' account of the Tobiads goes back to the second half of the third century, and not simply to the first half of the second, the question is what information, if any, we can gather from this source regarding the administration of the southern Levant in general, and Judea in particular. Some authors, like B. Eckardt, while accepting the traditional chronology for Josephus' account, have expressed skepticism about its value as a historical source.[39] This caution is entirely understandable in light of some earlier reconstructions based on this account, which were highly optimistic—if not somewhat naïve—regarding its historical value. In my opinion, nonetheless, and with due methodological caution, some limited information can be gathered from Josephus' account if we analyze Josephus' language carefully and compare it with what we know from other sources about the administration of the southern Levant in the Ptolemaic period. In the limits of this essay, I will focus on the story of the conflict between the high priest Onias and Ptolemy.

According to Josephus' account, Onias caused the anger of king Ptolemy because he refused to pay the φόρος, "tribute".[40] Josephus specifies that this tribute was paid by the high priest "on behalf of the people" (ὑπὲρ τοῦ λαοῦ), that it amounted to twenty talents of silver, and that it was paid by Onias' forefather "on their own revenues" (ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων). Later, when Joseph, son of Tobias, who is also the nephew of Onias, rebukes his uncle for withholding the money for the tribute he reminds him that it is in exchange for this tribute that Onias received (apparently from the king) the προστασία over the people (τοῦ λαοῦ τὴν προστασίαν) as well as the charge of the high priesthood (καὶ τῆς ἀρχιερατικῆς τιμῆς).[41] The reason provided by Josephus for Onias' behaviour is that the high priest was "small-minded and passionately fond of money" (οὗτος ὁ Ὀνίας βραχὺς ἦν τὴν διάνοιαν καὶ χρημάτων ἥττων),[42] to the point of willing to endanger the whole community instead of paying the tribute to the king.[43]

There is little consensus regarding the historical information that can be generated from this account. In general, scholars have agreed that the account retains some sort of historical information regarding the high priesthood of Jerusalem and its

39 Eckhardt, *Ethnos und Herrschaft*, 163–164.

40 *Ant*. 12.158.

41 *Ant*. 12.161–162.

42 *Ant*. 12.158.

43 *Ant*. 12.162.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

implication in the local fiscal system,[44] yet reconstructions vary greatly. The main area of (relative) consensus appears to concern the reference to the tribute paid by the high priest annually, as well as the suspension of this tribute under the high priest Onias, which have often been considered historical.[45] Beyond that, however, the relevance of this description regarding issues such as the political status of the high priest, his role in the local administration, as well as the involvement of the royal (Ptolemaic) administration remain disputed. In order to shed some light on these issues, a closer analysis of some key terms in the narrative is required.

According to this description, the high priest Onias is presented as enjoying a form of communal leadership which is designated in 12.162 with the expression προστασία τοῦ λαοῦ. Several scholars have proposed that the προστασία τοῦ λαοῦ would denote here an official function in the Ptolemaic administration.[46] Yet, as noted by other authors,[47] this is implausible. The προστάτες was introduced in the Ptolemaic administration in order to translate a Demotic term meaning "the man who draws up the inventory" (*pA rmT nty Sn*), denoting a royal fiscal administrator representing the interests of the king in a sanctuary.[48] However, this can certainly not be the meaning intended for the use of προστασία in Josephus' account of the Tobiads. The expression προστασία τοῦ λαοῦ for the high priest Onias in 12.162 clearly indicates that he is in charge of representing the interests of the community, not of the king.[49] Furthermore, later in the account, in 12.167, Joseph himself is

44 A partial exception is Gera, "On the Credibility", 34–36; however, even he acknowledges that the story of the Tobiads is well-informed about Ptolemaic administrative practices. For a critique of Gera's minimalist approach toward Josephus' Tobiads account, see, e. g., Pfeiffer, "Die Familie des Tubias".

45 So already Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews*, 127, who summarizes the historical kernel underlying this part of the account as follows: "Under King Ptolemy of Egypt […] the High Priest Onias refused to deliver the large tribute which he paid annually to the Egyptian sovereign. The king, angered, sent his envoy to Jerusalem with a severe message and the threat that, if Onias did not pay, he would divide Jewish territory into cleruchies and send troops to Jerusalem as military settlers. Despite these threats Onias refused to yield and maintained his former decision". Cf. similarly Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 1.27. Further, e. g., Schunck, "Hoherpriester", 501 with n. 12.

46 Thus, e. g., Büchler, *Tobiaden*, 82; Momigliano, "I Tobiadi". Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews*, 132, likewise argued that the office of προστάτες involved the right to levy taxes. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 27, correctly observes that the προστασία corresponds to the representation of the people's interest, not the crown's, but nonetheless maintains that this would be an "office" within the royal administration. There is, however, no evidence for the existence of such an office. For a similar view, see, e. g., Schunck, "Hoherpriester", 500. The notion that the προστασία would effectively correspond to some sort of imperial office, however defined, can still be found in various recent studies: see, e. g., Grabbe, "Governance", 79; Brutti, *Development*, 252.

47 See, e. g., Eckhardt, *Ethnos und Herrschaft*, 162 n. 40.

48 See Gorre and Honigman, "Kings, Taxes and High Priests", esp. 113–114.

49 *Contra* Brutti, *Development*, 252, who follows Goldstein, "Tales of the Tobiads", 87.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

designated as προστάτες when he acts as a representative of the people of Jerusalem before the king. It is clear, therefore, that the terms προστασία and προστάτες are used here in a non-technical and non-administrative sense, to denote a form of communal leadership. This conclusion is consistent, in addition, with the fact that προστασία is apparently used synonymously in 12.163 with ἄρχειν, a general term likewise denoting here some form of unspecified "leadership" over the local community.

Other scholars, for their part, have denied any sort of historical relevance to the use of the terms προστασία and προστάτες in this account, on the basis of the observation—in itself correct—that προστασία is Josephus' favourite term to denote all kinds of leadership among the Jews.[50] B. Eckhardt concludes from this that the use of the expression προστασία τοῦ λαοῦ for Onias II in *Ant*. 12.162 is Josephus' creation and is devoid of historical value ("eine zeitlose Konzeption des Josephus").[51] However, he fails to discuss at this point the fact that the use of the expression προστασία τοῦ λαοῦ has a parallel in the description found in Diodorus, *Library* 40.3.5, where the high priest is already presented as enjoying the προστασία τοῦ πλήθους. Both the expression προστασία τοῦ λαοῦ in Josephus' account of Onias and the expression προστασία τοῦ πλήθους in Diodorus description of the high priest of the Jews are reminiscent of the expression προστασία τοῦ δήμου in the Classical literature. The latter expression, προστασία τοῦ δήμου, has been used in Greek ethnographic traditions since Herodotus to denote local rulers or tyrants (in the Greek sense of this term).[52] Presumably, this is also the case with the expressions προστασία τοῦ λαοῦ and προστασία τοῦ πλήθους applied to the high priest of Jerusalem. The fact that this idiom is already found in Diodorus indicates that it predates Josephus; furthermore, since Diodorus himself is using a source in his description of the high priest (though probably not Hecateus of Abdera, as commonly assumed),[53] the association of the προστασία with the high priest is probably not Diodorus' invention either but goes back to an older tradition. Taking this evidence together, it seems that the association of the high priest of Jerusalem with the προστασία, used with the general meaning of "communal leadership", is

50 See on this already Schwartz, "Jewish Constitutions".

51 Eckhardt, *Ethnos und Herrschaft*, 162 n. 40.

52 See Herodotus, Hist., 3.82.4. It is then used on several occasions in the work of Thucydides. See on this, e. g., Wallace, "Practice of Politics".

53 For a recent discussion of this issue, with additional references, see Kratz, "Greek Historians". The nature of the source used by Diodorus in Library 40.3.5. would require a longer discussion than can be provided here. Besides, we need to consider the possibility that Diodorus did not use a single source (as Kratz and other still assume), but multiple sources, as per the standard practice for Greek historians.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

not Josephus' invention but belongs to a literary convention used to describe this figure in texts written in Greek during the Hellenistic period.

A further issue has to do with the φόρος, "tribute", which according to Josephus' account the high priest had to pay annually. As noted above, it has often been assumed that this motif is historical; however, it is unclear what this tribute consisted of. Because the φόρος is said to be "on behalf of" or "concerning" the people (ὑπὲρ τοῦ λαοῦ), it has been argued that it would represent the tribute over the entire territory of Judea corresponding to the annual farming tax levied for the Ptolemies.[54] This view is still found in a 2016 article by A. Monson, who tends to interpret Josephus' description of Onias as indicating that he was responsible for the farming of the tax for all of Judea.[55] However, as other authors have already observed, this view is unlikely for several reasons. To begin with, as noted by V. Tcherikover, the amount mentioned for the φόρος annually paid by the high priest (twenty talents of silver) seems to be too low to represent the annual tax levied on the province of Judea.[56] By comparison, Joseph claims to be able to levy 16,000 talents for the whole of Coele-Syria, which is presented as the double of the usual tax.[57] Furthermore, the right to farm tax was given to officials appointed by the Ptolemaic administration, yet there is no evidence in the account to suggest that the high priest of Jerusalem had any official role in the royal administration. As noted above, the term προστασία is used in a non-administrative sense, and has nothing to do with the right to farm tax for the royal administration. Likewise, the fact that the tribute is denoted with the term φόρος, which is already used in 12.155 for the tribute of Coele-Syria brought by Cleopatra as a dowry, does not prove anything. As shown by B. Chankowski, in the third and second centuries BCE this term had lost much of its specificity and could be used for very different kinds of tributes.[58]

It is very likely, therefore, that the account has in view here not the annual tax levied on the province of Judea, but a much more limited tax levied on the temple of Jerusalem.[59] This conclusion explains why it is the high priest, specifically, which was in charge of paying this tax. Furthermore, although this point has not always

54 See, e. g., Bickerman, *Jews in the Greek Age*, 144; similarly Jagersma, *History*, 26.

55 Monson, "The Jewish high priesthood for sale," 22. I thank my colleague Sylvie Honigman for drawing my attention to this important article.

56 Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews*, 459 n. 39; cf. also more recently VanderKam, *Joshua*, 179.

57 *Ant*. 12.175–176. Whatever the reality of these numbers, there is at any rate a clear disproportion within the account with the twenty talents mentioned as the φόρος of the high priest in 12.158.

58 Chankowski, "Catégories du vocabulaire", 325; cf. also on this point Kaye and Amitay, "Kleopatra's Dowry", 147 n. 64. Besides, as discussed above (§ 2), the dowry pact was presumably not in the source used by Josephus for the Tobiads.

59 For this view, see already Bagnall, *Administration*, 20; further, e. g., Rooke, *Zadok's Heirs*, 259.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

been correctly noted, it is important to observe that the tax is said to be paid by the high priest "on his own income" (ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων). This suggests that the tax was actually paid by the high priest to the royal administration in exchange for the permission to manage the income generated by the temple, including sacrifices, tithes, votives, donations, local taxes, as well as the various services for which the priests in the temple were paid by the local population. This interpretation explains why the φόρος can be simultaneously described as being paid on the own revenues of Onias as well as "on behalf of the people" (ὑπὲρ τοῦ λαοῦ): namely, with his tribute the high priest transferred to the royal administration a portion of his income derived from the temple's economy, itself driven by the local population in Jerusalem and the province. In other words, the φόρος bought to the high priest the right to continue managing the temple under the Ptolemaic administration. While we must be careful not to project too quickly the administrative situation prevailing in Egypt under the Ptolemies over the southern Levant, this arrangement is nonetheless strikingly similar to what is documented for Egyptian temples in the third century BCE, where high priestly offices were similarly bought from the crown in the form of an annual tax paid by the office holder.[60] The account also states that this φόρος was already paid by Onias' forefathers,[61] suggesting that this fiscal arrangement apparently predates Onias II. How long this fiscal agreement goes back, and when it was initiated, is difficult to say. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to think that already Onias I must have had to pay some form of tribute to the Ptolemaic administration when Ptolemy I secured the control of Jerusalem and its territory at the end of the third century BCE, even though the fiscal system was presumably not as developed as it later became at the time of Onias II, under Ptolemy III and IV.

This reconstruction implies the existence of not one, but at least two taxation systems in the province of Judea, one representing the national tribute collected by the Ptolemaic administration and the other consisting of a temple tax annually paid by the high priest. It is unclear whether and to what extent this dual system has its origins in the Persian period. The claim by A. Lemaire that the temple of Jerusalem was already collecting something like a "poll tax" in the fourth century BCE is not so much based on epigraphic evidence as on a rather narrow reading of some biblical texts, like Neh 10.[62] On the other hand, there is some limited evidence for the growing role of the temple of Jerusalem in the administration of Judea in the fourth century BCE,[63] so that the possibility that the temple was already involved

60 See on this, e. g., Vandorpe, "Temples and Tax Law in Ptolemaic Egypt".

61 *Ant*. 12.158.

62 See Lemaire, "Administration in Fourth-Century B.C.E. Judah," 58–61.

63 In particular, the stamp impressions from Yehud from the fourth century BCE (types 13 and 14) show a clear increase in the number of stamps found in Jerusalem, in comparison to stamp impressions

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

at that time in the collection of some kind of tax cannot be completely excluded either. At any rate, it is tempting to relate the temple tax mentioned by Josephus for the Ptolemaic period with the series of Judean silver coins for that period, which have been extensively analysed by H. Gitler and C. Lorber.[64] One significant feature of these coins is the fact that they are exclusively made of silver, not of bronze as is the case elsewhere in the Ptolemaic empire. As Gitler and Lorber observe, this strongly suggests that these coins were used neither for the expenses of the Ptolemaic administration in the province nor for trade with neighbouring regions but for local excahnges. Not only does this point to a separate fiscal system, but it is likely that such silver coins were used, perhaps even primarily, for payments to the temple.[65] As various authors have remarked, the use of silver is consistent with the prescription found in Deut 14:25, according to which silver must be used for all payments to the temple.[66] Furthermore, several texts of the Hebrew Bible refer to a silver shekel of the sanctuary,[67] which was used for taxes and donations to the temple. Although these texts are somewhat earlier (i. e., from the fourth century BCE),[68] this silver shekel of the sanctuary continued to be used during the third century BCE and presumably corresponds to the Judean silver coinage at that time. Most likely, the tax of "twenty talents of silver" mentioned by Josephus in 12.158 was directly withdrawn every year by the high priest on the temple's treasury.

Summing up the discussion so far: A careful analysis of Josephus' account suggests that the following information can be generated from it. In the second half of the third century BCE, under Ptolemy III and Ptolemy IV, the high priest of Jerusalem – namely, Onias II – was regarded as the local ruler in Jerusalem. This

---

from the earlier period (so-called "early types"). This finding points to an increased role of Jerusalem in the administration of the province—even though Jerusalem's role apparently remained secondary to that of Ramat Raḥel, the seat of the governor of the province—which suggests, in turn, an increased role for the temple in the administration of the province. See Lipschits and Vanderhooft, *Yehud Stamp Impressions*, 253–583. This conclusion is corroborated, at least in part, by the small silver coin with the inscription YWḤNN HKHN, dating from the early Ptolemaic period (see Gitler and Lorber, "New Chronology," 69–70, and the discussion above n. 22), which indicates that, by the end of the fourth century BCE, the high priest of Jerusalem could act as minting authority, at least temporarily.

64 Gitler and Lorber, "Ptolemaic Coins".

65 Gitler and Lorber, "Ptolemaic Coins", 4–5.

66 See Ronen, "Some Observations", 29–30; also Gonzalez, "Contexte historique", 34, who aptly notes that this may explain the superior purity of the Judean silver coins.

67 See Exod 30:13, 24; 38:24, 25, 26; Lev 5:15; 27:3, 25; Num 3:47. That this shekel was made of silver is indicated by Exod 38:25 and Lev 5:15.

68 Lemaire, "Administration", 359–360, traces the origins of this silver shekel back to Nehemiah in the fifth century, but he nonetheless acknowledges that the texts of the Pentateuch reflect the administrative situation in the fourth century BCE.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

position corresponds to the fact that the office of the governor (*peḥāh*) was apparently discontinued at some point under Ptolemy I,[69] with the consequence that the high priest de facto remained the highest local authority in the province. This status did not confer to him any official role in the royal, Ptolemaic administration, and it is unlikely that his authority extended significantly beyond Jerusalem and its immediate surroundings. In passing, this conclusion is also consistent with the complete omission of the high priest in the Zeno papyri. As local leader, the high priest paid a tribute to the Ptolemaic administration, in exchange for the authorization to manage the temple's incomes. In this respect, the royal administration was not directly taxing the temple, but rather the charge, or the office, corresponding to the priestly management of the temple, in keeping with the practice documented elsewhere in Egypt. Apparently, this fiscal arrangement predates Onias II, and may go back to Onias I.

4. The Termination of Onias' Tribute: Context and Causes

What remains to be explained, therefore, is why Onias II stopped paying the tribute to the royal administration. Josephus himself explains that Onias stopped paying the tribute because he was "narrow-minded" and "passionately fond of money" (οὗτος ὁ Ὀνίας βραχὺς ἦν τὴν διάνοιαν καὶ χρημάτων ἥττων).[70] In general, modern scholars have not accepted this explanation. Nonetheless, they have often assumed that the account would preserve historical information, in that the *initiative* for the termination of the tribute went back to Onias himself. Tcherikover, in particular, developed a far-reaching theory which had a lasting impact on scholarship, according to which the non-payment of the tribute was a deliberate move on the part of Onias, who sought to use Ptolemy III's recent military drawbacks against Seleukos II Callunicus, including the loss of Damascus, in order to free himself from the obligation to pay an annual tribute.[71] This theory, in turn, gave rise to the view that Onias II and his son Simon II would have been the leaders of an anti-Ptolemaic, pro-Seleukid movement in Jerusalem, which was eventually rewarded when Antiochos III conquered Jerusalem in the context of the Fifth Syrian

69 Gonzalez and Mendoza, "Reassessment," have recently proposed that the termination of the office of governor should be related to Ptolemy's campaign in 311 BCE.

70 *Ant.* 12.158.

71 Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews*, 129; he was followed, among others, by Stern, "Notes", 43. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 27, suggests that the main cause for Onias' non-payment of the annual tribute was the "general weariness in face of constant regimentation by the Ptolemaic administration"; however, he also acknowledges the possibility that this decision may have to do with Ptolemy III's military drawbacks.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

War.[72] On closer examination, however, there are several issues with this scenario, which have already been pointed out by other scholars. Despite his military drawbacks, Ptolemy III remained comfortably in control of Jerusalem, and the high priest did not have any military force that he could oppose to the king.[73] It is much more likely, in fact, that the cause for the termination of Onias' tribute is external rather than internal, and that it has to do with recent development in the Ptolemaic administration of the southern Levant.

Starting from the reign of Ptolemy II, we have some evidence for the control exercised by the royal administration on the southern Levant, especially as regards fiscal matters. Various aspects of this control are documented in the Zeno papyri. In one papyrus,[74] for instance, Apollonios tasks Apollodotos to register every payment received for the exportation of cereals from Syria, presumably by private merchants. Furthermore, there is also evidence suggesting that the royal administration would introduce new administrative policies, in order to increase its control on local and regional fiscality in the territories of the southern Levant. The Rainer papyri,[75] for instance, preserve a decree of Ptolemy II in his 24$^{\text{th}}$ year or reign (= 260 BCE) concerning the regulation of taxes on cattle as well as on the trade of slaves, evincing the interest of the royal administration to tighten its grip on this source of income (and presumably others as well). While much of the evidence we have dates from the time of Ptolemy II, this policy was clearly continued by his successors, Ptolemy III and Ptolemy IV. It is in this context, therefore, that the termination of the tribute paid by Onias II to the royal administration needs to be situated. One factor, in particular, which is likely to have played a role in this development concerns the discontinuation of the series of Judean silver coins which I have already mentioned. The exact date for this discontinuation is not entirely clear. The last substantial series of Judean coins appears to date from the reign of Ptolemy II, ca. 261/260 BCE, and corresponds to an administrative reform.[76] According to Gitler and Lorber, however (who are followed on this by O. Tal), these coins could have continued to be produced until 242/241, in the reign of Ptolemy III.[77] This possibility is suggested, in particular, by the fact that this is also the date in which the minting of precious

72 For this reconstruction, see, e. g., Schunck, "Hohepriester", 501–504. This view is still found in recent treatments of Judea in the late third and early second centuries BCE, see, e. g., Frevel, "Grundriss der Geschichte Israels," 883.

73 Goldstein, "Tales of the Tobiads", 96, notes in addition that the entire setting of Josephus' account of the Tobiads presupposes a context of peace, not war.

74 *PSI* IV 324.

75 See Liebesny, "Erlass"; Bagnall and Derow, *Hellenistic Period*, 111–113. Compare also now Gonzalez, *Guerre et prophétie*, 266–267.

76 See on this Gitler and Lorber, "Ptolemaic Coins", 13.

77 Gitler and Lorber, "Ptolemaic Coins", 16; see also Tal, "Greek Coinages", 259.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

metals was discontinued in various Syro-Phoenician presses, presumably as part of an attempt by the royal administration to better control the minting and circulation of coins.

Whatever the precise date of the discontinuation of Judean coins, this development must have had a substantial impact on the economy of the temple in Jerusalem. To begin with, the discontinuation of local coinage would have significantly altered the functioning of the temple economy, forcing the priests to accept other coinages of lesser value or even to be paid in nature, thereby diminishing their income as well as their economic power. Furthermore, the discontinuation of local Judean coinage characterized by the use of silver rather than bronze (as noted above) would have made it more difficult for the high priest to pay the tax of twenty talents of silver in exchange for his office and the corresponding right to exploit the temple's revenues. Over the time, it is not difficult to understand how this could lead to a situation in which the payment of the tax on a regular (i. e., annual) basis became a challenge for the high priest of Jerusalem, although other factors may certainly have played a role as well in the non-payment. The fiscal mechanisms underlying this development were no longer known to Josephus or his source, who blamed the discontinuation of the payment on Onias II's avarice and general incompetence.

To what extent, precisely, such a situation had been intended by the Ptolemaic administration is of course difficult to determine. However, given the substantial attention generally provided by the Ptolemaic administration in respect of fiscal matters of all sorts, it seems very unlikely that the administration was completely unaware of the economic and political consequences of this decision for the local elites in Jerusalem. More likely, the discontinuation of the Judean silver coins was part of a larger bid by the Ptolemaic administration to increase its grip over Jerusalem and its territory by weakening the local priestly dynasty in favour of other types of royal agents, like Joseph, who were better controlled by the king. In this respect, the motif in Josephus' account that, following the discontinuation of the payment of the royal tax by Onias II, the προστασία was transferred from Onias to Joseph may have some kind of historical basis. Here again, this strategy is reminiscent of the general strategy developed by the Ptolemies in Egypt itself since Ptolemy II, which basically consisted in replacing members from priestly families by clients of the king in various functions and positions related to the levying of taxes through the territory.[78]

78 See on this, e. g., Gorre and Honigman, "Kings, Taxes and High Priests", 111–114, with additional references.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

5. The Larger Picture: Some Implications for the Relations between Foreign and Local Powers in Third Century BCE Judea

In this paper, I have argued that, with due caution, *some* limited historical information can be generated from Josephus' account of the Tobiads, specifically from the opening episode of the conflict between the high priest Onias and the royal administration over the non-payment of the tax. In particular, the previous discussion points to the following reconstruction:

1) Following the termination of the office of "governor" at the beginning of the Ptolemaic period—presumably in 301 BCE, or shortly before—the high priest of Jerusalem became the leading authority in Jerusalem. As such, he arguably enjoyed some form of communal leadership over the inhabitants of the province of Judea, which corresponds to the language of προστασία in *Ant.* 12.162. However, the nature of this communal leadership remains difficult to identify. Contrary to an oft-repeated suggestion, it is unlikely that it corresponds to any form of official function in the Ptolemaic administration.
2) As local leader in Jerusalem, the high priest paid a tax to the Ptolemaic administration, which was taken from the temple's treasury, in exchange for the right to manage the temple. In this regard, the high priest was effectively in charge of a form of local taxation, yet this taxation appears to have been limited to the temple tax and was therefore distinct from the taxation of the province. This fiscal arrangement, by means of which the Ptolemaic administration de facto acknowledged the right of the Judean high priest to manage the temple, may go back to Onias I at the beginning of the Ptolemaic period. This conclusion, however, does not preclude the possibility that the fiscal arrangement with the high priest of Jerusalem evolved in the course of Ptolemaic domination of the southern Levant during the third century BCE. At any rate, the previous discussion indicates that the high priest was not the head of a centralized administration in Judea, and that the political and economic control of the territory was effectively disputed between various local and regional "warlords", a situation which the Zenon papyri explicitly document.[79]
3) Josephus' information according to which the temple tax paid by the high priest to the royal administration was terminated at some point under Onias II may be historically accurate, even though we cannot confirm this information through another source than Josephus. Against an earlier view, it is unlikely that the termination of this tax was initiated by Onias himself, and that it reflects an attempt to side with the pro-Seleukid party against the Ptolemies in the context of the Third or Fourth Syrian War. More likely, the termination of the temple

79 See, e. g., Grabbe, "Governance", 88–90; Eckhardt, *Ethnos und Herrschaft*, 164.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

tax should be related to recent changes in the fiscal policy of the Ptolemies and the termination of the minting of Judean silver coins in the course of the third century—somewhere between 261 and 241 BCE. If so, the entire reconstruction according to which Onias and his son Simon II would have been the leading figures of a pro-Seleukid, anti-Ptolemaic party in Jerusalem is open to discussion, and needs to be reassessed.

Overall, the reconstruction sketched here implies that the history of the high priesthood in the pre-Hasmonean period is substantially more complex, and less linear, than it has been suggested in a number of studies. Following the publication of D. Rooke's seminal monograph,[80] much of the recent debate in the last twenty years or so has been focused on whether, and to what extent, Yehud in the Late Persian and Early Hellenistic period was a kind of "theocracy" (in the sense given by Josephus in Book 2 of his *Contra Apionem*[81]). While several recent studies continue to defend the notion of a form of priestly government anticipating Josephus' concept of theocracy in this period,[82] others, following Rooke's argument, consider that the authority exercised by the high priest was strictly confined to the cultic domain. The analysis offered here suggests a more nuanced picture, according to which the political and administrative role effectively increased between the fourth and the third century, in particular in the aftermath of the termination of the office of the governor at the end of the fourth century. Yet to speak of a "priestly" government in Yehud for this period would be a misconstrual, which does not do justice to the complex division of political, fiscal and military power in Ptolemaic Judea. In this situation, the high priest was only one actor among several others, and presumably not the most significant—which is also consistent with his non-mention in the Zeno papyri. It is only with Antiochos III's conquest of the southern levant and the ensuing refoundation of Jerusalem that the high priest arguably enjoyed a further—albeit still limited—extension of his powers, a situation which seems to be partly reflected in Sirach's Praise of Simon (Sir 50).

80 Rooke, *Zadok's Heirs*.

81 *C. Ap.* 2.165, see further 2.184–185. For the genesis of Josephus' concept, see, e. g., Cataldo, *Theocratic Yehud?*, 121–122 with n. 18; for a brief but relevant discussion of *C. Ap.* 2.165 in the context of Josephus' writings, see Barclay, *Against Apion*, 261.

82 Among recent scholars, see, e. g., Oswald, "Der Hohepriester als Ethnarch."

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Bibliography

Bagnall, R.S., (1976), *The Administration of Ptolemaic Possessions outside Egypt*, Leiden: Brill.

Bagnall, R.S., and P. Derow, (2004), *The Hellenistic Period: Historical Sources in Translation*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Bickerman, E.J., (1990), *The Jews in the Greek Age*, Harvard, MA: Harvard University Press.

Brutti, M., (2006), *The Development of the High Priesthood during the pre-Hasmonean Period*, JSJ.S 108; Leiden *et al.*: Brill.

Büchler, A., (1899), *Die Tobiaden und die Oniaden im II. Makkabäerbuche und in der verwandten jüdisch-hellenistischen Literatur*, Wien: Olms.

Cataldo, J.W., (2009), *A Theocratic Yehud? Issues of government in a Persian Period Province*, LHB/ OTS 498; New York *et al.*: Bloomsbury.

Chankowski, V., (2007), 'Les catégories du vocabulaire de la fiscalité dans les cités grecques', in: J. Andreau and V. Chankowski (eds.), *Vocabulaire et expression de l'économie dans le monde antique*, Pessac: Aussonius: 299–331.

Eckhardt, B., (2013), *Ethnos und Herrschaft. Politische Figurationen judäischer Identität von Antiochos III. bis Herodes I*, Studia Judaica 72; Berlin – Boston: de Gruyter.

Fuks, G., (2001), 'Josephus' Tobiads Again: A Cautionary Note', *JJS* 52: 354–356.

Gera, D., (1990), 'On the Credibility of the History of the Tobiads', in: A. Kasher, R. Rappaport and G. Fuks (eds.), *Greece and Rome in Eretz Israel: Collected Essays*: Jerusalem: 21–38.

Gera, D., (1997), *Judaea and Mediterranean Politics, 219 to 161 B.C.E.,* Brill's Series in Jewish Studies 8; Leiden: Brill.

Gitler, H., and C. Lorber, (2006), 'A New Chronology for the Ptolemaic Coins of Judah', *American Journal of Numismatics Second Series* 18: 1–41.

Goldstein, J. A., (1975), 'The Tales of the Tobiads', in: J. Neusner (ed.), *Christianity, Judaism and Other Greco-Roman Cults: Studies for Morton Smith at Sixty*; Leiden: Brill: vol. 3, 85–123.

Gonzalez, H., (2021), *Guerre et prophétie en Judée sous dominations hellénistiques. Lecture socio-historique du thème de la guerre en Zacharie 9–10 et ses apports pour l'étude de Zacharie 9–14*, Thèse de doctorat, Université de Lausanne.

Gonzalez, H., and M. Mendoza, (2020), '"What Have the Macedonians Ever Done for Us?" A Reassessment of the Changes in Samaria by the Start of the Hellenistic Period', in B. Hensel, D. Nocquet, and B. Adamczewski (eds.), *Yahwistic Diversity and the Hebrew Bible: Tracing Perspective of Group Identity from Judah, Samaria and the Diaspora in Biblical Traditions*, FAT II 120; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck: 169–229.

Gorre, G., (2019), *Des temples, des hommes et des dieux: l'intégration des temples égyptiens dans la politique lagide*, Mémoire inédit, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris.

Gorre, G., and S. Honigman, (2013), 'Kings, Taxes and High Priests: Comparing the Ptolemaic and Seleukid Policies', in: S. Bussi (ed.), *Egitto dai faraoni agli Arabi. Atti del convegno Egitto: amministrazione, economia, società, cultura dai faraoni agli Arabi, Milano, Universtà degli studi, 7–9 gennaio 2013*, Pisa – Roma: Fabrizio Serra: 105–119.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Grabbe, L. L., (2008), *History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period. Vol. 2: The Early Hellenistic Period (335–175 BCE)*, LSTS 68; London – New York: T & T Clark.

Grabbe, L. L., (2013), 'Hyparchs, *Oikonomoi* and Mafiosi: The Governance of Judah in the Ptolemaic Period', in: L.L. Grabbe and O. Lipschits (eds.), *Judah Between East and West: The Transition from Persian to Greek Rule (ca. 400–200 BCE)*, London et al.: T & T Clark: 70–90.

Hengel, M., (1974), *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period. Vol. 1*, London: SCM Press; Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

Holleaux, M., (1899), 'Sur un passage de Flavius Josèphe *Antiq. jud.*, XII, 4', *Revue des études juives* 39: 161–176.

Honigman, S., (2014), *Tales of High Priests and Taxes: The Books of the Maccabees and the Judean Rebellion against Antiochios IV*, The S. Mark Taper Foundation Imprint in Jewish Studies; Oakland: University of California Press.

Kaye, N., and Amitay, O., (2015), 'Kleopatra's Dowry: Taxation and Sovereignty between Hellenistic Kingdoms', *Historia* 64: 131–155.

Kratz, R. G., (2021), 'Greek Historians on Jews and Judaism in the 3rd Century BCE', in: S. Honigman, C. Nihan and O. Lipschits (eds.), *Times of Transition: Judea in the Early Hellenistic Period*, Mosaics 1; University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns: 263–280.

Lemaire, A., (2007), 'Administration in Fourth-Century B.C.E. Judah in Light of Epigraphy and Numismatics', in: O. Lipschits, G.N. Knoppers, and R. Albertz (eds.), *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.E.*, Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns: 53–74.

Liebesny, H., (1936), 'Erlass des Königs Ptolemaios II Philadelphos über die Deklaration von Vieh und Sklaven in Syrien und Phönikien (PER Inv. Nr. 24.552 gr.)', *Aegyptus* 16: 257–288.

Lipschits, O., and D. S. Vanderhooft, (2011), *The Yehud Stamp Impressions: A Corpus of Inscribed Impressions from the Persian and Hellenistic Periods in Judah*, Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.

Momigliano, A., (1931–1932), 'I Tobiadi nella preistoria del Moto Maccabaico', *Atti della Reale Accademia delle Scienze di Torino* 67: 165–200.

Monson, A., (2016), 'The Jewish high priesthood for sale: farming out temples in the Hellenistic Near East', *JJS* 67: 15–35.

Oswald, W., (2015), 'Der Hohepriester als Ethnarch. Zur politischen Organisation Judäas im 4 Jahrhundert v. Chr.', *Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte* 21: 309–320.

Ronen, Y., (2003–2006), 'Some Observations on the Coinage of Yehud', *Israel Numismatic Journal* 15: 28–31.

Rooke, D., (2012), *Zadok's Heirs: The Role and Development of the High Priesthood in Ancient Israel*, Oxford Theological Monographs; second edition; Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sartre, M., (2014), 'Histoire et mémoire(s) des Maccabées', in: M.-F. Baslez and O. Munnich (eds.), *La mémoire des persécutions. Autour des livres des Maccabées*, CREJ 56; Louvain: Peeters: 1–20.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Schunck, K.-D., (1994), 'Hoherpriester und Politiker? Die Stellung der Hohenpriester von Jaddua bis Jonatan zur jüdischen Gemeinde und zum hellenistischen Staat', *Vetus Testamentum* 44: 498–512.

Schwartz, D. R., (1983), 'Josephus on the Jewish Constitutions and Community', *Scripta Classica Israelica* 7: 30–52.

Schwartz, D. R., (1998), 'Josephus' Tobiads: Back to the Second Century?', in: M. Goodman (ed.), *Jews in a Graeco-Roman World*, Oxford: Clarendon: 47–61.

Schwartz, D. R., (2002), 'Once again on Tobiad Chronology: Should We Let a Stated Anomaly be Anomalous? A Response to Gideon Fuks', *Journal of Jewish Studies* 53: 146–151.

Tal, O., (2012), 'Greek Coinages of Palestine', in: W.E. Metcalf (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Coinage*, Oxford: Oxford University Press: 252–274.

Tcherikover, V. A., (1959), *Hellenisitic Civilization and the Jews* (transl. S. Applebaum); Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America.

VanderKam, J.C., (2004), *From Joshua to Caiaphas: High Priests after the Exile*, Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg Fortress Press.

Vandorpe, K., (2007), 'Agriculture, Temples and Tax Law in Ptolemaic Egypt', in: J. C. Moreno García (ed.), *L'agriculture institutionnelle en Égypte ancienne: État de la question et perspectives interdisciplinaires*, CRIPEL 25; Villeneuve d'Ascq: 165–171.

Wallace, R. W., (2015), 'The Practice of Politics in Classical Athens, and the Paradox of Democratic Leadership', in: D. Hammer (ed.), *A Companion to Greek Democracy and the Roman Republic*, Chichester: Wiley Blackwell: 241–256.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Sylvie Honigman

Egypt in Israel

The Multifaceted Presence of Ptolemaic Egypt in the Southern Levant (Third to First Centuries BCE)

The table of contents of Martin Hengel's *Judaism and Hellenism* gives us a sense of how the scholarly treatment of "Hellenism" and "Hellenization" has changed since the 1970s. As Hengel divided Hellenism between what we would nowadays call imperial technologies—that is, administration and taxation—on the one hand, and culture and literature on the other, he treated the cultural and literary aspect of "Hellenism" as a single entity, while splitting imperial technologies into simple equations, distinguishing between technologies introduced during the Ptolemaic domination and Seleucid ones imposed after Antiochus III's conquest of the region, the Maccabean crisis under Antiochus IV marking a second sharp break. In all its aspects (cultural and imperial), "Hellenism" is equated with rationality, secular culture, modernity, and universalism, being endorsed by dynamic elites engaging in transregional trade and serving the imperial interests, while those resisting Hellenism are described as obscurantists barricaded in their temple and temple state.[1] Alongside the fact of conquest, this vision provides the main causal narrative explaining "Hellenization."

Fortunately, the worst colonial undertones still underpinning the study of the Hellenistic world in Hengel's days, which influenced his discourse, have largely disappeared. Furthermore, the structuralist treatment of "Hellenism" as a single entity has given way to nuanced studies emphasizing the need to regionalize Greek culture. Some of these studies have explored the different ways in which local communities across the Mediterranean appropriated and reshaped Hellenism from Classical times to the days of the Roman Empire,[2] while others have stressed that Hellenism in the Hellenistic East was the culture and language of empire, and moreover have explored how the Ptolemies and Seleucids developed distinct imperial cultures.[3] The differences between the two empires concerned not only the technologies of domination—such as the systems of levying taxes, the relationship

1 A fairly similar picture is found in Bringmann, *Hellenistische Reform*.

2 Most relevant for the present discussion is the edited volume Chrubasik and King, *Hellenism*.

3 See, for instance, von Reden and Fischer-Bovet, *Comparing the Ptolemaic and Seleucid Empires*; for the distinct culture of the Seleucid empire, see Kosmin, *The Land of the Elephant Kings*; *Time and its Adversaries*.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

with native temples in terms of the administrative management of the imperial territories, and the management of time (Seleucid Era)—but also the institutional management of the pre-Hellenistic Greek literary legacy and the production of new literary works. The royal libraries of Alexandria and Pergamon seem to have developed distinct traditions, whereas the Seleucids did not set up any similar institution.[4]

This last development has potentially far-reaching implications for the studies of the southern Levant in general, and Judea in particular, because the region was particularly exposed to the two powers, but to a large extent these implications still remain to be explored.[5] No less problematic is the fact that not much progress has been made regarding the question of what we mean by “Hellenism in Palestine.” In particular, it seems that the prevailing mental map in Qumran studies associates “Hellenism” with the world of the Greek cities in the Mediterranean.[6] Arguably, this representation is a legacy of the outdated practice of treating “Hellenism” as a single entity, and it appears to overlook the attempts to regionalize Greek culture and treat it as a culture of empire, which as just noted currently dominate the study of the Hellenistic world at large. Very much correlated to this shortcoming is the persisting nebulousness in recent modern studies when it comes to determine what were the main channels—institutional or otherwise—through which Greek ideas and literature spread across the southern Levant (or the Hellenistic East) in general, and Judea in particular. While the once-prevailing postulate that Greek education was perforce spread by Greek teachers through gymnasia—the Greek educational institution par excellence—seems to have been toned down today, it has not been replaced by any coherently articulated narrative.[7] Even more critically, to my mind, the paradigm of “Hellenization” still dominates the study of the Hellenistic period, prompting scholars to focus on innovative aspects in local cultures and literatures that originated in Greek culture, whereas the numerous innovations that can be

4 See, e. g., König, Oikonomopoulou, and Woolf, *Ancient Libraries*; Jacob, *Des mondes lettrés*.

5 A notable exception is Andrea Berlin and Sharon Herbert’s study of the distinct cultures of empire successfully implemented by the Achaemenid, Ptolemaic, and Seleucid administrations based on their examination of the administrative complex of Tel Qedesh at the hinterland border of the Tyrian territory in Galilee. See Berlin and Herbert, “Kedesh of the Upper Galilee.”

6 See, for instance, the special issue of *Dead Sea Discoveries* 24 (2017), entitled “Ancient Judaism and the Dead Sea Scrolls in a Mediterranean Context,” and in particular Hartog and Jokiranta, “The Dead Sea Scrolls in Their Hellenistic Context”; and Mizzi, “From the Judaean Desert to the Great Sea.” For a critical overview of the comparisons between the Yaḥad and associations in the Greek cities of Hellenistic times, see Eckhardt, “Yahad.” For “Hellenism” in Judea as a whole, see Collins and Sterling, *Hellenism in the Land of Israel*.

7 For a preliminary attempt in this direction, see Honigman, “Intercultural Exchanges in the Hellenistic East.”

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

traced to other foreign origins, albeit duly noted, are yet to be gathered together in an overarching scholarly interpretation.[8]

In this article I will tackle the various issues just spelled out through a specific example, namely the impact of Ptolemaic Egypt on the southern Levant in general, and on Judean society and literature in particular. Admittedly, part of the evidence discussed below is well known, but the very fact of collecting the material and pointing to correlations between different kinds of evidence will arguably put forward a new picture. As I argue, "Hellenism" in southern Palestine in general, and in Judea in particular, primarily came from Ptolemaic Egypt, not the Hellenistic cities of the Mediterranean. This basic contention ramifies into several layers. First, we need to decouple the impact of Ptolemaic Egypt on the southern Levant and Judea from the period of Ptolemaic domination on the region strictly speaking (301–198 BCE).[9] Egypt had for centuries, if not millennia, been a major pole of attraction for, and a major source of influence on, the neighboring area of southern Palestine; and this situation did not cease abruptly upon Antiochus III's conquest. Recent studies have shown that the Ptolemies never complied with this territorial loss, and throughout the second century tried to regain influence if not land. Accordingly, as I argue below, Ptolemaic Egypt was a major source of inspiration for the Hasmonean dynasty as the latter developed its imperial culture. What is more, the literary influences from Ptolemaic Egypt can definitely be detected in Judean works (such as MT Esther and Jubilees), which recent scholarship tends to date to the days of the Hasmoneans.

Furthermore, the presence of Ptolemaic Egypt in Judean society and literature was not limited to aspects that can be traced either to the Ptolemaic dynasty per se or to Greek culture and literature; on the contrary, it definitely included Egyptian institutions and items originating in Demotic culture and literature. Finally, we need to admit that the channels through which cultural and literary items originating in Ptolemaic Egypt made their way to Judea were multitudinous. More crucially, contrary to the view that mapped Greek education with the gymnasia and Greek teachers, we need to make distinctions between cultures and the channels of cross-cultural transmission. To a large extent, both Greek and Demotic items circulated through the same channels, and the sites of encounter and the people involved were variegated. I wish to stress from the outset that the Jerusalem temple and its literati made an active contribution to this lively process of cultural interaction, as did, presumably, educated members of the Judean communities settled in Egypt. These issues are discussed in turn below.

8 For an overview, see Honigman, "In Search of a New Paradigm."

9 For the date of 198, see Lorber, "Numismatic Evidence."

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

I. The Political and Military Frame: The Ptolemaic Presence in Coele Syria after 198 BCE

The chronological frame dividing the Hellenistic period in the southern Levant between the Macedonian, Ptolemaic, Seleucid, and Hasmonean periods has been questioned by scholars working on the relationships between the Ptolemies and Seleucids. While according to the military narrative deriving from the ancient Greco-Roman historians—Polybius, 1 Macc, Josephus, Livy, and Justin—Coele Syria became part of the Seleucid empire as an outcome of the Fifth Syrian War (202–195 BCE), the Ptolemies' political and military interferences in this region remained a constant throughout the second century BCE. In 2010 John Grainger argued that the traditional number of six "Syrian Wars"— adding only Antiochus IV's invasions of Egypt in 169 and 168 to the five conflicts of the third century—artificially creates a break between the third and second centuries, whereas throughout the second century the Ptolemies tried to recover some of the territories lost in 198, thereby resuming a pattern of attempted territorial expansion that had characterized the first three wars fought by Ptolemy II and III (in 274–271, 260–253, and 246–241 BCE, respectively). Grainger argued that the armed conflicts of 170–168, 150–145, 129–124, and 103–101 BCE should be counted as Syrian Wars, bringing up their total number to nine.[10] By this reckoning, there was roughly one war fought per generation between 274 and 101 BCE—the next generation of the Ptolemies would effectively lose their independence to the Romans.

The Ptolemaic interferences in Coele Syria after 198 were facilitated by two aspects related to dynastic history: in the second and early first centuries BCE, the Seleucids and the Ptolemies intermarried on multiple occasions, and the princesses presumably arrived with a substantial retinue of both female and male followers, ensuring almost on-going reciprocal cultural influences between the two dynasties. That said, the number of Ptolemaic princesses who came to Syria was incommensurably higher than their Seleucid counterparts moving to Alexandria.[11] The second dynastic element that opened the way to Ptolemaic meddling was the emergence of two Seleucid rival lines on the death of Antiochus V (161 BCE), especially when one of the Seleucid contenders was also the son-in-law of the king then ruling in Alexandria—that said, the Ptolemies could also have done without this pretext.

Two distinct cases of interventions are worth mentioning here. First, concerning the Phoenician cities, there are no grounds to believe that Antiochus III's takeover

10 Grainger, *The Syrian Wars*. For a summary, see Fischer-Bovet, "Machinations of the Ptolemaic State."

11 On these inter-dynastic marriages, see Graslin-Thomé and Veïsse, "Relations entre Séleucides et Lagides."

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

disrupted the commerce between those and Egypt, which was carried out both by sea and by land through the caravan road linking Sidon to Egypt.[12] Rather, Antiochus III's decision to uphold the Phoenician (and Ptolemaic) standard for silver coinage in Coele Syria rather than integrating the region into the Seleucid economy could only encourage the commerce with Egypt further.[13] Strikingly, it seems that politics aligned with the economy. Although in the aftermath of his conquest Antiochus III encouraged the rise of new families to power in the Phoenician cities—or perhaps because of that[14]—these cities soon resumed their alliances with the Ptolemies. Throughout the second century the Ptolemies retained a prominent influence and remained very popular in the Phoenician cities south of the Eleutherus river in general, and in Ptolemaïs-Akko (the province's administrative capital), in particular.[15] Alexander Balas used Ptolemaïs as his capital, and it is there that he married Ptolemy VI's daughter Cleopatra Thea (1 Macc 10: 51–55). Modern scholars have noted that on this occasion Balas surrounded himself with Ptolemaic agents, and Balas' choice of distinctive Ptolemaic symbols for his coinage minted in the Phoenician cities—in particular the cornucopia, the Ptolemaic eagle and Isis on the reverse—has been interpreted as a deliberate policy to exploit the popularity of the Ptolemaic dynasty in the region, and possibly even to pose as a Ptolemaic king.[16] Ptolemy VI himself used the Phoenician harbors and the city of Ptolemaïs to send troops against Demetrius II in Cilicia in 148–147 BCE (Josephus, *Ant.* 13.103–104), and even minted his own coins in Ptolemaïs at this juncture. Ptolemy VI continued to behave as though he were at home in Phoenicia after he broke with Balas and transferred his alliance together with his daughter to Demetrius II (1 Macc 11: 1–18).

According to 1 Macc and Josephus, Jonathan chose to ally himself with Balas rather than Demetrius I (1 Macc 10: 1–47), responding to the invitation to attend Balas' wedding with Cleopatra Thea in 150 BCE (Jos., *Ant.* 13.83), whereas 1 Macc mentions that he met Balas and Ptolemy VI in Ptolemaïs to pay allegiance and be rewarded with titles and powers (1 Macc 10: 59–66). Although Christelle Fischer-Bovet suggests that Jonathan seemingly behaved as Balas' *philos*, not Ptolemy VI's, he nonetheless accompanied Ptolemy VI from Joppa up to the Eleutherus river in 147—that is, after the king's fallout with Balas (1 Macc 11:

12 Durand, *Des Grecs en Palestine*, 138; Apicella, "Rôle des cités phéniciennes."

13 De Callataÿ, "Instauration"; Houghton and Lorber, "Antiochus III."

14 Apicella, "Antiochos III et les cités de Phénicie."

15 As Apicella, "Rôle des cités phéniciennes," 144, with n. 74 notes, it is striking that Polybius, 1 Macc, and Josephus call the city only by its Ptolemaic name, never its Seleucid one ("Antioch in Ptolemaïs").

16 Ehling, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der späten Seleukiden*, 154–156; Apicella, "Rôle des cités phéniciennes," 141–44, objecting to Chrubasik's counterargument that Balas claimed the legacy of Alexander the Great instead.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

6–7)—a move that may be read as a mark of allegiance to the Ptolemaic king.[17] Moreover, as Fischer-Bovet notes, not only Jonathan but also his Judean enemies came to Ptolemaïs to meet the king, basically assigning Ptolemy VI the power to arbitrate between them as they competed for his support (1 Macc. 10: 59–66).[18]

While these events are well known, several scholars have recently argued—based on coin hoards whose closure dates fall in the second century BCE—that between 174 and the late 140s BCE the Ptolemies used a mobile mint in Coele Syria to destabilize Seleucid rule by providing financial support—and presumably modest military backup too—to whoever was stirring troubles at any given moment.[19] It seems that the Ptolemaic coins minted in the region in the late 160s and 152 were exclusively used—and presumably also struck—in Judea, and aimed to support Judean rebels against the Seleucids.[20] Even though the subsidy amounted to a relatively modest sum, the very existence of these Ptolemaic issues is symptomatic of the Ptolemies' political and military engagement in Coele Syria in the second century.[21]

In sum, the close economic ties between the Palestinian coastal cities (and of course Marisa) were not affected by Antiochus III's takeover, and moreover that the Ptolemies maintained their political and military presence in the region and entertained alliances with local elites and leaders, first and foremost in the Phoenician cities, but also with various Judean rival factions. This picture explains the continued cultural presence of Ptolemaic Egypt in Judea in the second and first centuries BCE.

17 Fischer-Bovet, "Machinations," 298–299 (Middle Macc); see Apicella, "Rôle des cités phéniciennes," 144, n. 75.

18 Fischer-Bovet, "Machinations," 301.

19 Olivier, "Coinage as a Tool of Ptolemy VI Philometor's Policies"; endorsed with modifications in Lorber, "Circulation of Ptolemaic Silver"; "Numismatic Evidence." See also Fischer-Bovet, "Machinations."

20 Olivier ("Coinage") contended that the subsidies were intended for the Maccabees, but Fischer-Bovet ("Machinations," 300–301) cautioned that the Judean rebels were divided into several groups, and therefore we cannot be certain which group enjoyed the direct financial support of Ptolemy VI. Caution is all the more in order since Lorber slightly modified the chronology of the strikes in question compared to Olivier, noting that the earliest date to 164/3, not 162/1, that is, before the date when according to 1 Macc Judas resumed military activity. That said, Lorber interprets 2 Macc 12: 43 as evidence that "the Judahite soldiers had silver coinage with them while on campaign and that Judas was aware of this fact" (Lorber, "Numismatic Evidence," 318–320, quote p. 320).

21 Olivier calculated that it consisted in 150 to 200 talents of coined silver distributed over ten years, implying an average of 15 to 20 talents per year, which may have been enough to ensure payment for a few hundred men. See Olivier, "Coinage," 43; Lorber, "Numismatic Evidence," 319; and Fischer-Bovet, "Machinations," 301, n. 21.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

II. Culture of Kingship

A range of technologies used in the southern Levant in Hellenistic times originate in Egypt, and may have been introduced at the instigation of the Ptolemies at the time when the region was part of the Ptolemaic empire. Ptolemy II, in particular, is known to have encouraged innovations in agriculture and animal husbandry, and based on the Zenon papyri he may be credited with introducing a new species of wheat in what used to be the Tyrian hinterland in Galilee.[22] Perhaps unsurprisingly, some of these technologies were still in use in later times, such as oil-presses, and the Ptolemaic cubit.[23]

More remarkable are what seem to be significant references to the Ptolemaic culture of kingship by the Hasmoneans. The tenet that the Hasmonean dynasty was Hellenized pervades modern scholarship, but because the southern Levant since 198 BCE was under Seleucid sway, it is usually assumed that their Hellenization was in imitation of the Seleucids, despite certain numismatic symbols obviously originating in Ptolemaic coin issues alongside Seleucid symbols.[24] Upon closer examination, we can discern other references to the Ptolemaic royal culture and symbols. At first glance we may wonder whether the Hasmoneans genuinely borrowed their Ptolemaic models from Egypt per se, or from Ptolemaïs-Akko, and this question is pertinent for their numismatic symbols.[25] As we saw above (Section I), Alexander Balas' coinage referenced Ptolemaic issues and Ptolemy VI struck money from his own mint in the region, including Judea. However, several features characteristic of the Hasmoneans suggest a deliberate imitation (or mimicry) of traits definitely originating in Egypt.

2.1 Royal Funerary Monuments

The most incontrovertible example of deliberate emulation is the funerary monument that Simon built over the Hasmonean family tomb in Modi'in.[26] Its building

---

22 Berlin and Herbert, "Achaemenid–Ptolemaic Transition."

23 Oil presses: Ayalon, Frankel, and Kloner, *Oil and Wine Presses*. On the Ptolemaic cubit, see Cabaret, *Topographie de la Jérusalem antique*, 43–44, with n. 116.

24 On Hasmonean coinage, see Meshorer, *Ancient Jewish Coinage*.

25 See Lorber, "Numismatic Evidence." The cornucopia is Ptolemaic but was attested on Balas' coins, while the anchor is Seleucid.

26 The following discussion summarizes Honigman and Gorre, "Nectanebo, Alexander, and Judas Maccabee."

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

and aspect are briefly described in 1 Macc and Josephus, with slight differences between the two.[27] Here is the description in 1 Macc:

> And Simon built a monument over the tomb of his father and his brothers; he made it high so that it might be seen, with polished stone at the front and back. He also erected seven pyramids, opposite one another, for his father and mother and four brothers. For the pyramids he devised an elaborate setting, erecting about them great columns, and upon the columns he set suits of armor for a permanent memorial, and beside the suits of armor he carved ships, so that they could be seen by all who sail the sea. This is the tomb that he built in Modein; it remains to this day" (1 Macc 13: 27–30).[28]

The most important interpretation of Simon's monument to date was proposed by Andrea Berlin and Geoffrey Waywall, who pointed to similarities between this construction and the monumental tomb of King Mausolus of Caria built in Halicarnassus in the mid-fourth century BCE, including "the monument's height, the use of polished stone, the surrounding colonnades, and the pyramid crowning the cubic structure."[29] Acknowledging the chronological gap of roughly three centuries and the geographical distance separating the two monuments, Berlin reasonably suggested that drawings and verbal descriptions of the Mausoleum—one of the Seven Wonders of the World—must have been widely circulated.[30]

However, while endorsing these resemblances with the Mausoleum, we may point to an alternative model closer to home: Andrew Chugg contended that the architectural layout of the *Sema*—the monumental tomb built by Ptolemy IV Philopator in Alexandria ca. 215 BCE to mark the burying place of Alexander's remains after their transfer from Memphis to Alexandria—drew inspiration from the Halicarnassus memorial.[31] The *Sema* and the monumental complex erected around it by Ptolemy IV are known from several ancient descriptions, and moreover they

27 Josephus, *Ant.* 13.211 mentions "porticoes" (στοαί) surrounding the "elaborate designs" (μηχανήματα).

28 27 καὶ ᾠκοδόμησεν Σιμων ἐπὶ τὸν τάφον τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ καὶ τῶν ἀδελφῶν αὐτοῦ καὶ ὕψωσεν αὐτὸν τῇ ὁράσει λίθῳ ξεστῷ ἐκ τῶν ὄπισθεν καὶ ἔμπροσθεν. 28 καὶ ἔστησεν ἑπτὰ πυραμίδας, μίαν κατέναντι τῆς μιᾶς, τῷ πατρὶ καὶ τῇ μητρὶ καὶ τοῖς τέσσαρσιν ἀδελφοῖς. 29 καὶ ταύταις ἐποίησεν μηχανήματα περιθεὶς στύλους μεγάλους καὶ ἐποίησεν ἐπὶ τοῖς στύλοις πανοπλίας εἰς ὄνομα αἰώνιον καὶ παρὰ ταῖς πανοπλίαις πλοῖα ἐγγεγλυμμένα εἰς τὸ θεωρεῖσθαι ὑπὸ πάντων τῶν πλεόντων τὴν θάλασσαν. 30 οὗτος ὁ τάφος, ὃν ἐποίησεν ἐν Μωδεϊν, ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ταύτης. Translations here and below from NRSV, here slightly modified.

29 Berlin, "Power and Its Afterlife," 145–147. See also Waywell and Berlin, "Monumental Tombs."

30 Berlin, "Power," 145; Waywell and Berlin, "Monumental Tombs," 56.

31 Chugg, "Tomb of Alexander." As Chugg points out, at the time Philopator built the new complex Caria was under Ptolemaic control.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

remained in place for centuries.[32] Therefore we can readily admit that Simon's architects had first-hand knowledge of the monument—if they were not Alexandrian themselves. According to Chugg, the *Sema* consisted of an underground, rock-hewn chamber in which Alexander's golden coffin and the ashes of the Ptolemaic kings were kept. Crucially, the monument that topped the burial place itself was crowned with a pyramidal structure, and because the Alexandrian monument is labeled as a "mausoleum" in the ancient sources, Chugg made the case that the pyramid imitated that of the Halicarnassus Mausoleum rather than an Egyptian pyramid.[33]

2.2 Alexandrian Funerary Architecture in Palestine

The concatenated connection between the Halicarnassus Mausoleum, the Alexandrian *Sema*, and Simon's Modi'in memorial can be verified further in an indirect manner through the architectural remains of several tombs that wealthy families erected in the vicinity of Jerusalem between the early first century BCE to the first century CE, and which, to use Andrea Berlin's words, aimed at conspicuous display.[34] The earliest one (Jason's Tomb) stood northwest of the site of Hellenistic Jerusalem, and was originally capped by a pyramid, while access to the tomb was through a monumental porch entrance displaying a Doric column standing between two pilasters and architrave in finely-cut ashlar blocks.[35] Three other display tombs were built in the Kidron Valley across the Hellenistic and Herodian city: the "Bene Ḥezir" tomb (latter half of the second century BCE); the "Tomb of Zechariah" (second half of the first century CE); and the "Absalom Tomb" of roughly the same time.[36] While the latter displays specifically Herodian features, the first two are adorned with architectural elements derived from Doric and Ionic architecture—Ionic semi-columns, pilasters, a Doric frieze, or a Doric porch—and exhibit squared pyramids, while in two cases a cornice in the Egyptian style connected between the columns and the pyramid.[37] Finally, the so-called "Tomb of the Kings"—in actuality the tomb of the royal house of Adiabene—built in the surroundings of Jerusalem in the first century CE may be the closest parallel to the

32 Chugg, "Tomb of Alexander," 79–83.

33 Chugg, 81–82.

34 Berlin, "Power," 143–145.

35 On Jason's Tomb, see Berlin, "Power," 141–143; Hachlili, *Jewish Funerary Customs*, 34–36.

36 On these tombs, see Hachlili, *Jewish Funerary Customs*, 31–33, with figures II.3a–c p. 33.

37 On the "Absalom Tomb," see now Peleg-Barkat and Chachy, "Architectural Decoration of the Mausoleum," 315–316.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Hasmonean monument, in that it exhibited several pyramids—three, according to Josephus' description (*Ant.* 20.95).[38]

While Berlin convincingly argued that the practice of constructing display funerary monuments in Judea was spurred by Simon's Modi'in memorial, and that the elaborate tombs around Jerusalem imitated what was to become the Hasmonean royal monument, Chugg lists the tombs from the Kidron Valley alongside other imitations of Alexander's Alexandrian tomb that were found in Alexandria itself and adjacent territories, including Cyrene and northern Coele Syria (modern Lebanon).[39] The monuments built in Judea show that the appeal of Alexandrian architecture endured well beyond the period of direct imperial domination. This is by no means exceptional, as imitations of Alexandrian architecture are documented in multiple sites in the southern Levant and Transjordan, spanning over several centuries, from Marisa in Hellenistic times to the early example of what Judith McKenzie called the Alexandrian "baroque architecture" in Petra.[40]

This survey of the Alexandrian funerary architecture raises the possibility that Simon imitated an architectural item per se, not the Ptolemaic dynasty's ruling culture specifically. However, as the displays of trophies on the Modi'in monument shows (see quote above), Simon did not conceive it simply as a family funerary memorial, but also as a monument to victory. The association of victory with royal ideology strongly suggests that Simon intended to build a dynastic monument, and in this respect the reference to Alexander's *Sema* was certainly also symbolic, and not simply architectural.[41]

2.3 Political institutions

The decree that the assembly of "the Judeans and the priests" (οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ οἱ ἱερεῖς) voted in honor of Simon and his sons in 140 BCE (1 Macc 14: 25–49, quote from v. 41) points to another aspect of Simon's dynastic policy drawing inspiration from a Ptolemaic dynastic practice. The decree has been compared to

38 See Fine, *Art and Identity*, 4–5; Cabaret, *Topographie de la Jérusalem antique*, 189–196. Alongside its modern remains, the monument is also depicted in a contemporary ossuary.

39 Chugg, "Tomb of Alexander," 85–87.

40 On Alexandrian funerary architecture, see Venit, *Monumental Tombs of Ancient Alexandria*. On its influence on the funerary architecture in Marisa (Idumea), see Venit, *Monumental Tombs*, 177–178; Jacobson, *Hellenistic Paintings of Marisa*, with Berlin, "Review." On Petra, see McKenzie 1990. On imitations of the "baroque architecture" of Ptolemaic times across the Mediterranean in the days of the Roman empire, see McKenzie, *Architecture of Alexandria*, 103–137. On Hasmonean imitations, see Cabaret, *Topographie de la Jérusalem antique*, 135.

41 For the claim that the Modi'in tomb visually referenced victories that were commemorated in festivals instituted in the days of the Hasmoneans (Hanukkah, Purim, and Nikanor's Day), see also Honigman and Gorre, "Nectanebo."

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Greek honorific decrees and, as Jonathan Goldstein put it, "imitates them in many respects."[42] A far more convincing parallel, however, are the decrees voted on by the priestly synods that convened in Egypt under the Ptolemies and were publicized through the well-known trilingual inscriptions. Incidentally, their affinities with Greek honorary decrees have also been noted.[43]

To date, seven to ten priestly decrees ranging from 243 to 182 BCE—in the reigns of Ptolemy III, Ptolemy IV, and Ptolemy V—are documented. As Gilles Gorre and Anne-Emmanuelle Veïsse showed in a recent innovative study, the documents fall into two categories: between 243 and 196 BCE, regular synods gathering the various categories of temple personnel in charge of the internal administration of the temples convened every year in Alexandria for the celebration of the ruler cult.[44] Because the requirement to display the decrees on stone stelae in all the sanctuaries of first, second and third ranks throughout the country entailed heavy expenses, only when new decisions were made were trilingual decrees formally issued.[45] The second category of decrees concerns those issued by extraordinary synods that were summoned in various places on exceptional occasions. Two synods were held in Memphis in 217 and 196 BCE to respectively mark Ptolemy IV's victory over Antiochus III at Raphia, and the coronation of Ptolemy V shortly after the crushing of a domestic rebellion and the Ptolemaic defeat in the Fifth Syrian War and the loss of Coele Syria during the king's childhood. Three other exceptional synods were held after the discontinuation of the regular synods in 196, namely in 186 to proclaim the royal victory over the rebel Chaonnophris in Upper Egypt (Philae II); in 185 for the inauguration of a new Apis bull in Memphis (Philae I); and in 182 for the inauguration of a new Mnevis in Memphis (Memphis decree).[46]

According to Gorre and Veïsse, it is likely that the synods disappeared altogether shortly after the last documented one, not least because their original raison d'être—to celebrate the ruler cult—became irrelevant thanks to the successful rooting of the dynastic cult in the Egyptian temples throughout the country.[47] Moreover, from 125 BCE onwards, the personnel administering the temples were incorporated within the royal territorial administration, and therefore the kings could

42 Goldstein, *I Maccabees*, 501. See also van Henten, "Honorary Decree."

43 Clarysse, "Ptolémées et temples." Gorre and Veïsse also compare them with the honorary decrees voted on by non-civic associations, such as that of the artists of Dionysos. See their "Birth and Disappearance of the Priestly Synods," 129.

44 Gorre and Veïsse, "Birth," 121–124. See also Gorre and Clancier, "The Integration of Indigenous Elites," 97.

45 See Gorre and Veïsse, "Birth," 118, 125.

46 Gorre and Veïsse, 124–125. I follow their dating of the last decree (see pp. 116–117).

47 Gorre and Veïsse, 114, 130. On the gap in documentation between the 180s and 125 BCE, I rely on Gilles Gorre (personal communication, September 25, 2021). See also Gorre, *Relations du clergé égyptien*.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

communicate his will to them through other, less solemn (and cumbersome) channels.[48] Indeed, the Heracleion stela issued in the wake of a meeting convened by Ptolemy VIII in 118 BCE to tackle a variety of matters—including, but not restricted to temple affairs—attests that the participants in the meeting comprised various categories of royal officials, not temple personnel.[49]

As the circumstances that occasioned the irregular synods show, their purpose was to reaffirm during critical times for the country the loyalty to the temple of leading personnel to the king; and in some cases the regular meetings convened before 196 fulfilled a similar function.[50] Likewise, if we leave aside the change in the identity of the personnel summoned by the king, the Heracleion stela also has affinities with the extraordinary priestly synods. According to Christophe Thiers, the decisions taken in the synod, and the very publication of the stelae, are related to the wide-ranging decree of amnesty that Ptolemy VIII, Cleopatra II and Cleopatra III issued in 118, which aimed to restore calm in the country following a protracted period of unrest.[51]

To my mind, it is precisely because of their political function of affirming or reasserting loyalty to the king that the Ptolemaic decrees offer the most accurate parallels to the Judean decree in honor of Simon and his sons.[52] While the civic

---

48 Gorre and Veïsse, "Birth," 131–138. For the administration of the temples after 125 BCE, see Gorre, *Relations*, 513–540, 593–603; 2013: 8–11.

49 "… the great, the notable, the members of the Thirty, the elders of the palace, the members of the body of officials *and* the great men of Egypt, [went] to the privileged place of the palace to take counsel concerning … *they* took an oath before *him*" (English translation http://www.attalus.org/docs/other/inscr_263.html, §20; accessed September 25, 2021).

50 Gorre and Veïsse, "Birth," 126. Compare also the Memphis Decree of 196 (Rosetta Stone; OGIS 90 = I. Prose 16 for the Greek text; English translation in Austin, no. 283).

51 P.Tebt. I 5 (= Sel.Pap. 2.210) preserves a copy of the said amnesty decree. For the reaffirmation of loyalty to the king, see the following quote: "they violated the decree which your father had promulgated, [?] not realising the power of your majesty … O our master, protector of everything *that exists*, the favor of Horus belongs to you in the confines of the nomes; *you are* victorious for his father Osiris … with orders [(?) to perform] your massacre amongst them" (English translation http://www.attalus.org/docs/other/inscr_263.html, §19; accessed September 25, 2021).

52 Knowledge about the Ptolemaic practice of convening priestly synods yearly must have been well known. It is echoed in a parodic manner in 3 Macc (3: 25, 4: 4–10), a text composed after the Alexandrian interethnic clashes of 38 CE. The end of the journey in the canal to Schedia is called a *paraplous* (a sailing alongside the coast"; see Mélèze Modrzejewski, *Troisième Live des Maccabées*, 151 at 4: 11), a term that presumably echoes the term of *kataplous* ("the sailing down the Nile") that was used to designate the annual travel of the priests to Alexandria (see Memphis Decree, OGIS 90 = I. Prose 16, ll. 16–17). On the *kataplous*, see Gorre and Veïsse, "Birth," 126–127). On the date of 3 Macc, see Honigman 2019. More specifically, the synod decrees were to be displayed in all the temples of first, second and third ranks, and some of the texts indeed survived in multiple versions—seven for the Canopus decree of 238 BCE, and five for the Alexandria decree of 243. They may also have been copied on papyri, ensuring their wider circulation.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

decrees of Hellenistic times voted in honor of kings are usually concerned with the establishment of a civic cult to the honorary king—and thus on the face of it are similar to the Ptolemaic priestly decrees—their ideological context is completely different. The civic decrees proclaim the establishment of a civic ruler cult to reward the king for his egregious benefactions, and not to formally pledge loyalty. To the contrary, the cities' assemblies never even mention the honorand's royal powers and minimize references to his status as king.[53] Similarly, after the benefactions that entitled the king to divine honors are duly spelled out, the civic decrees present the issuing city as the only side exercising agency when it comes to making decisions. The only actions mentioned consist in the establishment of the cult and assorted steps; the inscription of the decree on a stela and assorted financial steps; and the dispatch of an embassy to inform the king about the honor granted.

In contrast, not only do the Ptolemaic decrees and the Judean one duly mention the rulers' powers but they also explicitly acknowledge that the said powers originate outside the institutional body voting on the decree.[54] The texts also acknowledge powers to the ruler, and although the different historical circumstances explain the different nature of the powers dealt with in Egypt and Judea, in both societies we may note a combination of political and religious matters.[55] Finally, like the Ptolemaic decrees, the Judean decree for Simon and his sons is a statement of allegiance, as the final parts of the text makes clear:

> "None of the people or priests shall be permitted to nullify any of these decisions or to oppose what he says, or to convene an assembly in the country without his permission, or to be clothed in purple or put on a gold buckle. Whoever acts contrary to these decisions

53 For instance, in the Teian decree for Antiochus III and Laodike III (Ma, *Antiochos III*, 308–311, no. 17, probably 203 BCE), the honoree is described as the "benefactor of all the Greek cities and especially of ours," not as king (ll. 6–8). The main, if not sole exception, is the claim that the king's goodwill is a natural gift that he inherited from his ancestors.

54 The annual synods celebrated the ruler cult on two dates, the king's birthday and the day "on which he received the royalty of his father" (Memphis Decree of 196, trans. Austin, no. 283, p. 495; compare Canopus Decree of 238 BCE, English trans. Austin, no. 271, p. 471). Judean decree for Simon and his sons: "In view of these things King Demetrius confirmed him in the high-priesthood, made him one of his Friends, and paid him high honors" (1 Macc 14: 38–39).

55 Decree for Simon: "The Judeans and the priests (οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ οἱ ἱερεῖς) have resolved that Simon should be their military leader and high priest (ἡγούμενον καὶ ἀρχιερέα) forever, until a trustworthy prophet should arise, and that he should be governor (στρατηγόν) over them and that he should take charge of the holy affairs (περὶ τῶν ἁγίων) and appoint officials over its tasks and over the country and the weapons and the strongholds, and that he should take charge of the holy affairs, and that he should be obeyed by all, and that all contracts (συγγραφαὶ) in the country should be written in his name, and that he should be clothed in purple and wear gold" (1 Macc 14: 41–43). Trans. NRSV, modified.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

> or rejects any of them shall be liable to punishment. All the people agreed to grant Simon the right to act in accordance with these decisions. So Simon accepted and agreed to be high priest, to be commander and ethnarch of the Jews and priests, and to be protector of them all" (1 Macc 14: 44–47).[56]

It is explicitly stated that beside the display of the decree on bronze tablets in the temple precincts—paralleling the display of the Ptolemaic decrees in all the temples of first, second and third ranks—copies of its texts were to be deposited in the treasury and be available to Simon and his sons (14: 49), a step obviously unparalleled in the Ptolemaic decrees because the position of the king was firm, but which confirms that Simon's position was not so.[57] The association of Simon's sons to the honors parallels other steps that Simon took—like building two residences for himself and his "son" (in the singular) in Jerusalem and Gazara (1 Macc 13: 49, 52–53)—and which aimed at establishing a dynasty, and not only his rule.

The gathering of the Judean assembly composed of "Judeans and priests" to vote on the honorary decree for Simon was unquestionably an institutional innovation, but the similarities with Greek civic honorary decrees are very loose, and to a large extent they are also found in the Ptolemaic synod decrees.[58] Rather, the decree's "Greekness" was not only Ptolemaic, but eminently dynastic.

---

56 καὶ οὐκ ἐξέσται οὐθενὶ τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ τῶν ἱερέων ἀθετῆσαί τι τούτων καὶ ἀντειπεῖν τοῖς ὑπ᾽ αὐτοῦ ῥηθησομένοις καὶ ἐπισυστρέψαι συστροφὴν ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ ἄνευ αὐτοῦ καὶ περιβάλλεσθαι πορφύραν καὶ ἐμπορποῦσθαι πόρπην χρυσῆν· ὃς δ᾽ ἂν παρὰ ταῦτα ποιήσῃ ἢ ἀθετήσῃ τι τούτων, ἔνοχος ἔσται. καὶ εὐδόκησεν πᾶς ὁ λαὸς θέσθαι Σιμωνι ποιῆσαι κατὰ τοὺς λόγους τούτους. καὶ ἐπεδέξατο Σιμων καὶ εὐδόκησεν ἀρχιερατεύειν καὶ εἶναι στρατηγὸς καὶ ἐθνάρχης τῶν Ιουδαίων καὶ ἱερέων καὶ τοῦ προστατῆσαι πάντων. Translation NRSV, modified.

57 The choreographed scenario pretending that the initiative to give Simon powers had spontaneously come from the "people" recalls the episode in which "the Antiochenes" offered Ptolemy VI kingship over Asia alongside Egypt (Diod. Sic., *Bib. hist*. 32.9c). As Christelle Fischer (2021: 299) notes, the episode suggests Ptolemy's "excellent communicative skills with local elites, that is, the Ptolemaic partisans among them, best illustrated in Antioch by Hierax and Diodotus" who made the offer. Likewise, the explicit clause preemptively forbidding anyone of the "Judeans or priests" from cancelling Simon's powers and trying to take his place suggests that Simon's supporters were behind the gathering of the assembly. Parenthetically, the association between "*Ioudaioi*" and "priests" and the nature of the prohibition just cited strongly suggest that the *Ioudaioi* in question were noblemen, and not "all the people," offering one more affinity with the Ptolemaic priestly decrees and crucial difference with Greek civic decrees.

58 In terms of form, the long list of "considerations" introduced by ἐπεί or ἐπειδή before the decisions are spelled out; in terms of content, for instance, the mentions of the honoree assuming the expenses entailed by his benefactions out of his own revenues. For this and other euergetic themes in the synod decrees, see Clarysse 1999. Compare 1 Macc 14: 32.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

2.4 Hasmoneans: priests with military powers

Finally, another prominent aspect of the Hasmoneans' ruling culture that may be indebted to Ptolemaic Egypt points to the Egyptian priests.[59] As Gilles Gorre showed, from the very end of the third century on, the neat distinction between the temple personnel and the royal officials in Egypt started blurring. While Greek military and civil officials made their way into the administration of the temples located in their territorial districts, Egyptian priests were incorporated in the royal administration, and as a result served in temple administrations to which they were not originally affiliated as priests.[60] One of the earliest documented examples of Greek administrators working in Egyptian temples is Herodes, son of Demophon, whose career is known through his Greek inscriptions dating between 163 and 142 BCE.[61] A military officer and district administrator stationed at the southern border in Upper Egypt, Herodes had links with several Egyptian temples located in his district, and made his way up the temples' hierarchy as he also progressed in his military and civil career. Even more noteworthy with respect to a comparison with the Hasmoneans is the family of Ptolemaios-Pamenches in Edfu (Apollinopolis Magna, Upper Egypt), which can be traced over five generations thanks to their Greek and hieroglyphic inscriptions.[62] Typically, Ptolemaios-Pamenches, who bore the court title of *syngenes*, recorded only his career as a military and civilian official in his Greek funerary inscription, but in his hieroglyphic inscription also mentioned his priestly functions.

The Ptolemaic examples of a priest cumulating a military and civilian career alongside his religious functions are numerous. Of course, the comparison cannot be overstated, and the Hasmoneans' innovative position combining the status of high priest and military leadership that harked back to Jonathan—and starting from the honorary decree for Simon, was officially recognized at least by the family's supporters—was presumably the outcome of the historical circumstances in which the family had risen to power. That said, the almost complete symbiosis between temple, civilian, and military careers in Ptolemaic Egypt at their time may have contributed to make this combination in Judea more acceptable, even though it was untraditional.[63]

---

59 The comparison discussed in this section was suggested to me by Gilles Gorre (personal communication, 2019).

60 Gorre, *Relations du clergé égyptien*. For a summary, see Gorre, "Self-representation."

61 Gorre, *Relations*, 5–9; , "Self-representation," 107–108.

62 Yoyotte, "Bakhthis"; Gorre, *Relations*, 17–27.

63 Monson compared the Jerusalem high priest of Hellenistic times with the *lesonis* (or *archiereus*; Demotic *mr-šn*), who in an Egyptian temple administered the temple estate. See Monson, "Jewish High Priesthood for Sale."

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

More examples of how the Hasmoneans looked to the Ptolemaic dynasty and to Ptolemaic society as they shaped their rule could certainly be found.[64] Likewise, a survey of how Judean elite circles were attentive to developments in Ptolemaic society would certainly yield substantial results, as the following sample may suggest. First, as we saw above (Section 2.2), Judean wealthy families of late Hellenistic and Herodian times built display funerary monuments which, while drawing their primary inspiration from the Hasmonean family memorial in Modi'in, may have kept an eye on Alexandrian funerary architectural trends. Second, the parallel organization of temple personnel into classes serving part-time in the temple in Egypt and Jerusalem could warrant a closer look, as the systems of rotation respectively used in these two societies allowed the temple personnel to engage in other activities (especially, administrative).[65] Third, the idea was raised to compare the Qumran Yaḥad to Egyptian religious associations rather than Greek associations that developed in the social culture of the Hellenistic cities.[66] And finally, the technologies of how to write texts and preserve scrolls attested by the Dead Sea Scrolls seem to have been largely borrowed from Egypt.[67] Despite its preliminary nature, this inventory provides a plausible historical, technological, and social context in which to frame the intertextual presence of Egyptian literary works in the Judean literary production of Hellenistic times. And as we shall see below, by "Egyptian" literature I mean both Greek and Demotic texts.

64 In Judas' prophetic dream on the eve of his decisive battle against Nikanor (2 Macc 15: 12–16), the prophet Jeremiah hands him a golden sword (vv. 15–16). According to Jan Willem van Henten (2004 [2006]), this image recalls the typical Egyptian depictions in which a god bestows a sword upon the Pharoah, symbolizing victory. However, some commentators have pointed to a parallel between this image in Judas' dream and that of the sheep receiving a sword in Animal Apocalypse (1 Enoch 90.19) and Apocalypse of Weeks (1 Enoch 91.12), where it refers to the "Time of the Sword," a standard feature in Judean apocalypses. These two apocalypses were composed after Antiochos IV's time, and belong to the subcategory of historical apocalypses. They are thus roughly contemporary with 2 Macc, and the Hasmonean appropriation of prophetic and apocalyptic themes is well documented (see, e. g., 1 Macc 14). On the motif of the sword in these apocalypses, see Tiller, *A Commentary on the Animal Apocalypse*, 365–366; Olson, *Enoch: A New Translation*, 208 at 90.19; and , *New Reading of the Animal Apocalypse*, 217. In *Animal Apocalypse*, this image refers to the "Time of the Sword," a standard feature in Judean apocalypses—it is also found in the Apocalypse of Weeks (1 Enoch 91.12), a work which in both generic features and time was close to Animal Apocalypse. According to Olson's definition of the "Time of the Sword," "the persecuted righteous are granted a limited time in which to wreak vengeance upon the wicked, fulfilling scriptures like Ps. 149: 6–9. Afterwards God himself steps in to initiate the Last Judgment" (Olson, *Enoch*, 76, at 1 Enoch 38.5).

65 The comparison is suggested by Gorre 2021: 194 (Times of Transition).

66 Gillihan, *Civic Ideology*.

67 For a recent survey and further bibliography, see Peters, "'Egypt' and the Dead Sea Scrolls."

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

III. Locating the Encounter between “Greek” and Judean Literature: Clues Pointing to Alexandria

The pervading military, political, and cultural presence of Ptolemaic Egypt in Judea surveyed in Sections 1 and 2 has clear implications when we study the Judean literary production of Hellenistic times: the fact that intertextuality with Ptolemaic literature (Greek or Demotic) is detected in a Judean text or that references to Ptolemaic realia are prominent in it does not automatically imply that the said text was composed in Egypt.[68] In what follows I am not interested in listing Judean works of Hellenistic times that may have been composed in Egypt,[69] but in identifying intertexts and similarities that point to connections between Ptolemaic literatures and Judean texts composed in Palestine.

A second tenet should be made clear from the outset: the language in which a work was composed does not determine its contents in terms of intertextuality. Numerous examples disprove any rigid link between language and content: to some extent, the Ptolemaic dynasty was culturally bilingual;[70] courtly Alexandrian poetry incorporated Egyptian themes;[71] Egyptian priests were perfectly able to compose trilingual synod decrees, including the Greek texts;[72] Demotic works were translated into Greek;[73] and Demotic literati were perfectly able to read Greek literature and incorporate Greek intertexts and literary forms into their works.[74] The same is true with Judean literati writing in Hebrew and Aramaic.[75] Finally, like their courtly Greek counterparts Judean authors writing in Alexandria (and hence in Greek) were in dialogue—sometimes, but definitely not always hostile—with Demotic literature on the one hand, and Egyptian authors writing in Greek on the other, while the Judean Ptolemaic translators of the Septuagint adapted to their needs the techniques of translation from Demotic to Greek devised by their Egyptian colleagues; and in one prominent instance at least—the Egyptian rewriting

68 Therefore, to take one example, Machiela’s hesitations in “Some Egyptian Elements” are superfluous. For an (uncritical) survey of this matter, see Peters, “‘Egypt.’”

69 For this approach, see Peters, “‘Egypt.’”

70 See Koenen, “Ptolemaic King”; Wyns, “State Ideology.”

71 See for instance Stephens, *Seeing Double*.

72 Clarysse, “Ptolémées et temples.”

73 Dieleman and Moyer, “Egyptian Literature,” 440–441.

74 Dieleman and Moyer, “Egyptian Literature,” 440–443; Rutherford, *Greco-Egyptian Interactions*; “Introduction.” A convenient starting point with further bibliography for these various aspects is Honigman, “Novellas.”

75 See below on MT Esther.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

of the Exodus story—Egyptian authors tackled a Judean tradition.[76] There remains Aramaic: while Judean literati were trilingual, P.Amherst 63 notwithstanding we should rule out that texts composed in Aramaic in Hellenistic times originated in Egypt.[77]

3.1 Royal Banquets and Herodotus in MT Esther

According to Jean-Daniel Macchi, a proto-Masoretic version of Esther corresponding to chapters 1 through 8.2 of the MT text was composed in Hellenistic, pre-Maccabean times, while the last section (MT 8.3–10) was composed and added following the Maccabean crisis.[78] Throughout, the work mines the descriptions of the Persian court found in Greek historians, to the point that Macchi describes MT Esther as a *Persica*. Although he emphasizes that interest for Persia was constant in the Greco-Roman tradition from Aeschylus' *Persae* in fifth-century Athens to the Roman empire, it is hard to see why it would have occurred to Judean literati to use Greek sources to describe the Persian court before the Hellenistic era, given that the Greek tradition is overwhelmingly derogatory.[79] Moreover, Herodotus and Xenophon were hugely popular in Hellenistic and imperial times, and MT Esther in particular seems to use Herodotus quite extensively.

The question remains, however, of the channel through which Judean literati writing in Hebrew—that is, residing in Judea—would have become acquainted with Greek literature. In this respect, MT Esther may well provide a clue, thanks to the descriptions of the ten banquets running through the work.[80] As Macchi points out, the banquets in Esther are Greek Hellenistic, not Persian, in that the king's separation from the rest of the people, while mentioned in Esther 1,

76 On Demotic elements in the Letter of Aristeas, see Honigman, "Literary Genres"; "Competition with Egyptian Religious Ideas." On Isis in Ben Sira 24, see Newman, "Hybridity." On the Septuagint translators, see, for instance, Aitken, Septuagint and Egyptian Translation Methods."

77 For the interaction between Demotic and Aramaic in Egypt under the Achaemenid domination, see Quack, "The Interaction of Egyptian and Aramaic Literature." On P.Amherst 63, see Toorn, *Becoming Diaspora Jews*, 149–187.

78 Macchi, *Le Livre d'Esther*, 65–67. For a summary, see also Macchi, *Esther*.

79 As Macchi stresses, modern scholars who have pointed to similarities with Greek literature in MT Esther, while insisting on dating the work to late Persian times, speculate about the oral circulation of Greek traditions about Persia. However, the number and very specific nature of the intertexts suppose the use of written sources. Now, while Gary Knoppers ("Greek Historiography") has argued that the shape of HB Chronicles echoed Greek poetic genealogies, it is quite another matter to assume the circulation of prose texts.

80 Macchi, "L'identité judéenne au banquet," 243, citing MT Esther 1: 2–9 (banquets of the nobles, of the whole population of Susa, and of the women); 2: 18; 3: 15; 5: 4–8; 7: 1–9; and 8: 17; and 9: 17–19 (the two banquets of the Judeans).

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

is not thematized. Moreover, one banquet gathers the whole population of the city, and women are separated from women, whereas in the Persian court the king's wives were present at his side.[81] More specifically, the text emphasizes the lavishness of the architectural frame and the luxury of the tableware and dishes, and as Macchi notes, the parallel coming to mind is the pavilion set up to accommodate Ptolemy II's selected guest at the Ptolemaia festival, a literary description of which was composed by Callixenus of Rhodes (Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistai* 5.196A–197C).[82]

This parallel is indeed far more accurate than Macchi assumes. As Oswyn Murray argued, the royal symposium became a ritual of Hellenistic kingship, combining three legacies: the symposia of Greek tyrants; the Macedonian symposia of the royal court that knowingly imitated the Homeric style of feasting; and the Persian ritual of the King's Table, which Alexander the Great himself mimicked.[83] An element characterizing the Hellenistic royal symposia (starting from Alexander the Great) was the luxurious furnishing and style of the banqueting hall, which for practical and ideological reasons Greek civic banquets never imitated, and even private benefactors in Greek cities were unable to rival. While written descriptions of Alexander's banquet tent existed,[84] the most detailed *ekphrasis* of a royal banquet hall was written by Callixenus, and the text presumably circulated outside Alexandria—primarily in Ptolemaic Egypt alongside the *ekphraseis* of royal monuments adorning the capital and the epigram dedications on the monuments, but also presumably elsewhere.[85]

Even though we cannot know whether the literati who wrote MT Esther had access to Callixenus' work, we know for certain that there existed an Alexandrian literary tradition about the Ptolemies holding royal banquets, as evidenced by the seven-night banquet that Ptolemy II held in honor of the seventy-two Judean Elders in the Letter of Aristeas.[86] Civic banquets conventionally lasted a single night, not seven. In contrast, the banquets for the nobles and the people of Susa opening MT Esther are said to last 180 and 7 nights, respectively (MT Esther 1: 4–5). Their lengths, the allusion to the luxury of the banquet the nobles were invited to, the sheer number of the banquets in the text, and their key function in the unfolding of the plot strongly suggest that MT Esther referenced the Ptolemaic royal symposia,

81 Macchi, "Identité judéenne," 245–246.

82 Macchi, p. 247, n. 2.

83 Murray, "Hellenistic Royal Symposia," 15–20.

84 Murray, p. 21, points to Athen. *Deipn.* 12.538b; Diod. 17.16.4; and Curtius 9.7.15.

85 For an example of circulation in the Egyptian countryside, see Thompson, "Ptolemaios and 'The Lighthouse.'"

86 According to Murray (pp. 22–23), Aristeas offers an idealized version of the royal symposium quite far away from its historical counterparts, but this is beyond the point.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

albeit with a carnivalesque twist.[87] This contention is also consistent with my claim above that the Hasmoneans imitated features of the Ptolemaic royal style to shape their culture of ruling (Section II).

3.2 Encyclopaedism in Jubilees

In a recent article Pieter Hartog argued that Jubilees' rhetorical strategy revolves "around comprehensiveness and order," a technique which is typical of Hellenistic encyclopaedism.[88] Encyclopaedism—an "ideal which was widespread in the Hellenistic and Roman periods"—is a way of organizing knowledge—and hence a work's contents—that proceeds through the compilation of data relative to a given topic collected in earlier works and its re-ordering in such a way as to support a claim of comprehensiveness.[89] The earliest examples in the Greek tradition are Aristotle's works, and it is further exemplified in early Hellenistic times by Aristophanes of Byzantium's work on animals; Theophrastus' study on plants; and Callimachus' *Collection of marvels in all the earth according to localities*. Hartog further compares the encyclopaedic treatment of Jewish history in Jubilees to the histories compiled by Berossus and Manetho, respectively.[90]

Encyclopaedism is of course dependent on the availability of books for compilations, and it is no coincidence that Aristotle was held as being the first philosopher to gather what amounted to a library in a Greek city. In his bid to situate what he sees as Jubilees' translocal and global mindset in "global intellectual developments," Hartog offers a survey of Greco-Roman institutions of knowledge from Aristotle to imperial times, embracing both civic communities and the various Hellenistic dynasties, as well as their Roman heirs.[91] However, we need to distinguish between mindset and mental representations on the one hand, and the material channels of communication and human agents through which cultural items circulated transculturally.

A key question is where the literati who composed Jubilees would have encountered encyclopaedism—or where the encyclopaedism they encountered came from—both as a literary praxis and an ideal. Elsewhere, Hartog compared the development of the exegetical technique of the *pesharim* interpreting Torah and Prophets through discrete quotations and commentary with the technique of literary com-

87 Macchi, "Identité judéenne," 243, stresses that the banquets in Esther structure and organize the plot.

88 Hartog, "Jubilees and Hellenistic Encyclopaedism."

89 Hartog, 2–4, quote from p. 4.

90 Hartog, p. 4.

91 On the Mediterranean scope, see Hartog, 1–8.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

mentaries that was developed in the Alexandrian library (the *hypomnemata*).[92] On another front, as noted above, scholars working on the Dead Sea Scrolls have compared the technologies of writing and preserving the scrolls employed at Qumran with the material evidence of scribal practices in Egypt.[93] To my mind, the textual and material kinds of evidence corroborate each other: Jubilees' mindset was a derivative product from Alexandria. Moreover, the cultural presence of Ptolemaic Egypt in Judea is also confirmed by the Demotic component of this presence.

IV. Demotic Intertexts in Judean Literary Works of Hellenistic Times

The impact of Egyptian literature on Judean literati in Hellenistic times is nothing new. It has long been noted that the Book of Proverbs, which is deemed to be pre-Hellenistic, incorporated the Egyptian Instruction of Amenemope (Amen-em-apt, or Amenophis) in 22: 17–24: 22. Sapiential literature indeed remains one of the genres of Hellenistic times in which the presence of Demotic sources has been most debated, but recently generic affinities between the so-called Demotic tales and Judean narrative literature have been pointed out, as well.

4.1 Sapiential Literature: The Case of Ben Sira

The possible intertexts with the *Demotic Wisdom Book* (Papyrus Insinger), Greek poetry (Homer and Theognis), and Stoic philosophy in Ben Sira, form the core of a controversy between Jack Sanders and Matthew Goff; in addition, Miriam Lichtheim's study of P. Insinger was inducted into the debate.[94] Goff questioned the notion that Ben Sira was directly dependent on P. Insinger, claiming that their similar themes drew on earlier sapiential texts belonging to the respective Hebrew and Demotic traditions, and moreover that "Ben Sira and P. Insinger reflect a degree of international influence, since they have features that are compatible with broader

92 Hartog, *Pesher and Hypomnema*. To be fair, Hartog also advanced a narrative of globalization in this book.

93 Tov, *Scribal Practices*. For an overview, see Peters, "'Egypt' and the Dead Sea Scrolls," 90–91. As Peters notes, George Brooke commented on Tov's investigation by arguing that "the motivation for using Egyptian papyrus for what may be archival copies of key non-scriptural Dead Sea Scroll texts may have represented a 'high cultural marker' by a 'self-confident elite' that set itself apart from the Hasmoneans while emulating the library of Alexandria and the priests of Egypt" (Peters, 91, quoting from Brooke, "Choosing Between Papyrus and Skin," 133–134. It is, however, far from certain that this practice "set" the Qumran literati "apart from the Hasmoneans."

94 Sanders, *Ben Sira and Demotic Wisdom*; Goff, "Hellenistic Instruction in Palestine and Egypt"; Sanders, "Concerning Ben Sira and Demotic Wisdom"; Lichtheim, *Late Egyptian Wisdom Literature*.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

intellectual trends during the Hellenistic period."[95] Similarly, while Lichtheim argued that the way P. Insinger handles "fate" and "fortune" betrays familiarity with Stoic texts and further noted linguistic equivalences between Demotic and Greek terms relating to these notions in the Ptolemaic trilingual decrees,[96] Goff responded that "[the] viewpoint [that life is unpredictable] is prevalent in the Hellenistic age, as is the assertion that the world is nevertheless orchestrated according to divine and rational principles."[97]

Sanders in turn countered these reservations stating that he based his case for literary dependence not simply on thematic similarities, but on precise wording, specific sections, the overall order of the themes in the two works, and themes which are specific, in particular the hymns to creation (P. Ins. 30: 18–33: 6; Ben Sira 39: 12–15 and 42: 15–43: 33).[98] Rather than delving into the texts, I wish to bring several general considerations to the debate. First, contrary to Goff's reservations, language is not an obstacle: Greek translations of Demotic texts are attested, and moreover we can legitimately imagine Egyptian learned individuals who would have had first-hand access to Demotic instruction works also learning (and teaching) Greek philosophy in Alexandria or elsewhere in the country. Indeed, we have no reason to believe that Apion in the first century CE was the first Egyptian ever to become a skilled grammarian and philosopher; and the Letter of Aristeas—presumably composed in the late second century in Alexandria—is evidence that individuals with complex identity politics could engage with Greek philosophy. Second, at the same time, the Apology of the Law in the Letter of Aristeas (128–171) attests that the kind of Greek education that the Judean-Alexandrian author and targeted audience mastered was not based on specific philosophical treatises—whose consumption must have been reserved for an elite minority of readers—but on digests extracting commonplaces from the various Hellenistic philosophical schools, which brought philosophy closer to conventional wisdom and in this way made it accessible to a wider audience.[99] This is also exactly the kind of philosophical potpourri absorbed by both the Demotic literati who composed P. Insinger, and by Ben Sira's grandson and translator; furthermore, the place where the texts were compiled and to which they had access was obviously Alexandria.

95 Goff, "Hellenistic Instruction," 149.

96 Lichtheim, *Late Egyptian Wisdom Literature*, 140, 151–152, summarized in Goff, "Hellenistic Instruction," 164.

97 Goff, "Hellenistic Instruction," 165.

98 Sanders, "Concerning Ben Sira."

99 For this comment I am indebted to discussions that were led by Sharon Weisser in the frame of our joint graduate seminar on "God and the divine in the Greco-Roman world: Between philosophical thinking and religious practice" (Tel Aviv University, June 6, 2021).

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Alongside P. Insinger and Ben Sira, scholars have pointed to affinities between the *Instruction of Ankhsheshonqy*—a Demotic text combining instructions and a narrative frame hinging on the very common theme of the pitfalls of life at court—and several Judean narratives, namely Tobit, Esther, and Daniel.[100] However, the comparison between Judean narratives and Demotic literature may be taken further, as Judean narratives share generic affinities with the so-called Demotic tales—the diverging connotations induced by their accepted labels, respectively, are misleading.

4.2 Demotic Intertexts: From the Demotic Tales to the Judean Ones

These affinities hinge on several remarkable features,[101] the most particular being how the memory of past events was constructed, resulting in what modern commentators of the Judean works commonly label "gross historical inaccuracies." Thus, in Judith we find 1.1 Nebuchadnezzar cited as "king of the Assyrians" (actually, he was Babylonian), and invading Judea after the exile—a few centuries after the time when he actually lived. Likewise, in Tobit 1: 13 Sennacherib becomes the son of Shalmaneser, whereas rigorous modern historians would expect Sargon II.[102]

In truth, these notations are "inaccuracies" only according to the rules of Greek *historia* and modern Western historiography as its heir. Rather, the Judean literati who composed these works borrowed a well-documented technique in Egyptian literature consisting in conflating events that occurred at different periods. Rather than emphasizing their anecdotal individuality, the conflation highlights their thematic similarities, and in this way is a powerful tool of historical interpretation.[103] Rather than situating events of the distant and recent past on a precise timeline, as Greek historians aimed to do, Egyptian literati used historical episodes as a way of illustrating the Pharaoh's daily fight to ensure the maintenance of *Ma't* (truth, justice, and order) over the constant assaults of *Isfet* (lie, wrongfulness, and chaos).[104] Foreign invasions and domestic rebellion qualified as categories of chaos. By this logic, in Judith the composite figure of Nebuchadnezzar captures the theme of the "foreign invasion," which for the original audience of Hasmonean times would have evoked memories of Antiochus IV's invasion and the dire events that ensued, while also taming this traumatic memory through its carnivalesque parody. Likewise, as Dorothy Peters noted, Tobit's King Sennacherib "who executed Jews after fleeing

100 Wills, *Jew in the Court*, 42–44, with further bibliography. For a translation of the Instruction of Ankhsheshonqy, see Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature, Vol. III*, 159–183.

101 This section owes much to Honigman, "Novellas."

102 Peters, "'Egypt' and the Dead Sea Scrolls," 100.

103 Peters, 100.

104 See Hornung, *Geschichte als Fest*; Gozzoli, *Writing of History*.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

from Judea (Tob 1: 18)" conjured up a traumatic event from the recent past—the identification of which depends on how we want to date the book of Tobit.

Another prominent feature of the Judean tales that may be seen as inspired by their Demotic counterparts is the focus on robust female characters (Judith, Esther; and Salome in the Story of John the Baptist's Death, Mark 6: 17–28). Eminent female characters were at home in Demotic literature, reflecting the prominent place that Isis acquired in Egyptian devotion and mythology in Hellenistic times.[105]

V. Channels Contributing to the Transcultural Circulation of Texts

To round off this discussion, mention must be made of the people and institutional channels that contributed to the transcultural circulation of texts and idea from Egypt to Judea. Since I have dealt extensively with this issue elsewhere, here I will only dwell on new elements.[106] While the old view that gymnasia were established in Palestine to inculcate Greek education to natives can be disposed of,[107] recent studies have pointed to the royal courts as institutions in which cultural and literary activity was conducted, and literati from a variety of cultural backgrounds could meet and exchange ideas and texts in translation.[108]

Moreover, the cross-cultural circulation of ideas and texts was greatly assisted by the diplomatic practices of ancient times: those dispatched as ambassadors were learned scholars in the Greek world, and often temple literati in societies of the Hellenistic East. Greek inscriptions relative to what has been called "*syngeneia* diplomacy" are particularly telling in this respect. When ambassadors, dispatched to seek military or financial help, arrived in the targeted communities, in support of their mundane requests they would embark pn detailed explanations of the historical or mythological ties that allegedly linked the two communities, and these learned speeches obviously required adequate acquaintance with historical and mythological lore.[109] Ambassadors were rewarded for their rhetorical performance,

105 See Vinson, "Through a Woman's Eyes"; "Good and Bad Women." For further discussion, see Honigman, "Novellas"; Fitzpatrick-McKinley, "Some Cultural Influences."

106 Honigman, "Intercultural Exchanges."

107 For the claim that gymnasia in the Hellenistic East were primarily aimed at physical, i. e., military education, see Gauthier, "Notes sur le rôle du gymnase"; Groß–Albenhausen, "Bedeutung und Funktion der Gymnasien." For the Jerusalem gymnasium, see Kennell, "New Light on 2 Maccabees 4: 7–15."

108 Honigman, "Intercultural Exchanges;" Kosmin, "Seleucid Ethnography"; Stevens, *Between Greece and Babylonia*, 196–251, emphasizing that Greek and Babylonian scholars did not enjoy equal status in the Seleucids' cultural engagements.

109 See the Xanthos inscriptions in which the Xanthians recorded at length the learned lecture the Kytenian ambassador had delivered. Ma, "Peer Polity Interaction," 12, with further commentary.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

and sometimes also sang poetic pieces while playing the kithara.[110] Based on 1 and 2 Macc, it seems that Spartan ambassadors visited Jerusalem and deployed *syngeneia* diplomacy there (1 Macc 12: 2, 5–23; 14: 16–23; 2 Macc 5: 9). Conversely, a certain Eupolemus who was dispatched from Jerusalem to Rome in the early second century BCE (2 Macc 4: 11; see 1 Macc 8: 17) was of priestly descent, and has been plausibly identified as the author of a lost work cited in Eusebius.[111]

Given the traveling conditions of the time, the ambassadors presumably resided in the places they visited for periods ranging from several days to several months. This practical reality is well attested: the Alexandrian and Jewish embassies that were dispatched to Rome following the interethnic clashes of 38 CE were composed of skilled orators who were also learned men—Apion on the one side, and Philo on the other—and they waited there for a long time before Caligula received them. The author of the Letter of Aristeas mentions that when the seventy-two elders were immediately received by the king upon their arrival in Alexandria, and the author tellingly presents this gesture as an egregious honor, implying that such welcomes never happened in real life. In passing, we are also told that ambassadors could expect to wait around five days before receiving an audience (*Ar.* 173–175). Now we can readily imagine how bored scholars would have taken advantage of their spare time, and especially (but not only) in small communities, how people would not have wanted to miss an opportunity for some distraction and instruction. The visiting scholars gave extra lectures, and would also have been eager to meet their local counterparts to exchange views and traditions with them, material which they would bring back home.[112]

Furthermore, the specifically Ptolemaic institution of summoning Egyptian priests into synods in Alexandria and Memphis must have played an important role in the encounter between Demotic and Greek literary and intellectual traditions. Under Ptolemy III, their "navigation" (*kataplous*) to Alexandria lasted at least three weeks, as they came to celebrate the king's birthday on the 5th of the month Dios, and the anniversary of the day when he received kingship from his father on Dios 25.[113] Undoubtedly, the celebrations must also have drawn visitors from the whole empire to Alexandria, and would have provided a good opportunity for

110 Ma, 18, 20.

111 Doran, *2 Macc*, 104.

112 The performance of music and song was presumably a bonus following the ambassador's lecture before the civic council, and according to a well-known anecdote. We may also think of the well-known Athenian embassy to Rome in 155 BCE which comprised philosophers—the Academic Carneades, the Stoic Diogenes, and the Peripatetic Critolaus—and which according to the Roman tradition exposed the Roman elites to Greek philosophy for the first time. See Powell, "The Embassy of the Three Philosophers."

113 Gorre and Veïsse, "Birth and disappearance of the Priestly Synods," 122.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Egyptian literati to meet with their counterparts from Phoenicia, Judea, and other regions.

Finally, we should beware the ideological bias of the Judean literary sources. Modern studies focus on the circulation of scholars and texts from Palestine to Egypt, because this is what the explicit evidence invites us to do—the prologue of Ben Sira; the colophon of Esther; and the festival letters prefixed to 2 Maccabees.[114] Alongside scholars, we hear of priests and modest people who moved to Egypt: Ezechias the priest who moved there in the days of Ptolemy I (Jos., Ag. Apion 1.187); and Onias III or IV who founded the temple of Leontopolis. In contrast, records of the movement of scholars and texts from Egypt to Palestine are absent from the literary sources. This asymmetry, is likely the result of an ideological stance, however, rather than reflecting the actual reality. In actuality, the cultural and intellectual vitality of the Judeans settled in Alexandria and Egypt must have had a substantial impact on the Judean scholarly activity in Palestine. In particular, they may have imported Greek texts to Judea, or taught Greek literature there. The development of the pilgrimage to Jerusalem in Hasmonean times could only have created more opportunities for the circulation of ideas. In sum, scholars themselves may have played a key role in the translation and circulation of texts, because their social positions entailed journeys to multiple places.

Conclusion

As I noted in the introduction to my overview of literary connections between Ptolemaic and Judean literary works, the constant meddling of the Ptolemies in the political and military affairs of the Seleucids in Coele Syria on the one hand, and on the other the willingness of the Hasmoneans to appropriate elements of the Ptolemaic royal style in shaping their own ruling culture, reasonably suggest that Judean texts referencing Ptolemaic realia could have been composed in Judea, rather than in Egypt. By the same token, rather than apprehending intertexts with Greek literature in a Judean work as evidence of its embedding in an "international" or "global" culture, we must ask ourselves how this international world reached Judea. Ideas do not travel alone, but accompany travelers and trading routes. Now, as both the archaeological and literary sources of evidence attest, most of the transregional economic activity from and to Judea was with Egypt, not the Mediterranean coast, and likewise the main migratory fluxes from Judea led to Egypt, not the Mediterranean harbors such as Delos. Therefore, when asking in

114 For a refreshing departure from this emphasis, see Aitken, "The Social and Historical Setting of the Septuagint."

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

which places and through which routes “Hellenistic” or “international” or “global” ideas reached Judean literati, the likeliest answer by far is that the region’s true global city was Alexandria not Ptolemaïs-Akko—let alone Jerusalem or Qumran. Therefore evidence of the “translocality” of Judean literature is a measure of the impact exerted by the culture of Ptolemaic Egypt in general—and of Alexandria in particular—on the culture of the Judean literati, whether of Jerusalem or Qumran.

Bibliography

Aitken, J. K., (2016), ‘The Septuagint and Egyptian Translation Methods’, in: W. Kraus, M. N. van der Meer, and M. Meiser (eds.), *XV Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies, Munich 2013*, SBL Septuagint and Cognate Studies 64. Atlanta, Ga: 269–94.

Aitken, J. K., (2021), ‘The Social and Historical Setting of the Septuagint: Palestine and the Diaspora’, in: A. Salvesen, and T. M. Law (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of the Septuagint*, Oxford: Oxford University Press: 73–80.

Apicella, C., (2017), ‘Antiochos III et les cités de Phénicie’, in: A. Salvesen, and T. M. Law (eds.), *Antiochos III et l’Orient. Actes de la rencontre franco-allemande tenue à Nancy du 6 au 8 juin 2016*, Nancy: A.D.R.A: 143–162.

Apicella, C., (2021), ‘Le rôle des cités phéniciennes dans les difficultés des derniers Séleucides’, in: L. Graslin-Thomé and Ch. Feyel (eds.), *Les Derniers Séleucides: actes du colloque international tenu à Nancy (20–22 novembre 2019)*, Nancy: A.D.R.A.: 129–153.

Austin, M., (2006), *The Hellenistic World from Alexander to the Roman Conquest: A Selection of Ancient Sources in Translation*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ayalon, E., R. Frankel, and A. Kloner, (eds.) (2009), *Oil and Wine Presses in Israel from the Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine Periods*. BAR international series. Oxford: Archaeopress.

Berlin, A. M., (2002), ‘Power and Its Afterlife: Tombs in Hellenistic Palestine’, *Near Eastern Archaeology* 65.2: 138–148.

Berlin, A. M., (2009): ‘Review of *The Hellenistic Paintings of Marisa*, by David M. Jacobson’, *BASOR* 354: 91–93.

Berlin, A. M., and Sh. C. Herbert, (2015), ‘Kedesh of the Upper Galilee’, in: D. A. Fiensy, J. R. Strange (eds.), *Galilee in the Late Second Temple and Mishnaic Periods 100 BCE–200 CE.* Vol. 2. *The Archaeological Record of Galilean Cities, Towns, and Villages*, Minneapolis MN: Fortress Press: 419–436.

Berlin, A. M., and Sh. C. Herbert, (2021), ‘The Achaemenid–Ptolemaic Transition: The View from Southern Phoenicia’, in: S. Honigman, Ch. Nihan, and O. Lipschits (eds.), *Times of Transition*: *Judea in the Early Hellenistic Period*, Philadelphia, Winona Lake, IN, and Tel Aviv: Penn State University, Eisenbrauns, Tel Aviv University: 143–160.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Bringmann, K., (1983), *Hellenistische Reform und Religionsverfolgung in Judäa. Eine Untersuchung zur jüdisch-hellenistischen Geschichte (175–163 v. Chr.)*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Brooke, G. J., (2017), 'Choosing Between Papyrus and Skin: Cultural Complexity and Multiple Identities in the Qumran Library', in: M. Popović, M. Schoonover, and M. Vandenberghe (eds.), *Jewish Cultural Encounters in the Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern World*, Leiden: Brill: 119–135.

Cabaret, D.-M., (2020), *La Topographie de la Jérusalem antique*. Cahiers de la Revue Biblique. Series archaeologica, 2. Leuven: Peeters.

Callataÿ de, F., (2005), 'L'instauration par Ptolémée I[er] Sôter d'une économie monétaire fermée', in: F. Duyrat and O. Picard (eds.), *L'Exception égyptienne? Production et échanges monétaires en Égypte hellénistique et romaine. Actes du colloque d'Alexandrie, 13–15 avril 2002*, Cairo: IFAO: 117–33.

Chrubasik, B., and D. King, (eds.) (2017), *Hellenism and the Local Communities of the Eastern Mediterranean, 400 BCE–250 CE*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chugg, A., (2002[2003]), 'The Tomb of Alexander the Great in Alexandria', *American Journal of Ancient History*, New Series 1.2: 75–108.

Clarysse, W., (1999), 'Ptolémées et temples', in: D. Valbelle and J. Leclant (eds.), *Le décret de Memphis: Colloque de la Fondation Singer-Polignac, Paris, 1er juin 1999 à l'occasion de la célébration du bicentenaire de la découverte de la Pierre de Rosette*, Paris: Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres: 41–65.

Collins, J. J. and G. E. Sterling, (eds.) (2001), *Hellenism in the Land of Israel*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

Dieleman, J., and I. S. Moyer, (2010), 'Egyptian Literature', in: J. J. Clauss and M. Cuypers (eds.), *A Companion to Hellenistic Literature*, Malden; Oxford; Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell: 429–47.

Doran, R., (2012), *2 Maccabees*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress.

Durand, X., (1997), *Des Grecs en Palestine au IIIe siècle avant Jésus-Christ: le dossier syrien des archives de Zénon de Caunos*. Paris: 261–252.

Eckhardt, B., (2018), 'The Yahad in the context of Hellenistic Group Formation', in: G. J. Brooke and Ch. Hempel (eds.), *T&T Clark Companion to the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Bloomsbury Companion. London: Bloomsbury, T&T Clark: 86–96.

Ehling, K., (2008), *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der späten Seleukiden, 164–63 v. Chr. vom Tode des Antiochos IV bis zur Einrichtung der Provinz Syria unter Pompeius*. Stuttgart

Fine, Steven., *Art and Identity in Later Second Temple Period Judaea: The Hasmonean Royal Tombs at Modi'in*. Cincinnati, Ohio: University of Cincinnati, Department of Judaic Studies, 2002.

Fischer-Bovet, Ch., (2021), 'The Machinations of the Ptolemaic State in Its Relationship with Judea (160–104 BCE)', in: A. M. Berlin and P. J. Kosmin (eds.), *The Middle Maccabees. Archaeology, History, and the Rise of the Hasmonean Kingdom*, Archaeology and Biblical Studies. Atlanta: SBL Press: 293–310.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Fitzpatrick-McKinley, A., (2023), 'Some Cultural Influences in the Judean-Egyptian Book of Judith', in: S. Honigman, A. Fitzpatrick-McKinley, and G. Knoppers (eds.), *Judeans in Persian and Hellenistic Egypt: Social Settings and Literary Productions*, *HeBAI* 12: 216–246.

Gauthier, Ph., (1997), 'Notes sur le rôle du gymnase dans les cités hellénistiques', in: M. Wörrle and P. Zanker (eds.), *Stadtbild und Burgerbild im Hellenismus*, Munich: C. H. Beck: 1–11.

Gillihan, Y. M., (2012), *Civic Ideology, Organization, and Law in the Rule Scrolls: A Comparative Study of the Covenanters' Sect and Contemporary Voluntary Associations in Political Context*. Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 97. Leiden: Brill.

Goff, M. J., (2005), 'Hellenistic Instruction in Palestine and Egypt: Ben Sira and Papyrus Insinger', *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Times* 36: 147–172.

Goldstein, J. A., (1976), *I Maccabees: A New Translation, with Introduction and Commentary*. The Anchor Bible. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Gorre, G., (2009), *Les relations du clergé égyptien et des Lagides.* Leuven: Peeters.

Gorre, G., (2013), 'Self-representation and Identity of the Egyptian Priests', in: E. Stavrianopoulou (ed.), *Shifting Social Imaginaries in the Hellenistic Period*, Mnemosyne Supplements 340. Leiden and Boston: Brill: 99–114.

Gorre, G., (2021), 'Sacred and Secular Activities in the Egyptian Temple Precincts (*temenē*) in the 3rd Century BCE', in: S. Honigman, Ch. Nihan, and O. Lipschits (eds.), *Times of Transition*: *Judea in the Early Hellenistic Period*, Philadelphia, Pa: Penn State University, Eisenbrauns: 187–198.

Gorre, G., and A.-E. Veïsse, (2020), 'Birth and Disappearance of the Priestly Synods in the Time of the Ptolemies', in: S. Wackenier and G. Gorre (eds.), *Quand la fortune du royaume ne dépend pas de la vertu du prince: un renforcement de la monarchie lagide de Ptolémée VI à Ptolémée X (169–88 av. J.-C.)?*, Leuven: Peeters: 113–140.

Gorre, G., and Ph. Clancier, (2021), 'The Integration of Indigenous Elites and the Development of Poleis in the Ptolemaic and Seleucid empires', in: S. von Reden and Ch. Fischer-Bovet (eds.), *Comparing the Ptolemaic and Seleucid Empires: Integration, Communication, and Resistance*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 86–105.

Gozzoli, R. B., (2006) *The Writing of History in ancient Egypt during the First Millennium BC (ca. 1070–180 BC)*. Trends and Perspectives, London: Golden House.

Graslin-Thomé, L., and A.-E. Veïsse, (2021), 'Les relations entre Séleucides et Lagides après la sixième guerre de Syrie: une histoire sans intérêt?', in: L. Graslin-Thomé and C. Feyel (eds.), *Les Derniers Séleucides: actes du colloque international tenu à Nancy (20–22 novembre 2019)*, Nancy: A.D.R.A.: 397–438.

Grainger, J. D., (2010), *The Syrian Wars*. MnemSup 320. Leiden: Brill.

Groß–Albenhausen, K., (2004), 'Bedeutung und Funktion der Gymnasien für die Hellenisierung des Ostens', in: D. Kah and P. Scholz (eds.), *Das hellenistische Gymnasion*, Berlin: Akademie: 313–22.

Hachlili, R., (2005), *Jewish Funerary Customs, Practices and Rites in the Second Temple Period*. Leiden; Boston: Brill.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Hartog, P. B., (2017), *Pesher and Hypomnema: A Comparison of Two Commentary Traditions from the Hellenistic-Roman Period. Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 121*. Leiden: Brill.

Hartog, P. B., (2019), 'Jubilees and Hellenistic Encyclopaedism', *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 50: 1–25.

Hartog, P. B., and J. Jokiranta, (2017), 'The Dead Sea Scrolls in Their Hellenistic Context', *Dead Sea Discoveries* 24: 339–355.

Hengel, M., (1969), *Judentum und Hellenismus. Studien zu ihrer Begegnung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Palästinas bis zur Mitte des 2 Jh.s v. Chr.* Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr.

Hengel, M., (1974), *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period*. 2 vols. London: SCM Press.

Henten van, J. W., (2001), 'The Honorary Decree for Simon the Maccabee (1 Macc 14: 25–49) in Its Hellenistic Context', In: J. J. Collins and G. E. Sterling (eds.), *Hellenism in the Land of Israel*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press: 116–45.

Henten van, J. W., (2004 [2006]), 'Judas the Maccabee's Dream (2 Macc. 15: 11–16) and the Egyptian King's Sickle Sword', *Zutot* 4: 8–15.

Honigman, S., (2016), 'Intercultural Exchanges in the Hellenistic East: The Respective Roles of Temples, Royal Administrative Offices, Royal Courts, and Gymnasia', in: E. Ben Zvi and C. Levin (eds.), *Centres and Peripheries in the Early Second Temple Period*, FAT. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck: 49–78.

Honigman, S., (2019a), 'Between History and Fiction: 3 Macc and the events of 38–41 CE in Alexandria', in: L. Capponi (ed.), *Tra politica e religione: I Giudei nel mondo greco-romano. Studi in onore di Lucio Troiani*, Antiquitas 30. Bologna: Jouvence: 127–143.

Honigman, S., (2019b), 'Literary Genres and Identity in the Letter of Aristeas: Courtly and Demotic Models', in: D. Rivlin-Katz, N. Hacham, G. Herman, and L. Sagiv (eds.), *A Question of Identity*: *Social, Political, and Historical Aspects of Identity Dynamics in Jewish and Other Contexts*, Berlin: De Gruyter: 223–244.

Honigman, S., (2020), 'Novellas for Diverting Jewish Urban Businessmen or Channels of Knowledge: Redefining Judean Short Stories of Hellenistic Times', *Ancient Narrative* 17: 189–227.

Honigman, S., (2022a), 'In Search of a New Paradigm: Judean Literature as a Crucible of Appropriations from Multiple Imperial and Native Temple Cultures in Hellenistic Times', *Journal for the Study of Judaism in Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Times* 53, 4–5: 489–523.

Honigman, S., (2022b), 'Competition with Egyptian Religious Ideas in the *Letter of Aristeas*', *Journal for the Study of Judaism in Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Times* 54, 1: 24–62.

Honigman, S., and G. Gorre, (forthcoming), 'Nectanebo, Alexander, and Judas Maccabee: Dynastic Genealogies and Funerary Monuments as Evidence of a Ptolemaic Influence over the Hasmoneans,'

Hornung, E., (1966), *Geschichte als Fest: Zwei Vorträge zum Geschichtsbild der frühen Menschheit*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Houghton, A., and C. Lorber, (2000–2002), 'Antiochus III in Coele-Syria and Phoenicia', *Israel Numismatic Journal* 14: 44–58.

König, J., K. Oikonomopoulou, and G. Woolf, (eds) (2013), *Ancient Libraries*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Jacob, Ch., (2018), *Des mondes lettrés aux lieux de savoir*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres.

Jacobson, D. M. (2007), *The Hellenistic Paintings of Marisa, including a facsimile reprint of Painted Tombs in the Necropolis of Marissa (Marêshah), by John P. Peters and Hermann Thiersch.* Palestine Exploration Fund Annual, vol. 7. Leeds: Maney Publishing.

Kennell, N. M., (2005), 'New Light on 2 Maccabees 4: 7–15', *JJS* 56: 10–25.

Koenen, L., (1993), 'The Ptolemaic King as a Religious Figure.' in: A. Bulloch, E. S. Gruen, A. A. Long, and A. Stewart (eds.), *Image and Ideologies. Self-definition in the Hellenistic World*, Berkeley: University California Press, 1993: 25–115.

Knoppers, G. N., (2003), 'Greek Historiography and the Chronicler's History: A Reexamination', *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 122: 627–650.

Kosmin, P. J., (2013), 'Seleucid Ethnography and Indigenous Kingship: The Babylonian Education of Antiochus I', in: J. Haubold et al. (eds.), *The World of Berossos: Proceedings of the 4th International Colloquium on "The Ancient Near East between Classical and Ancient Oriental Traditions", Hatfield College, Durham 7th-9th July 2010*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz: 199–212.

Kosmin, P. J., (2014), *The Land of the Elephant Kings: Space, Territory, and Ideology in the Seleucid Empire*. Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press.

Kosmin, P. J., (2018), *Time and its Adversaries in the Seleucid Empire*. Cambridge, Mass., and London, England: Harvard University Press.

Lichtheim, M., (1980), *Ancient Egyptian Literature Volume III*: The Late Period. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Lichtheim, M., (1983), *Late Egyptian Wisdom Literature in the International Context: A Study of Demotic Instructions*. OBO 52; Fribourg; Göttigen: University Press, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Lorber, C. C., (2019), 'The Circulation of Ptolemaic Silver in Seleucid Coele Syria and Phoenicia from Antiochus III to the Maccabean Revolt: Monetary Policies and Political Consequences', in: *Jerusalem and Judaea: Studies on History, Archaeology and Numismatics. Electrum* 26: 9–23. DOI 10.4467/20800909EL.19.001.11204.

Lorber, C. C., (2021a), 'Numismatic Evidence and the Chronology of the Fifth Syrian War', in: S. Honigman, Ch. Nihan, and O. Lipschits (eds.), *Times of Transition: Judea in the Early Hellenistic Period*, Mosaics: Studies on Ancient Israel 1. Philadelphia, Winona Lake, IN, and Tel Aviv: Penn State University Press, Eisenbrauns, Tel Aviv University: 31–41.

Lorber, C. C., (2021b), 'Silver Coinage in Seleucid Coele Syria and Phoenicia: Implications for the History of Judah', in: A. M. Berlin and P. J. Kosmin (eds.), *The Middle Maccabees. Archaeology, History, and the Rise of the Hasmonean Kingdom*, Archaeology and Biblical Studies. Atlanta: SBL Press: 311–30.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Ma, J., (2000), *Antiochos III and the Cities of Western Asia Minor*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ma, J., (2003), 'Peer Polity Interaction in the Hellenistic Age', *Past & Present* 180: 9–40.

Macchi, J.-D., (2009), 'L'identité judéenne au banquet. Le défi de la commensalité à l'époque hellénistique selon le livre d'Esther', in: O. Artus (ed.), *L'Identité dans l'Écriture*, Paris: Le Cerf: 227–260.

Macchi, J.-D., (2016), *Le Livre d'Esther*. Geneva: Labor et Fides.

Macchi, J.-D., (2018), *Esther*, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2018.

Machiela, D. A., (2010), 'Some Egyptian Elements in the Genesis Apocryphon: Evidence of a Ptolemaic Social Location?', *Aramaic Studies* 8: 47–69.

McKenzie, J., (1990), *The Architecture of Petra*. British Academy Monographs in Archaeology 1. Oxford University Press.

McKenzie, J., (2007), *The Architecture of Alexandria and Egypt 300 B.C.–A.D. 700*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Meshorer, Y., (1982), *Ancient Jewish Coinage.* Vol. I. *Persian Period through Hasmonaeans*. New York: Amphora.

Mélèze-Modrzejewski, J., (2008), *Troisième Live des Maccabées*. La Bible d'Alexandrie, LXX, 15.3. Paris: Le Cerf.

Mizzi, D., (2017), 'From the Judaean Desert to the Great Sea: Qumran in a Mediterranean Context', *Dead Sea Discoveries* 24: 378–406.

Monson, A., (2016), 'The Jewish High Priesthood for Sale: Farming out Temples in the Hellenistic Near East', *JJS* 67: 15–35.

Murray, O., (1996), 'Hellenistic Royal Symposia', in: P. Bilde, T. Engberg-Pedersen, L. Hannestad, and J. Zahle (eds.), *Aspects of Hellenistic Kingship*, Aarhus: Aarhus University Press: 15–27.

Newman, J. N., (2017), 'Hybridity, Hydrology, and Hidden Transcript: Sirach 24 and the Judean Encounter with Ptolemaic Isis Worship', in: M. Popović, M. Schoonover, and M. Vandenberghe (eds.), *Jewish Cultural Encounters in the Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern World*, Leiden – Boston: Brill: 157–76.

Olivier, J., (2018), 'Coinage as a Tool of Ptolemy VI Philometor's Policies: Ptolemaic Coins in Coele Syria and Phoenicia in the Middle of the Second Century BCE', *Israel Numismatic Research* 13: 35–54.

Olson, D. C., (2004), *Enoch: A New Translation. The Ethiopic Book of Enoch, or 1 Enoch, Translated with Annotations and Cross-References. In Consultation with Archbishop Melkesedek Workeneh*. North Richland Hills, Tx: Bibal Press.

Olson, D. C., (2013), *A New Reading of the Animal Apocalypse of 1 Enoch. "All Nations Shall be Blessed." With a New Translation and Commentary*. Leiden and Boston: Brill.

Peleg-Barkat, O., and R. Chachy, (2015), 'The Architectural Decoration of the Mausoleum', in: R. Porat, R. Chachy, and Y. Kalman (eds.), *Herodium Final Reports of the 1972–2010 Excavations Directed by Ehud Netzer. Volume I: Herod's Tomb Precinct*, Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society: 314–348.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Peters, D. M., (2020), '"Egypt" and the Dead Sea Scrolls', in: A. Salvesen, S. Pearce, and M. Frenkel (eds.), *Israel in Egypt: The Land of Egypt as Concept and Reality for Jews in Antiquity and the Early Medieval Period*, Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity 110. Leiden; Boston: Brill: 87–115.

Powell, J. G. F., (2013), 'The Embassy of the Three Philosophers to Rome in 155 BC', in: Ch. Kremmydas and K. Tempest (eds.), *Hellenistic Oratory: Continuity and Change*, Oxford: Oxford University Press: 219–248.

Quack, J. F., (2011), 'The Interaction of Egyptian and Aramaic Literature', in: O. Lipschits, G. N. Knoppers, and M. Oeming (eds.), *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Age. Negotiating Identity in an International Context*, Penn State University Press: Eisenbrauns: 375–401.

Reden von, S., and Ch. Fischer-Bovet, (eds) (2021), *Comparing the Ptolemaic and Seleucid Empires: Integration, Communication, and Resistance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rutherford, I., (ed.) (2016a), *Greco-Egyptian Interactions: Literature, Translation, and Culture 500 BCE-300 CE.* Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

Rutherford, I., (ed.) (2016b), 'Introduction: Interaction and Translation between Greek Literature and Egypt', in: I. Rutherford (ed.), *Greco-Egyptian Interactions: Literature, Translation, and Culture 500 BCE-300 CE*, Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press: 1–39.

Sanders, J. T., (1983), *Ben Sira and Demotic Wisdom*. SBLMS 28. Chico, CA: Scholars Press for SBL.

Sanders, J. T., (2007), 'Concerning Ben Sira and Demotic Wisdom: A Response to Matthew J. Goff', *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Times* 28: 297–306.

Stephens, S., (2003), *Seeing Double. Intercultural Poetics in Ptolemaic Alexandria*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Stevens, K., (2019) *Between Greece and Babylonia: Hellenistic Intellectual History in Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tait, W. J., (1994), 'Egyptian Fiction in Demotic and Greek', in: J.R. Morgan and R. Stoneman (eds.), *Greek Fiction: The Greek Novel in Context*, London; New York: Routledge: 203–222.

Thiers, Ch., (2009), *La stèle de Ptolémée VIII Évergète II à Héracléion*. Oxford: Oxford Institute for Maritime Archeology.

Tiller, P. A., (1993), *A Commentary on the Animal Apocalypse of I Enoch*. Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press.

Thompson, D. J., (1987), 'Ptolemaios and 'The Lighthouse': Greek culture in the Memphite Serapeum', *PCPhS* n.s. 33: 105–121.

Toorn van der, K., (2019), *Becoming Diaspora Jews: Behind the Story of Elephantine*; The Anchor Bible Reference Library; New Haven – London: Yale University Press.

Tov, E., (2004), *Scribal Practices and Approaches Reflected in the Texts Found in the Judean Desert*. Leiden: Brill.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Venit, M., (2002), *Monumental Tombs of Ancient Alexandria: The Theatre of the Dead*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Vinson, S., (2008), 'Through a Woman's Eyes, and in Woman's Voice: Ihweret as Focalizor in the *First Tale of Setne Khaemwas*', in: P. McKechnie and P. Guillaume (eds.), *Ptolemy II Philadelphus and his World*, Leiden: Brill: 303–351.

Vinson, S., (2016), 'Good and Bad Women in Egyptian and Greek Fiction', in: I. Rutherford (ed.), *Greco- Egyptian Interactions: Literature Translation, and Culture, 500 BCE–300 CE*, Oxford: Oxford University Press: 245–266.

Waywall, G. B., and A. Berlin, (2007), 'Monumental Tombs: From Maussollos to the Maccabees', *Biblical Archaeology Review* 33.3: 54–65.

Wills, L. M., (1990), *The Jew in the Court of the Foreign King: Ancient Jewish Court Legends*. Minneapolis: Fortress.

Yoyotte, J., (1969), 'Bakhthis: Religion égyptienne et culture grecque à Edfou', in: *Religions en Égypte hellénistique et romaine, Colloque de Strasbourg 16–18 mai 1967*, Paris: PUF: 127–141.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Kacper Ziemba

Judean Local Elites before the Maccabean Crisis

Local Continuities and over Regional Analogies*

The events leading up to the Maccabean Revolt (pre-175–167 BCE) are undoubtedly some of the most intriguing episodes of Judean history in the Hellenistic period. The sources for these events – 1 and 2 Maccabees and Flavius Josephus – portray them as an Seleucid attack against Judea when Antiochus IV Epiphanes aimed to strike at the very heart of the Judean religion (which was Jerusalem's temple cult). The Seleucid ruler is said to have been supported by a number of Judeans who participated in the persecution of their compatriots. This course of events was reversed by the Maccabees, who spearheaded an uprising against the oppressors. The way in which 1 and 2 Macc. presents these events is biased due to the adoption of pro-Maccabean position.[1] Unfortunately, we do not have sources that present the perspective of the Judeans opposed to the Maccabees. Given this, 1 and 2 Macc. and Flavius Josephus, despite their biases, remain the only texts that allow us to discuss the events concerning the events leading up to the Maccabean Revolt.

2 Macc. begins by presenting an idyllic picture of Jerusalem ruled over by the high priest Onias III. However, a quarrel between Onias and Simon leads the latter to inform representatives of the Seleucid administration of the riches accumulated in the temple (2 Macc. 3.1-6). Heliodorus, sent by Seleucus IV, was stopped by divine intervention. Despite this, Simon's actions against the high priest continue unabated, forcing Onias to intervene at the royal court (2 Macc. 4.4-6). The situation changes after the accession to the throne of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Onias' brother, Jason, in a meeting with the new ruler, offers him an increase in tax revenue from Judea. In turn, the king agrees to establish a gymnasium in Jerusalem. Having been granted the title of high priest by the king, Jason would begin introducing Greek practices and customs that were contrary to the Jewish law. Three years later, Onias' brother Menelaus also sought an audience with Antiochus promising the king even more revenues. Antiochus duly appointed him high priest, effectively deposing Jason who flees the country. However, Menelaus fails to pay higher taxes

* This article was written as part of the project financed by the National Science Centre, Poland (UMO-2016/23/B/HS3/01880). Many thanks to Barry Keane for his comments and for improving the English of the paper.

1 Note that the pro-Maccabean stance of 2 Maccabees, as advocated by Honigman 2014:65–94 remains a matter of dispute; see also Grabbe 2020:79–83.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

which makes him sell temple vessels. This decision causes the outbreak of riots in Jerusalem. During this time Antiochus had undertaken the second expedition to Egypt. Hearing rumours of the king's death, Jason attempts to regain power. In response, Antiochus, very much alive, carried out a bloody pacification of the city and the Temple is dedicated to Zeus. 1 Macc. begins with a much broader historical perspective starting with Alexander's conquest. After the ascension of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, 'renegades (υἱοὶ παράνομοι) came out from Israel'[2] and went to the king to 'observe the ordinances of the nations' (1 Macc. 1.11, 14). The introduction of foreign customs then occurs. After the expedition against Egypt (we do not know which as 1 Macc. mentions only one), Antiochus was to pacify Jerusalem and plunder the Temple. Two years later another incursion into the city took place and a garrison was established. At the same time, Antiochus was to issue a decree ordering the abandonment of local customs. In the case of Judea, the king's decision meant the cessation of sacrifices in the Temple. These decisions were welcomed by some Judeans. The culmination of these events was the erection of the 'desolating sacrilege' (1 Macc. 1.54) on the temple altar and the persecution of those resistant to the new cult. In both 1 and 2 Macc., an uprising under the leadership of the Maccabees begins in response to the persecution.

Both 1 and 2 Macc. portray the conflict as a clash between the Greek and Judean worlds. 1 Macc. presents a violent conflict in which the main antagonist is Antiochus supported by a small and nebulous group of 'renegades' (υἱοὶ παράνομοι). 2 Macc. contains more information describing the groups of Hellenists centred around Jason and Menelaus, thus indicating the wider Judean involvement in the persecution. In both texts, Jason and Menelaus are opposed by Judeans faithful to the local customs. Despite all their differences, the two texts oppose two blocs – the native Judaean and the foreign Hellenistic.[3] Although the very fact of the pacification carried out by Antiochus IV in Jerusalem is considered historical, the events preceding the uprising (the forced Hellenisation of the Judeans and the banning of Judean worship by Antiochus IV) are considered inauthentic and the result of the adoption of narrative strategies by the authors of 1 and 2 Macc.[4] This does not mean, however, that the sources do not contain reliable information about Judea in the first half of the 2nd century BCE such as on the rivalries of the local elites.

The events preceding the Maccabean crisis have their parallels in the other parts of the Hellenistic world. Thus, we can compare the data from 1 and 2 Macc. with sources from different parts of the Hellenistic world. Such a comparative approach can help to explain the processes and events taking place in Judea. These

2 All Biblical quotations follow the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition.

3 Honigman 2014: 225–8.

4 See the summary of the research history in Grabbe 2020: 345–58.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

phenomena entailed contact with the administration of these empires and the imperial elite that ruled them. These relationships were not irrelevant to internal developments in Judea. What follows therefore attempts to place these events in a broader geographical and chronological context.

Taxes

2 Macc. 3-4 deals with the taxes paid by the high priest of the Jerusalem temple to the Seleucid rulers. In 2 Macc. 3 we read of an attempt to seize the temple treasures by Heliodorus sent by Seleucus IV to Jerusalem. This intervention was said to be the result of a conflict between the high priest Onias III and Simon. The narrative of 2 Macc. ends with a divine intervention that prevents the robbery of the temple treasury.

Let us begin with Onias III's opponent Simon. 2 Macc. 3:4 refers to him as "the superior of the temple" (προστάτης τοῦ ἱεροῦ). Apart from 2 Macc, the term never appears in a Temple context. Schwartz, therefore, linked it with the term "strategos of the Temple" attested in later sources (στρατηγὸς τοῦ ἱεροῦ, *BJ* 2.409; 6.294, Acts 4.1; 5.24), arguing that it may have been essentially the same function.[5] Aperghis concluded that προστάτης τοῦ ἱεροῦ was the royal representative in the temple responsible for collecting taxes and overseeing its finances.[6] Doran compares this function with the similar position of the tax collector in Hellenistic Egypt but concludes only that Simon was an important figure in Judea and significant in the context of the Temple finances.[7]

The reason for Simon's report was said to be a dispute with Onias over the "supervision of the city marketplace" (περὶ τῆς κατὰ τὴν πόλιν ἀγορανομίας). Simon sought to take over this function from the high priest. In the Hellenistic East, the function of the agoronomos was to oversee measures and prices in the city market.[8] Aperghis opines that the agoranomos may also have been a royal representative responsible for the collection of taxes at the place of trade[9]. Thus, we can see that Simon was a figure of potentially great influence on economic developments in Jerusalem, and he was likely a representative of the Seleucid administration in the city.

5 Schwartz 2008: 189–190.

6 Aperghis 2004: 287; see also Ma 1999: 145: 'a Jew appointed to act as a local Seleukid official'.

7 Doran 2012: 79–80; note also that – 2 Macc 4.28 mentions Sostratos, a commander of the citadel which indicates a role for this figure in tax collection as well; such situation – the army's participation in tax collection – must have been similar in other parts of the Selucid state, Ma 1999: 139–40.

8 Schwartz 2008: 190; on agoranomos in the different parts of the Hellenistic world see Doran 2012: 80.

9 Aperghis 2004: 285.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Heliodorus, who was sent after Simon's report, is dubbed by 2 Macc. as being "in charge of the affairs". Schwartz believes that the author refers to the highest office in the state.[10] The title may also be a descriptive statement of a person who acts on behalf of the king.[11] We know about Heliodorus from another source from the southern Levant, the so-called stele of Heliodorus (Olympiodorus) found in Marisa, and containing an inscription dated to the year 178 (Cotton and Wörrle 2007; *SEG* 57.1838). The surviving part of the inscription contains three letters. One of these is addressed to Heliodorus:

> King Seleucus to Heliodorus his brother greetings. Taking the utmost consideration for the safety of our subjects, and thinking it to be of the greatest good for the affairs in our realm when those living in our kingdom manage their lives without fear, and at the same time realising that nothing can enjoy its fitting prosperity without the good will of the gods, from the outset we have made it our concern to ensure that the sanctuaries founded in the other satrapies receive the traditional honours with the care befitting them. But since the affairs in Koilē Syria and Phoinikē stand in need of appointing someone to take care of these (i. e. sanctuaries) . . . Olympiodorus

Seleucus IV gives instructions to Heliodorus regarding the action towards the temples located in Koilē Syria and Phoinikē, which was to involve the appointment of an overseer in the person of Olympiodorus – he was probably also given the function of the high priest of the satrapy.[12] Based on the inscription, Honigman has proposed to place the events of 2 Macc. 3 in the wider context of Seleucid politics. The conferring on Olympiodorus in 178 BCE of the title of the High Priest of Koilē Syria and Phoinikē was aimed at tightening control over the local temples' treasuries. A similar situation had previously occurred in Asia Minor, where the conferring of such a title on Nikanor in 209 BCE had been associated with increased control over the finances of the temples 'in the region beyond the Taurus' (*SEG* 37.1010).[13] The text of the Marisa inscription further refers to the shrines 'receiving the traditional honours with the care befitting them'. In return for these honours, the king expected increased tax revenues from the recently conquered Koilē Syria and Phoinikē. This decision gave rise to a quarrel between Onias III and Simon, who was the king's representative in the temple administration;

10 Schwartz 2008: 192; Note that Zeuxis, who was the highest Seleucid official in Asia Minor during the reign of Antiochus III, is referred to in the same way in the sources, see Cotton and Wörrle 2007: 195; According to Delos inscriptions, Heliodorus was said to have been raised with Seleucus and to have held the office of 'chancellor of the realm', see *IG* XI 4, nos. 1112–14.

11 Aperghis 2004: 276.

12 Honigman 2014: 322.

13 See Ma 2000: 288–292 with commentary.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

and the resulting intervention of Heliodorus. The cause of the tension thus lay in the royal administration's determination to increase tax revenues from Judea, which was effectively opposed by Onias III.[14] Thus, the reign of Seleucus IV marked a change in the way the administration dealt with local issues related to temples.

We do not know how Onias III managed to resist Heliodorus' intervention. Despite the effective opposition of the high priest, described as a divine intervention in 2 Macc. 3, Simon continued to denounce the local leader (2 Macc. 4.1-6). The situation changed dramatically after the accession to the throne of Antiochus IV Epiphanes in 175 BCE. First, Onias's brother Jason, during a visit to the king, promised him an increase in tax revenue (360 talents plus 80 talents from other income). In addition, he pledged to pay an additional 150 talents for the king's permission to establish a gymnasium and an ephebate and 'to enroll the people of Jerusalem as the Antiochenes in Jerusalem' (2 Macc. 4.9). These events were accompanied by the deposition of the previous high priest, now replaced by Jason. The situation escalates further in 172 BCE when Simon's brother Menelaus, sent by Jason to the king, wins the position of high priest by promising Antiochus an increase in tax revenue. Menelaus, unable to pay the promised sums, sells off some of the temple vessels (2 Macc. 4.32). Despite protests from the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the *gerusia*, he manages to hold on to his position.

Undoubtedly for Antiochus, who was preparing for the next phase of the conflict with Egypt, any filling of the coffers was welcome. His willingness to accept Jason and Menelaus' offers should not come as a surprise.[15] A different interpretation of these events has been proposed by Honigman, who argued that the initiative to raise taxes came directly from Antiochus. This would have been the next phase of the increase in fiscal control over the temples in Celesyria and Phoenicia initiated by the appointment of Olympiodorus as overseer of the temples in that province.[16] Thus, the reason for the aggravation of the situation in Judah was the increase in fiscal pressure and further consequences regarding this decision. The problem is Honigman's postulated attribution of the initiative for the tax increase to Antiochus. Firstly, such an interpretation is inconsistent with 2 Macc. Secondly, as pointed out recently by Grabbe, this interpretation assumes that Antiochus replaced Jason (who was apparently loyal to the king) with Menelaus after only three years. It is difficult to find reasons for such an action on the king's part.[17] The appointment of Menelaus, who was not a member of the high priestly Oniad family, would certainly have offended Judean sensibilities. For these reasons, we must look for a different explanation for Jason and Menelaus's rivalry.

14 Honigman 2014: 321–325; 330–344.

15 For more on Jason and Menelaus' motives see Grabbe 2020: 337–8.

16 Honigman 2014: 350, 359–75.

17 Grabbe 2020: 335.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

2 Macc. 3-4 is not the only source describing local Judean elites' rivalry and fiscality. The *Story of the Tobiads* narrates the story of Joseph Tobiad and his relation to Ptolemaic rulers (*AJ* 12.4.1–11). The text that we owe to Flavius Josephus contains novelistic elements. Nevertheless it is considered a reliable source.[18] The story, which Josephus places in the reign of Ptolemy V Epiphanes (204–180), begins with the refusal of the high priest Onias II to pay a tribute of twenty talents. The tax revenues were to be paid to Alexandria on the basis of a decision by Antiochus III, who had given them to Ptolemy V as a dowry following the marriage of his daughter Cleopatra to the Lagid ruler. Joseph, son of Tobias, Onias' nephew saw an opportunity in his uncle's refusal. Using his contacts and skills during a visit to the court of Alexandria, he obtained tax-farming rights from Koilē Syria and Phoinikē, which he would be in possession of for 22 years. Afterwards, he was succeeded by his youngest son Hyrcanus, who would soon come into conflict with the other brothers. He then withdrew to his fortress in Transjordan, where he committed suicide following the accession of Antiochus IV to the throne.

The chronology of the story poses certain problems. Flavius Josephus places Joseph's activities after the accession to the throne of Ptolemy V Eurgetes, who lost control over Koilē Syria and Phoinikē shortly after the beginning of his reign. For this reason, many scholars, believing that the paying of taxes to Ptolemy when Jerusalem was under Seleucid rule stretches credulity, have placed it before 200 BCE.[19] On the other hand, Maurice Sartre suggests that Joseph, not understanding how the tax-farming could have functioned in Koilē Syria and Phoinikē after the Seleucid conquest, erroneously placed it in the second half of the third century. Joseph could therefore have obtained the tax-farming rights after Cleopatra's marriage with Ptolemy V in 193 BCE.[20] Whatever the case, Joseph's activities remain difficult to date; and we are still left without convincing evidence, whether we choose to take Josephus's account at face value or place it in the third century.

What seems to be the most important is the very essence of the story, which is the payment of taxes and Joseph's relations with the Lagid administration. In the *Story of the Tobiads*, we see two families (the Oniad and Tobiad) vying for position in Judea. These families were related to each other (Josephus was the nephew of Onias II). Their members maintained contacts with the court in Alexandria. By these means, Joseph could have obtained the tax-farming rights from Koilē Syria and Phoinikē. Despite the chronological distance between Joseph's tax-collecting career and the replacement of Onias III by his brother Jason (either over 20 or 50 years), the situations share a fundamental similarity. It is the demonstration of

---

18 On the *Story of the Tobiads* see: Gera 1998: 36–58; Grabbe 2008: 75–8; Bernhardt 2017: 570–83.

19 Momigliano 1931–2: 178–80, Grabbe 2008:77; recently Bernhardt 2017: 95–96.

20 See Satre 2014; Honigman 2014: 352–354.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

a will to gain political advantage in Judea by responding to the ruler's demands for higher tax revenues. In the logic of the rivalry between elite Judean families, Jason and Menelaus acted similarly to Joseph. Jason could certainly have known of Antiochus IV's intentions; and Menelaus subsequently followed in his footsteps. We can therefore speak of a rivalry between local elite families involving negotiations between their members and representatives of the imperial administration. Since one of the main objectives of this administration was to obtain a surplus from the controlled territories, the subject of these negotiations (as well as the rivalries between elite representatives themselves) were functions and positions related to tax collection. Situations when the imperial administration pressed to increase its influence were at the same time an opportunity for representatives of the local elite to strengthen their position within the native community.

Antiochenes in Jerusalem

During his visit to Antiochus (2 Macc. 3.7-16), Jason offered the king an additional 150 talents for permission to introduce new institutions into Jerusalem:

> When Seleucus died and Antiochus, who was called Epiphanes, succeeded to the kingdom, Jason the brother of Onias obtained the high priesthood by corruption, promising the king through a petition three hundred sixty talents of silver and from another source of revenue eighty talents. In addition to this he promised to pay one hundred fifty more if permission were given to establish by his authority a gymnasium and a body of youth for it and to enroll the people of Jerusalem as the Antiochenes in Jerusalem (καὶ τοὺς ἐν Ιεροσολύμοις Ἀντιοχεῖς ἀναγράψαι). When the king assented and Jason came to office, he at once shifted his compatriots over to the Greek way of life. He set aside the existing royal concessions to the Jews, secured through John the father of Eupolemus, who went on the mission to establish friendship and alliance with the Romans, and he destroyed the lawful ways of living and introduced new customs contrary to the law. He took delight in establishing a gymnasium right under the citadel, and he induced the noblest of the young men to wear the Greek hat. There was such an extreme of Hellenization and increase in the adoption of foreign ways because of the surpassing wickedness of Jason, who was ungodly and no true high priest, that the priests were no longer intent upon their service at the altar. Despising the sanctuary and neglecting the sacrifices, they hurried to take part in the unlawful proceedings in the wrestling arena after the signal for the discus throwing, disdaining the honors prized by their ancestors and putting the highest value upon Greek forms of prestige. For this reason heavy disaster overtook them, and those whose ways of living they admired and wished to imitate completely became their enemies and punished them.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Jason was to obtain permission from the king to establish a gymnasium and an ephebate in the city. Together with the message about 'enrolling the people of Jerusalem as Antiochenes', these should be interpreted as the founding of a new city (polis) called Antioch.[21] What motivations drove the new high priest? In the Hellenistic world, the granting of polis status to old centres of urban character was a common practice, especially in the Seleucid kingdom and in Attalid Asia Minor. This conferral is explicit in the text of the inscription recounting the founding of a polis in Tyriaion in Asia Minor. Around the year 180 BCE, its inhabitants petitioned King Eumenes II to grant their city the status of a polis:

> **With good fortune!**
> King Eumenes to the inhabitants of Toriaion,
> greetings. Your men Antigenes, Brennos,
> Heliades, whom you sent to congratulate us
> For having accomplished everything and for arriving
> in good health at this place — on account of which, while giving thank-offerings to the gods, you offered the proper
> sacrifices — and to request, because of the good-will
> you have for our state, to grant you a city-constitution
> and (the use of) your own laws and a gymnasium, and other things consistent with those,
> (these men) have spoken with great enthusiasm,
> and after having declared that you are sincerely eager
> to do everything advantageous to us, they asked for (our)
> assent; for (they said that) befitting expressions of gratitude to me on the part of your people will remain for ever, and that
> you will not diverge from what is advantageous and necessary for me.
> As for me, I could indeed observe that it is no small matter
> For me to grant your demands, since it is
> directly related to many matters of great consequence: indeed.
> any (favour) bestowed on you by me at this moment would be durable, since I have full authority (over the land) by virtue of having received it from the Romans
> who prevailed both in war and in treaty, that would not be the case with a favour
> decreed by someone with no authority, for such a favour would truly be
> condemned by all as empty and deceitful. However, on account of
> the good-will you have for us, as you have demonstrated
> at the right time, I grant both you and those living with you
> in fortified places to organize yourselves into one citizen body and
> for use your own laws, if you yourselves are satisfied with some of these,

21 See Tcherikover 1959: 161; Hengel 1988: 503; Bernhardt 2017: 130.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

submit them to us so that we inspect them for
anything contrary to your interests: if not, let us know
and we shall send you the men capable of appointing both the council and the magistrates,
of distributing the people and assigning them to tribes,
and of building a gymnasium and providing oil for the youths.
Also, that your city is officially recognised,
I myself have already declared this at the beginning of the second letter.
After having received such great honours from me,
try to show in your deeds your true good-will
in all the situations. (Jonnes and Ricl 1997; ll: 1–38)

This text contains parallels with the account of Jason's polis in 2 Macc. In both cases, the initiative to establish the polis and organize the body of citizens came from representatives of the local community who had arrived for an audience with the king. In both cases, the king would assist them in building a gymnasium. 2 Macc. and the inscription have some differences, however. In the case of Tyriaion, Eumenes II entrusted the *politai* with the use of local legal norms. According to 2 Macc. 4.11, in Jerusalem/Antioch, on the other hand, local laws were to be violated when Jason 'destroyed the lawful ways of living and new customs contrary to the law' (καὶ τὰς μὲν νομίμους καταλύων πολιτείας παρανόμους ἐθισμοὺς ἐκαίνιζεν). It should be noted that the introduction of new customs or institutions that are – in the view of 2 Macc. – contrary to the local law does not necessarily imply its deliberate prohibition or destruction.[22] Nonetheless, one gets the impression that 2 Macc. links the introduction of a new constitution for Jerusalem with a violation of traditional Judean legal norms. But, was that really the case?

2 Macc. focuses on the changes in the customs of Jerusalemite elites following the establishment of the polis. Thus, we read of priests who participated so fiercely in the exercises of the palaestra that they neglected their temple service (4.14). 2 Macc., however, does not mention any specific circumstances when Judean religious customs were violated. The very general information about the priests does not indicate that there was any interruption of temple worship or other violations of local norms. It seems that the building of a gymnasium in Jerusalem did not in any way compromise Judean customs.[23] Another aspect comes to the fore. In 2 Macc. 4.12-14 it is stated that the 'foreign ways' (αλλοφυλισμός)' introduced by Jason were

22 1 Macc. is less detailed, but also explicitly underlines the actions of "certain renegades" (υἱοὶ παράνομοι) violating traditional customs: "So they built a gymnasium in Jerusalem according to the customs of the nations (κατὰ τὰ νόμιμα τῶν ἐθνῶν), and made foreskins for themselves, and abandoned the holy covenant. They joined with the nations and sold themselves to do evil"; 1 Macc. 1: 14–15.

23 Grabbe 2002, 2020: 330.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

something *new*. The wearing of *petasos*[24] by the young men and the taking part in the exercises of the palaestra by the priests certainly drew the attention of the other inhabitants of Jerusalem (whatever their reaction was). Indeed, it is clear from the sources that the *politai* were distinguished by their activities from the rest of the inhabitants.

In this case, we may compare them to the members of the polis of Babylon. As in 2 Macc. 4, the case is of *politai* functioning in the old urban centre.[25] A passus from the so-called *Astronomical Diaries* describes events organised by them in response to the successes of Antiochus IV in Egypt in 169 BCE (AD II, p. 470, No. -168 A1 Obv.' 14–15 (BM 41581 = 81–6-25, 195+197); cf. Van der Spek 1987: 67):

> That month I heard as follows: King Antiochus marched victoriously through the cities of Egypt. The *politai* (pu-li-te-e) [established] a *pompê* (pu-up-pe-e) and a ritual in the Greek fashion.

Another source, the so-called *Greek Community Chronicle* (*BCHP* 14 = BM 33870) dated to 163/2 BCE, mentions in turn anointing with oil, which should be linked to the existence of the gymnasium. Such practices, combined with the aforementioned procession and the 'ritual in the Greek fashion', may have been associated with a desire to distinguish oneself from the rest of the population, who were not members of the polis. Thus, they may have contributed to the cohesion of the *politai* as a symbolic expression to emphasise their status. It can be postulated that similar processes were also taking place in Jerusalem, where participation in the institutions of the polis enabled Jason and his compatriots (ομόφυλοι) to show their distinctiveness from those who were not included in the new organisation. Such phenomena were not necessarily confined to the Hellenistic period. More recently, Boris Chrubasik has juxtaposed 2 Macc with material from the fourth-century Hekatomnid Karia, arguing that the adoption of elements of Greek culture by local elites from the 4th century onwards served to empower those elites:

> Greek cultural elements could give local elites a political tool for their intra-community competition, differentiating themselves from their social competitors. If the adaptation of Greek culture was based on an intra-community discourse, however, Greek culture's main asset was that it offered a means of being different, and that was its value.[26]

24 This type of headgear common for the depictions of Hermes was characteristic of the ephebes, see Doran 2012: 105.

25 We have no information regarding the origin of the members of the polis of Babylon. We ignore their ethnicity – we do not know if they were members of the native elite or if they were settlers; for summary of discussion see Honigman 2014: 372).

26 Chrubasik 2017: 106.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Doing ‘Greek things’ may thus have been an instrument employed in the machinations of internal elite rivalry. Although we do not know how the situation looked in Babylon, in Jerusalem the adoption of Hellenistic institutions went hand in hand with the preservation of native traditions. Jason, as the main initiator of the polis, also became the high priest of the temple. There is no indication that the founding of the polis led to the disruption of the cult. The members of Jason’s polis therefore reconciled traditional Judean roles with participation in the new institutions. Equally important is the situation of the Judeans who found themselves outside the new organisation. Jason, as the chief organiser of the polis, could decide who would be ‘enrolled as an Antiochene’. Those who found themselves outside the polis may have been particularly reluctant to accept the new high priest and the order which he had introduced. The polis founded by Jason can therefore be interpreted as a tool for the differentiation of one elite group in competition with other elite representatives.[27] In such a way, Jason’s founding of the polis and the fact that probably he decided who would become *politai*, was another instrument of competition between elites for power. We must focus on the role of this figure who made participation in this rivalry possible.

This figure is a king, and his relations are with the local elites. In the Hellenistic world the power in the state was based on a balance between the central administration and local elites, Greek-Macedonian kings often meddled in the traditional functioning of conquered countries. This was the case both in Lagid Egypt, where Ptolemy II made a change to the position of the high priest of Ptah in Thebes and in Seleucid Babylonia where Antiochus IV replaced the priestly families in Uruk.[28] The events we read about in 2 Macc. were therefore not an isolated phenomenon in the Hellenistic world. It should be noted that in the case of Jason’s rise to power in Jerusalem – the change in the high priestly position and the foundation of the polis – the decision is attributed to Antiochus. 2 Macc. leaves no doubt about the close ties of Jason and his party to the court of Antioch. Soon after the description of the introduction of Greek customs in Jerusalem by the new high priest, we read of sending a delegation to Tyre, where the games were being held in the presence of the king. Its members were supposed to make a sacrifice to Heracles, but the funds for it were eventually diverted to the upkeep of the warships (2 Macc. 4.18-20). Following these events, the monarch was to visit Jerusalem, where he was welcomed by Jason and the *politai* (2 Macc. 4.21-22). The founding of the polis entailed therefore a relationship between the *politai* and the king as its founder. For context, we may look for parallels in Asia Minor and Babylonia. The inscription containing the

27 Honigman 2014: 367–8.

28 See Gorre 2009: 502–6 for Thebes; Monerie 2012: 333–47 for Uruk; Gorre, Honigman 2014 for both cases.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

correspondence between Eumenes II and the inhabitants of Tyriaion shows more than just the king's agreement to establish a polis. At the beginning of the third letter of which only the first two lines have survived, we read:

> King Eumenes to the council and the people of Toriaion
> greetings. Brennos and Orestes, whom you sent
> [as ambassadors to us/me ....]

Unfortunately, we do not know the continuation of this letter, but its beginning indicates that the *politai* maintained contact with the king after the establishment of the polis. One of them, Brennos, furthermore appears in the first letter among the messengers asking for polis status. The fact that another visit at the royal court took place and the erection of a stele in the city commemorating the mission to the king indicate the importance of the relationship with the monarch of the *politai* of Tyriaion. We find a similar relationship in the case of the Babylonian *politai* mentioned above. In an inscription dated to 166 BCE (*SEG* 36: 1274 = *OGIS* 253), Antiochus is mentioned as the founder (*ktistes*) of the city. The declarative devotion to the king evident in the language of the sources indicates a common element of the political culture of the Hellenistic period, shared also by the Antiochenes in Jerusalem.[29] Unfortunately, we do not have sources depicting these events from the perspective of Jason's party, but in the light of the above parallels, it seems that their relationship with the monarch was as close as that linking the *politai* to the kings in Tyriaion and Babylon.

Let us return to the problem of rivalry between elite groups in Jerusalem in the early second century BCE. It can be proposed that the founding of the polis and the associated processes of differentiation of the Judeans within the new order introduced by Jason was an element that, apart from the new high priest's possible fascination with Greek institutions, constituted a new instrument in the rivalry between elites. This rivalry is evident in the *Story of the Tobiads*, where its object is the pursuit of tax-farming rights. Of decisive importance in this rivalry is the relationship with the Hellenistic monarch, which is highlighted in the narrative of Joseph's acquisition of the right to collect taxes. In the case of the situation presented in 2 Macc. 4, the importance of contact with the king remains quite similar, with Jason and Menelaus obtaining the position of high priest after making an offer to the king. However, a new element emerges, that of the polis, which opens up

29 Bernhardt 2017: 143; it does not mean, however, that all texts produced by the poleis mentioning the king merely emphasised his power and merits to the *politai*; see Ma 2000: 215–9 for examples of city decrees that acknowledged the king's power, but at the same time related it to the interests of the polis.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

opportunities for contact with the monarch, and for soliciting his support. An example of such links between the monarch and the *politai* was the sending of representatives of the Jerusalem-Antioch to Tyre for the games held in the presence of Antiochus IV (2 Macc. 4.18-19) and the ceremonial reception of the king in Jerusalem shortly afterwards where 'he was welcomed magnificently by Jason and the city and ushered in with a blaze of torches and with shouts' (2 Macc. 4.22). The participation of local elites in such events involved the possibility of contact with the imperial elites who were in the monarch's entourage – in a word, the environment that Rolf Strootman has termed the outer court:

> a temporary expansion of the stable but much smaller 'inner court': the dynastic household comprising the extended family of the king and his queen(s), the household personnel, and various aulic title holders. The outer court came into existence for the occasion of great events, such as inaugurations, wedding ceremonies and religious festivals, that attracted elite persons from all over the empire from the place where at that time the imperial court resided.[30]

Participation in such events – apart from their attractiveness – may have had another important function, the value of which for the local elite could not be overestimated. This was to show oneself to be on the king's side and to indicate that one was supported by him. For the sake of analogy, let us return once again to the *Story of the Tobiads*. After the refusal of Onias II to pay taxes, Joseph was to convince the people gathered in the Temple that "he would be their ambassador to the king, and persuade him that they had done him no wrong" (*AJ* 12.6.2). Joseph then met the king for the first time in Memphis and gained tax-farming rights in Alexandria, where he became close friends with the royal couple impressed by his intelligence (*AJ* 12.6.3–4). This section certainly contains novelistic elements, but it indicates the importance that a relationship with the king had for the local elite. Moreover, the very fact that the text was a source used by Flavius Josephus may indicate a desire on the part of Joseph Tobiad (or his partisans) to emphasise his good relations with the ruler in Alexandria. Such relationships may therefore have been important capital for the local elite of which Joseph was a prominent member. A later example of a the local elites competing for the support of the monarch can be found in 1 Macc 10.59-66, where we read about marriage of Alexander Balas to Ptolemy VI's daughter Cleopatra Thea in Ptolemais in 150 BCE:

> Then King Alexander (Balas) wrote to Jonathan to come and meet him. So he went with pomp to Ptolemais and met the two kings; he gave them and their Friends silver and gold

30 Strootman 2013: 72.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

> and many gifts and found favor with them. A group of malcontents from Israel, renegades (ἄνδρες λοιμοὶ ἐξ Ισραηλ ἄνδρες παράνομοι), gathered together against him to accuse him, but the king paid no attention to them. The king gave orders to take off Jonathan's garments and to clothe him in purple (καὶ ἐνέδυσαν αὐτὸν πορφύραν), and they did so. The king also seated him at his side, and he said to his officers, "Go out with him into the middle of the city and proclaim that no one is to bring charges against him about any matter, and let no one trouble him for any reason. When his accusers saw the honor that was paid him, in accordance with the proclamation, and saw him clothed in purple, they all fled. Thus the king honored him and enrolled him among his First Friends (καὶ ἔγραψεν αὐτὸν τῶν πρώτων φίλων) and made him general and governor of the province. And Jonathan returned to Jerusalem in peace and gladness.

During the celebrations, a group of Judeans, apparently opposed to Jonathan, denounced the leader in front of the king. Their accusations were ignored by Alexander, who honoured Jonathan and counted him among the First Friends.[31] Later in the text in 1 Macc. 10.88-89, we read of further honours when the king bestowed a 'golden buckle' (πόρπη) on Jonathan. These passages again indicate the importance that relationships with kings had for the position of local elites within their community. This is one of several examples which see the Maccabees' cooperating with the Seleucid monarchs and pretenders (1 Macc. 10.1-21; 11.28-37) before they assumed full power in Judea. We may think that the ceremonial reception of Antiochus IV in Jerusalem by Jason was not only intended to curry favour with the king himself; but also to gain ground over the high priest's political opponents in Judea. We can therefore say that the establishment of the polis in Jerusalem bears witness to the competition of local elites for a position within their communities. The holders of the privileges and prestige that reinforced this position were the monarchs from whom representatives of the elites sought support. In the years following the beginning of Menelaus' high priesthood, the situation began to escalate. His inability to pay the promised sums allegedly resulted in the theft of the temple vessels, which caused a protest by Onias III and riots in Jerusalem, which Menelaus managed to quell. During these, according to sources, a new family came to the forefront of the protest.

Maccabees

1 and 2 Macc. present the introduction by Antiochus of repressive measures on Judean worship. In both narratives a practical ban on Judaism is the immediate

31 On this title see Babota 2014: 152–4.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

cause of the outbreak of the Maccabean Revolt. The repressive phase was to be preceded by Jason's attempt to regain power in Jerusalem. Chronologically, these events are linked to the war between Antiochus and Ptolemy VI (the so-called Sixth Syrian War). This conflict consisted of two expeditions to Egypt, the first in 170/169 and the second in 168.[32] According to 1 Macc., the king was to have plundered the temple treasures on his return from Egypt in 169 (1.20-28). This was followed "after two years" by an expedition in which the city was sacked and many of the inhabitants killed or taken captive. A garrison was placed in the city. The king then issued a decree according to which all the inhabitants of the empire were to "become one nation and abandon their customs." In Jerusalem, this edict was to involve the persecution of people wishing to preserve Judaism, culminating in the setting up of a "desolating sacrilege" (βδέλυγμα ἐρημώσεως) on the altar of the temple (1.54).

The course of events looks different in 2 Macc. 5-6. After the king's second expedition to Egypt, rumours of his death circulated in Jerusalem, which encouraged Jason to attempt to regain power. Though he succeeded to control parts of the city, Menelaus defended the citadel, forcing Jason to withdraw to Arabia. Antiochus responded with a widespread wave of repressive acts, which included the pacification of the city, the seizure of the temple treasures, and the sending of overseers (ἐπιστάται) to Jerusalem. Next, persecution and descriptions of martyrdom are preceded by descriptions of the introduction of the cult of the Zeus into the Temple, sacred prostitution, Dionysian processions and celebrations of the king's birthday.

Despite some differences between 1 and 2 Macc., we get a fairly similar picture of the events linking the royal persecution to the expedition against Ptolemy VI, the introduction of a foreign cult into the Temple and the beginning of the rebellion led by the Maccabees. The Maccabean family appears in the narratives of 1 and 2 Macc. only after the introduction of foreign worship into the temple and the persecution of Judeans faithful to Jewish traditions.[33]

In both books, the Maccabees appear as leading a response against the king's actions and persecutions. 1 Macc. ties the beginning of the battle to the doyen of the family, a priest from Modin Mattathias, who kills an official who has come to his hometown of Modin to encourage the inhabitants to make a sacrifice. 2 Macc. completely omits this character. Remarkably, the Maccabees appear in the persecution narratives like *Dei ex machina*. However, we learn a great deal about the family's declarative links to Israel's glorious past. Mattathias' deathbed speech presents the

32 See Grabbe 2020: 341–5.

33 The problem of the persecution continues to provoke debate. Although the acceptance of the inauthenticity of Antiochus' will to destroy Judaism is of *communis opinio*, the reconstruction of events in Jerusalem and Judea after 167 remains a matter of dispute; see summaries in Honigman 2014; Bernhardt 2017: 255–64; Grabbe 2020: 248–61; 345–58.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

family as a line of great figures in Israel's history (1 Macc. 2.52-60).[34] Of these, significance is ascribed to Pinchas, whose zeal in Num. 25 becomes a model for Mattathias acting in defence of legitimate worship (1 Macc 2.26). 1 Macc is clear on the idea that the family was chosen by God to lead the struggle (1 Macc 5.62). Whereas 2 Macc. furthermore leaves no doubt that Judah was the defender of the Temple, which had been attacked by the pagans.[35]

To sum up, the only thing we learn about the Maccabean family before they began their revolt to defend the Temple and Judaism is their connection to Modin and their priestly role. However, it seems impossible that their political career began only after the pacification. Barely known to the rest of the Judeans, the family would not have been in a position to lead a movement that opposed Menelaus. It must be assumed that representatives of the family were active in internal politics in Jerusalem, gaining recognition and trust, which they capitalised on in their own time. Comparing the Maccabees to the Oniads or Tobiads, Grabbe called them one of the 'mafiosa' families of Judea – a group that conducts local politics using various means of exerting influence and gathering its supporters.[36] We can only speculate about the role of the Maccabees in earlier events – whether Judah (or one of the brothers) sought to take on Jason, but was outmanoeuvred and changed strategy?[37] Were Maccabees active in the earlier quarrels over taxes that pitted Simon and Onias III against each other? These questions must remain unanswered. Their highly probable participation in political events in Jerusalem links them to the rivalries of the local elites. If, as Honigman suggests, they sought to participate in the polis of Jason but ended up being outmanoeuvred by him, then their adoption of Judaism and Judaen tradition against any Hellenistic influence was only a strategy employed to legitimise their position within the melee of factional infighting.

Whatever the case, the events linked to the pacification and the associated cultic events at the Temple meant the Maccabees were able to portray their struggle in terms of resistance against persecution, exploiting the resentment towards the high priest associated with the pacification carried out by the king and all its consequences. However, despite their declarative hostility to Hellenism, once they gained political supremacy in Judea, they became partners with some of the Seleucid rulers; and ended up participating in the political culture of the Hellenistic world (like Jonathan's participation in the wedding at Ptolemais).[38]

34 Reiterer 2007.

35 Doran 1981.

36 Grabbe 2020: 335.

37 As proposed by Honigman 2014: 377.

38 A potentially similar situation of elite rivalry had already taken place in Judah before the Hellenistic era. *Nehemiah's memoir* which forms a significant part of Nehemiah describes the rivalry of the governor of the Achaemenid province of Yehud in the second half of the fifth century accused by

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Conclusions

According to 2 Maccabees, the beginning of the events that led to the Maccabean rebellion started with Jason and Menelaus bidding for the high priesthood in response to Antiochus IV's anticipated increase in the tax revenue from Jerusalem. These events – without denying their wider dimension – can be interpreted as associative with the rivalry between the elite families of Judah. Such rivalry is already evident in the story of Joseph Tobiad and Onias II. In both cases, the opposing sides looked to negotiate with representatives of the imperial elite, to whom they sought to make the best possible offer; and by which they could strengthen their position within their community (as a tax farmer or high priest). The other side of these negotiations was to secure the favour of their compatriots and their partisans. The parties also struggled to stress their proximity to the monarch (Joseph Tobiad; Jason welcoming Antiochus IV to Jerusalem). However, this balance was fragile, as promises made to the king could backfire (the case of the Menelaus selling the temple vessels).

Contacts with the royal court also allowed the elites to obtain instruments that increased their power and helped to distinguish their party from the rest of the Judeans, thus arguably increasing the groups' cohesiveness. These were probably among Jason's objectives when he obtained permission from Antiochus to establish a polis in Jerusalem. Its establishment (similar to the Tyriaion in Asia Minor) allowed its participants to distinguish themselves (similarly to the *politai* in Babylon), allowing Jason to hope to build support among the elite who would remain loyal to him. On the other hand, those excluded from the polis could become a threat to Jason and the other *politai*. This was probably the same case for the Maccabees. Although we know nothing about them before the fighting began in 167, this family was likely already active in Judaean politics. In the aftermath of the pacifications, they could capitalise on their support by presenting themselves as defenders against those shown as persecutors and traitors.

However, the Maccabees would soon follow in the footsteps of their opponents. Having gained the upper hand in Judea, we see them participating in the Seleucid 'outer court' and receiving honours from the struggling Seleucids. The Maccabees, despite having sought to portray themselves as opponents of Hellenism, soon became important actors in the southern Levant. Although the kings from Antioch were in a weaker position than their predecessors back in the reign of Antiochus IV, their partners from Jerusalem soon stepped into the role of their enemies as being local elites negotiating with the imperial.

---

his opponents of wanting to rebel against the king. Significantly, Nehemiah presents himself as a governor appointed personally by Artaxerxes I. On the rivalry of local elites in the Persian era in the context of imperial politics, see Fitzpatrick – McKinley 2015.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Bibliography

Aperghis, G. G., (2004), *The Seleukid Royal Economy: The Finances and Financial Administration of the Seleukid Empire*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Babota, V., (2014), *The Institution of the Hasmonean High Priesthood*, JSJSup 165, Leiden/Boston: Brill.

Bernhardt, J. C., (2017), *Die jüdische Revolution: Untersuchungen zu Ursachen, Verlauf und Folgen der hasmonäischen Erhebung*, Klio Beihefte, Neue Folge 22, Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter.

Chrubasik, B., (2017), 'From Pre-Makkabaean Judea to Hekatomnid Karia and Back Again: The Question of Hellenization', in: B. Chrubasik and D. King (eds.), *Hellenism and the Local Communities of the Eastern Mediterranean (400 BCE – 250 CE)*, Oxford: Oxford University Press: 83–109.

Cotton, H. M., and M. Wörrle, (2007), 'Seleukos IV to Heliodoros: A New Dossier of Royal Correspondence from Israel', *ZPE* 159: 191–205.

Doran, R., (1981), *Temple Propaganda: The Purpose and Character of 2 Maccabees*, CBQMS 12, Washington DC: Catholic Biblical Association.

Doran, R., (2012), *2 Maccabees: A Critical Commentary*, ed. H. W. Atteridge, Minneapolis: Fortress.

Fitzpatrick–McKinley, A., (2015), *Empire, power and indigenous elites: a case study of the Nehemiah Memoir*, JSJSup 169, Leiden/Boston: Brill.

Gera, D., (1998), *Judaea and Mediterranean Politics 219 to 161 B.C.E*, BSJS 8, Leiden: Brill.

Gorre, G., (2009), *Les Relations du clergé égyptien et des Lagides d'après les sources privées*, Studia Hellenistica 45, Louvain: Peeters.

Gorre, G., and S. Honigman, (2014), 'La politique d'Antiochos IV à Jérusalem à la lumière des relations entre rois et temples aux époques perse et hellénistique (Babylonie, Judée et Égypte)', in: Ch. Feyel and L. Graslin (eds.), *Le Projet politique d'Antiochos IV (Journées d'études franco-allemandes, Nancy 17–19 juin 2013)*, Nancy: Presses Universitaires de Nancy; De Boccard: 301–33.

Grabbe, L. L., (2002), 'The Hellenistic City of Jerusalem', in: John R. Bartlett (ed.), *Jews in the Hellenistic and Roman Cities*, London: Routledge: 6–21.

Grabbe, L. L., (2008), *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period 2: The Coming of the Greeks: The Early Hellenistic Period (335–175 BCE)*, LSTS 68, London/New York: T & T Clark.

Grabbe, L. L., (2022), *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period 3: The Maccabean Revolt, Hasmonean Rule, and Herod the Great (175–4 BCE)*, LSTS 95, London/New York: T & T Clark.

Hengel, M., (1988), *Judentum und Hellenismus. Studien zu ihrer Begegnung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Palästinas bis zur Mitte des 2 Jh.s v. Chr*, WUNT 10, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Honigman, S., (2014), *Tales of High Priests and Taxes: The Books of the Maccabees and the Judean Rebellion against Antiochos IV*, Oakland, CA: University of California Press.

Jonnes L., and M. Ricl, (1997), 'A New Royal Inscription from the Phrygia Paroreios: Eumenes II Grants Tyriaion the Status of *Polis*', *Epigraphica Anatolica* 29: 1–30.

Ma, J., (1999), *Antiochos III and the Cities of Western Asia Minor*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Momigliano, A., (1931–2), 'I Tobiadi nella preistoria del Moto Maccabaico', *Atti della Reale Accademia delle Scienze di Torino* 67: 165–200.

Monerie, J., (2012), 'Notabilité urbaine et administration locale en Babylonie du sud aux époques séleucide et parthe', in: Ch. Feyel, J. Fournier, L. Graslin, and F. Kirbihler (eds.), *Communautés locales et pouvoir central dans l'Orient hellénistique et romain*, Études anciennes 47, Nancy/Paris: 327–52.

Reiterer, F. V., (2007), 'Die Vergangenheit als Basis für die Zukunft Mattatias' Lehre für Seine Söhne aus der Geschichte in 1 Makk. 2: 52–60', in: J. Zsengellér and G. G. Xeravits (eds.), *The Books of Maccabees: History, Theology, Ideology*, SJOT 118, Leiden: Brill: 78–100.

Sartre, M., (2014), 'Histoire et mémoire(s) des Maccabées', in: M.-F. Baslez and O. Munnich (eds.), *La mémoire des persécutions. Autour des livres des Maccabées*, Collection de la Revue des Études Juives 56, Leuven: Peeters: 1–20.

Schwartz, D. R., (2008), *2 Maccabees*, CEJL, Berlin: de Gruyter.

Spek van der, R. J., (1987), 'The Babylonian City', in: A. Kuhrt and S. Sherwin-White (eds.), *Hellenism in the East: The Interaction of Greek and Non-Greek Civilizations from Syria to Central Asia after Alexander*, London: Duckworth: 57–74.

Strootman, R., (2013), 'Babylonian, Macedonian, King of the World: The Antiochos Cylinder from Borsippa and Seleukid Imperial Integration', in: E. Stavrianopoulou (eds.), *Shifting Social Imaginaries in the Hellenistic Period: Narrations, Practices, and Images*, MNS 363, Leiden – Boston: Brill: 67–97.

Tcherikover, V. A., (1959), *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews*, New York: Jewish Publication Society.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Łukasz Niesiołowski-Spanò

Biblical Authorship and Greek Literary Tradition

Framework Considerations[1]

Introduction

The study of possible links between the Hebrew Bible and the texts originating from the neighboring cultures may be described in two main categories. To simplify – the first one is analytical in nature and aims at indicating possible narrative parallels in Akkadian, Hittite, Persian, Egyptian or Greek literature, on the one hand, and Biblical literature, on the other, allows for new interpretations of particular literary themes. For some Biblical scholars and historians of the Biblical text and scholars of ancient literatures, pointing out narrative parallels is sometimes a goal in itself. For the historian, indicating possible parallels in the narratives is not – or should not be – a goal, but merely a first step in the study that will allow for the posing of new questions. I do not want the above remark to demean the importance of literary and philological studies of ancient literature and Biblical texts[2]. In fact, they are fundamental and, especially when done in accordance with critical methods, essential for further research. And this brings us to the second level conventionally regarded as the synthetic plane, which consists in reconstructing the contexts wherein cultural exchange could have taken place; to include: social, religious, political, economic, demographic, cultural circumstances wherein the content produced by one culture was taken over and absorbed by the authors of another culture. In what follows, I will endeavor to explore and assess the reasons and circumstances in which writers of the Hebrew Bible may have borrowed themes from Greek culture and incorporated them into the texts of the Scriptures. Furthermore, I will look to illustrate how such borrowings allow us to paint a picture of the Jewish elites responsible for the composition of the Bible.

In order not to fall into the trap of parallelomania, in which two apparently similar entities are considered dependent on each other, one should be guided by certain criteria[3]. Therefore, it is necessary to indicate the time and place of possible

1 This article was written as part of the project financed by the National Science Centre, Poland (UMO-2016/23/B/HS3/01880). I would like to thank Barry Keane for his valuable comments and improving the final version of this text.

2 Brown 1995–2001; Wajdenbaum 2014.

3 Thompson (2014) claims that the direct dependence can be traced only in the case of the uniqueness of the texts.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

cultural transfer and its function, as well as – even if only in a model way – the people responsible for this process. This principle applies not only to the explanation of literary transfers, i. e. elite activities taking place at the top of social pyramids, but also in the process of cultural transfer pertaining to political, social, or economic institutions[4]. The origin of the Greek alphabet is a perfect example. At the analytical level, we know that the Phoenician alphabet inspired the Greeks to create their own writing system. At the synthetic level, we can explain quite safely why such borrowing came about; the alphabet was more practical than syllabic writing. We know, however, only approximately when this transfer may have occurred; but we do not know where, and we can only characterize those responsible for this transfer in a very general and speculative way.

Mythologies and Literary Motifs

Studies describing the parallels between themes in Biblical and Greek literature often limit themselves to identifying literary analogies as such; without attempting to specify the direction of the dependence. After all, whether we are dealing with a borrowing or a universal theme, a situation in which the presence of a theme in the Bible and the Greek tradition only proves a common source. Sometimes scholars are inclined to indicate where one culture inspired another. In some of the scholarly literature, we find clear attempts to argue for the dominance of the Orient and its influence on the Greek world[5]. It is not difficult to detect in these endeavors an echo of more general research trends. Classicists, especially in the second half of the 20th century, sought explanations for the phenomenon of Greek exceptionality as the result of the Oriental inspirations. This happened, among other things, thanks to the increase of the accessibility of the cuneiform literature. In part, Oriental inspiration is an element present in ancient Greek intellectual culture itself, hence it is not surprising that it has been addressed by contemporary scholars.

In other works, authors try to argue that it was the tradition of the Greeks that influenced the Biblical authors[6]. Hypotheses seeking Greek inspiration for themes present in the Old Testament usually originate in the circles of Bible scholars. These involve challenging the consensus on the dating of Biblical texts (see below) and indicating the sources of the uniqueness of the Bible, particularly against the background of the wider Middle Eastern literature.

4 For the theoretical model of intercultural transfer, see Niesiołowski-Spanò 2016, 259–263.

5 Gordon 1955; 1962; Astour 1965; West 1997.

6 E. g. Wajdenbaum 2014; Gmirkin 2006; 2017; Römer 2015; Louden 2011; 2019.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Often, however, research that aims to indicate an analogy overuses the diffusion model and thus sees a direct dependence of two similar motifs, ruling out the possibility of its origin in a third source, or indirect dependence. For it is not always the case that narrative analogies, even when supported by the argument of linguistic similarity[7], prove the direct dependence of one literary tradition on another. For there are two scenarios, competing with the diffusion model of mutual dependence. Firstly, there is the possibility that the two cultures used a motif from a common source; that is, a culture with which the authors of both sources available to us depended on. Thus, it is possible to explain the Greek and Biblical literary analogies looking to a common inspiration from the heritages of, say, Anatolia, Cyprus or Phoenicia. In other words, in cultures whose heritage has been preserved to a lesser extent than the literature of the Greeks and Hebrews. Secondly, it is possible that what we recognize as narrative analogies are traces of the widespread and even common occurrence of a motif in many cultures. In this model, it is difficult to identify the original inspiration, since motifs can be present in multiple versions in different cultures; and sometimes neither the direction of dependence nor the time of interaction can be determined. We are therefore dealing with migrating motifs, with a universal status, although the state of preservation of the sources can sometimes suggest the presence of a particular motif only in Greece and the Biblical world.

The eastern Mediterranean in antiquity is certainly more internally connected than we sometimes might have thought, with traces of intercultural exchange even over long distances. We have common cultural elements, the manifestations of which we can trace in many regions of the ancient world[8]. We certainly also have incidents of direct influence of one culture on another. The difficulty in historical reconstruction is that we sometimes too hastily take accidental or universal similarity as evidence of mutual dependence. This is generally the case with single narrative motifs. Usually, it is impossible to point to an original, and the literary attractiveness of a particular motif makes it impossible to trace narrative trails between cultures.

Thomas L. Thompson seems to be right in suggesting that avoiding the error of parallelomania is only possible for motifs of a unique and non-universal nature[9]. I still think that the similarity between the story of the creation of mankind in Genesis and Plato's writings is too close, and the motif itself too unusual to be coincidental[10]. In this case, it may represent a defensible example of a unique Greek philosophical motif, taken over and creatively reused by the authors of Genesis.

7 Cf. Rosół 2013.

8 Niesiołowski-Spanò, Węcowski 2018.

9 Thompson 2014; cf. Tobolowsky 2024.

10 Niesiołowski-Spanò 2007. Cf. Kozłowski, Poloczek 2022.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

For sure, not other way around. However, not in all cases of literary and linguistic analogies between Greek and Biblical literature can a mutual dependence be proven. Indeed, it is safer to reconstruct this process of cross-cultural transfer not in the case of isolated literary motifs, but in the case of larger, intrinsically complex concepts, such as entire literary genres, and theological or philosophical concepts.

Biblical and Greek Historiography

The number of publications identifying parallels between Greek and Biblical historiography, both at the micro level (individual plots) and at the macro level (the concept of writing history) has clearly increased over the past two decades[11]. Therefore, much has changed since the publications of Arnaldo Momogliano, who pointed out the narrative similarities between Biblical and Greek historiographies[12]; and the main point of progress concerns the dating of the Biblical texts. This change contributed significantly to the choice of a vector to indicate the direction in which cultural borrowing might have occurred. Momogliano was writing at a time when the Deuteronomistic historiographical corpus was usually dated to the end of the seventh and beginning of the sixth century BCE, which ruled out the possibility of its being modeled on Herodotus' *Histories* not to mention later Greek authors[13]. Today, some Biblical scholars are inclined to date the greatest literary effort of the authors of Biblical historiography to the Persian period, dating Deuteronomy to the beginning of that era[14], and the historiographical narrative – depending on the ideology or worldview contained in the book of Deuteronomy – to a correspondingly later period[15]. With a dating of the Biblical historiography to the late Persian period, or even the early Hellenistic period[16], nothing stands in the way of claiming the dependence of the historiographical literature produced in the parochial province of Yehud on classical Greek literature. The transfer of historiography should be seen as a more sophisticated phenomenon than the mere borrowing of literary plots, myths, or fanciful stories. The creation of a historical narrative – growing out of the philosophical stem of a reflection on the world – requires a critical judgment of cause and effect placed within a linear discourse. This is therefore not a simple

11 Nielsen 1997; Wesselius 2002; Gmirkin 2006; 2017; Sano 2021. For the comparison of Biblical and Roman historiography see e. g. Rüpke 2021.

12 Momigliano 1971; 1981, 25–32; 1990, 5–28.

13 Cf. Halpern, Lemaire 2010.

14 Pakkala 2009. Cf. Bultman 2001: 136–137.

15 Niesiołowski-Spanò 2021a.

16 Gmirkin 2017.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

collection of instructive tales, but evidence of a rational vision of the world, its development, and the didactic value of the very fact of describing the past[17].

One should apply certain criteria in order to reconstruct the possible circumstances of cross-cultural transfer. Furthermore, one might pose the question about time, place, and possible circumstances of borrowing and cross-cultural inspirations between the elite of Judah and the Greek world.

Although we have clear traces of the influence of Greek culture, in its Mycenaean and early archaic forms, on the inhabitants of Palestine at the end of the second millennium BCE[18], it is impossible to date the transfer of sophisticated literary content to that early period[19]. In the later periods we have traces of Greek–Levantine contacts, intensified by the Greek presence at Naukratis in Egypt[20] and up to the time when Greek mercenaries in the second half of the seventh century BCE were recorded in the armies of Pharaoh Psammeticus and Necho II[21]. We also know of the presence of Greek troops in the last quarter of the seventh century in Yavne-Yam[22], and it is probably tenable to argue for their presence at the same time in southern Judah – as indicated by the ostraca of Arad[23]. But were these contacts sufficient to establish suitable conditions for a transfer of literary themes? Even if members of the elite predominated among the Greek mercenaries, such as the brother of the poet Alkaios of Mitylene who took part in military campaign of 605 BCE, were these occasions sufficient for the borrowing of sophisticated literature? During the Persian period, Greeks certainly appeared in the Levant, just as their export products appeared. We know of travelers, political refugees, artisans, and physicians in the service of Persian kings,[24] but their presence is attested away from Judah, concentrated in the centers of the Persian state or in the cities of Phoenicia and Egypt. Judah, as a depopulated and ultra-peripheral region in the fifth and fourth centuries, does not furnish us with traces of Greek imports. We do not know to what extent the Greek influence, evident in Phoenicia and Samaria, may have influenced Judah's interior[25]. Is it possible, then, to imagine circumstances of deep intellectual exchange between representatives of the Judean and Greek elite in the Persian era?

17 Niesiołowski–Spanò 2018.

18 Niesiołowski–Spanò 2014; 2016; 2022.

19 Cf. Rollinger 2014 who advocates the possibility of Oriental inspirations of Homer in the 8th century BCE.

20 Fantalkin 2014.

21 Fantalkin, Lytle 2016; Miller, Hayes 1986, 389.

22 Fantalkin 2001.

23 Aharoni 1981.

24 Rollinger 2009; Poloczek, Ziemba 2023.

25 The imports of the Greek artefacts in the Phoenician cities and Samaria may indicate the possible places of contact, however outside Judah.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

The answer is positive, albeit in the absence of evidence we can only speculate. It is possible for Jewish intellectuals to have traveled outside Levant, including visits to Greece. It is possible for members of the Jewish elite to have served in the Persian army, including the troops stationed in Ionia; and therefore in close proximity to important centers of Greek culture such as Miletus and Ephesus. It is also possible for members of the Jewish elite to have met Greek intellectuals in Susa, Persepolis, or other political centers of the Persian state[26].

There are, however, two arguments against considering the Persian period as the best time for the Jewish elite to have adopted Greek intellectual acquisitions. First, the circumstances listed above are possible; though we have no corroboration for them. Second, the question of the language of communication remains a difficulty. We have no trace of knowledge of Greek on the part of the Judeans of the Persian period, so the most likely language of communication at that time must have been Aramaic. Despite the existence of evidence of the use of Aramaic in the fifth-fourth centuries to produce sophisticated literature[27], the idea of a conversation being conducted in Aramaic between a Greek and a Jewish intellectual remains only a theoretical model. It is therefore possible to imagine circumstances that allowed Jewish elites in the Persian period to become familiar with the heritage of Greek culture, including historiography. However, this requires a number of assumptions to be made; and remains only a possible scenario for which historical evidence is lacking. The situation is different with the later times. During the Hellenistic period, Greek culture became incomparably closer to Judah. Not only the cities of Phoenicia, but also the polis in Samaria and the inhabitants of the Decapolis were active recipients and creators of Greek culture. The profound process of Hellenization must have affected the indigenous heritage. Indeed, its impact can be seen in the Idumean elites of Maresha living in close proximity to Judah, or the Jewish elites of the third and second centuries: both those living in Judah and in the Egyptian diaspora, for whom knowledge of Greek became a matter of natural necessity.

How much easier it is to imagine the process of inspiration, adoption and creative adaptation of Greek historiographical models by the Jewish elite at a time when they were undergoing intense Greek acculturation, thanks to the paideia available throughout almost the entire region of the ancient Near East[28].

Two conclusions follow from this reasoning. Firstly, while some scholars agree that Biblical literature, including mythological themes, and historiography, was

---

26 Rollinger 2009.

27 Niesiołowski–Spanò 2021b.

28 Spronk (2015: 271) concludes his article comparing Judges and the Greek literature, as follows: "We may conclude that it is not only possible to read the book of Judges against a Hellenistic background, but also plausible that this book was written and edited by someone living in the early Hellenistic period and familiar with Greek literature".

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

inspired by the Greek tradition, we must recognize that it is more likely that this process occurred in the Hellenistic rather than the Persian period. Therefore, some Biblical texts should be dated later than usually proposed by commentators. Secondly, the ideological picture presented in the books of Maccabees and Ezra, assuming a xenophobic division of the world into the descendants of Jacob – the "good" followers of one god, and "evil" impious strangers and pagans, was merely an ideologically driven literary concept, extraneous to the authors of the Bible themselves, who drew extensively on the heritage of pagan Greek thought[29].

A historical reappraisal

The possible contact zones where encounters between Judean intellectuals and those capable of transmitting sophisticated content originated in the Greek world have been the subject of research in recent times[30]. As I mentioned above, the suitable contact zones and circumstances for cross-cultural transmission in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE are plausible, however, there is no clear source evidence. Without deciding at this point in which period and under what circumstances this process of intercultural diffusion should be placed, I want here to hint at two issues that require further consideration.

Firstly, was there a cross-local, universal community of intellectual authors and readers? The answer to this question touches an area that lies beyond the historian's purview. We can only speculate on the basis of circumstantial evidence. For different historical epochs, it has been postulated that there was in the Mediterranean region a certain cultural unity of elites that formed a supra-local network of communication through an elite cultural code. Even if one does not acknowledge the full flow of ideas between elites of different regions, it is often postulated that there existed a set of values and common ideas that allowed the inhabitants of different regions embedded in different cultures to build bridges of communication, which also serviced the exchange of goods and intellectual content. This issue is related to the question of the language of communication.

The dating of most of the books of the Hebrew Bible to the Persian era prevails nowadays in scholarship. This is the result of a scrambling of old paradigms and a kind of compromise between the old view of the formation of significant portions of the Bible in the royal era and the uncompromising dating of the Hebrew Bible to the Hellenistic period[31]. Some Bible scholars who see proto-Deuteronomy as

29 Niesiołowski-Spanò 2020.

30 Poloczek, Ziemba 2023.

31 See, the already classical article: Lemche 1993.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

a work of the late seventh century, date the greatest intellectual effort of the authors of the Hebrew Bible to the fifth and fourth centuries BCE. Making this assumption, one would have to consider Jewish intellectual circles interacting with Greek thought through oral transmission in Aramaic. As it was said above, knowledge of Greek by individual Jewish intellectuals in the Persian period cannot be ruled out, but neither can it be proven, or even illustrated, by any source evidence. The existence of Jewish intellectual circles in the Persian period who spoke Aramaic is certain. Indeed, the existence of sophisticated Aramaic literature – poetry, religious works, and wisdom texts – is proven by the Words of Ahiqar[32], or the papyrus Amherst 63[33]. However, there is neither an Aramaic epitome of the Herodotus' *Histories* nor an Aramaic version of the *Odyssey* or *Iliad*. As long as we do not see the existence of such texts, then it is safe to conclude that their content (main plots, and individual motifs) may have been transmitted apart from the written text, and therefore in oral conveyance. So somewhere, in those contacts zones that are difficult to grasp, the participants relayed literary texts, or particular plots of them; or certain literary and philosophical concepts. If this were the case, then borrowing between the Greek tradition and the Biblical text would have two intermediate stages: first, translation into the language of communication – most probably Aramaic, and second, a shift from the text in its written form to an orally summarized version. We should remember: *traduttore traditore*. So, if this is the way things were supposed to go, the Greek original would have been subjected to at least two twists, and interpretations, or maybe misrepresentations. This means that only the essence, the essentials, were subjected to transmission in an unchanging way. The very forms and details might have been lost in the process of translation. Such a reconstruction of the very process of cross-cultural transmission would be skeptically received by those scholars who see in the Hebrew Bible not only distant echoes of Greek inspiration, but clear literal references and allusions. Literal parallels can hardly be found in a process so subject to distortion and corruption. However, if one were to pursue this hypothesis further, in order to defend the axiom that Biblical texts originated in the Persian period, one would have to imagine the existence of a supra-local elite of the Persian empire (including the Greeks, most plausibly in the borderlands of Ionia) speaking and writing in Aramaic. This is probably not a picture unpleasant to the heart of the historians of the Persian period[34].

What if the process of inspiration by the Greek authors and the writing of large parts of the Hebrew Bible under the influence of Hellenistic literature took place

32 Cowley 1923, 204–248; Becking, 2020, 99–118.

33 Van der Toorn 2018.

34 Gzella 2021.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

during the third or even second century BCE? Maybe the meetings and contact between representatives of these cultures were held in Greek? Maybe these sought-after contact zones were in close proximity to Judah, where users of Greek culture lived, including Jerusalem itself? Can the Hellenized and openly stating so, Biblical writers, such as the author of the Book of Sirach or 1–2 Maccabees, as well as the crypto-Hellenists, such as the author of Genesis 1 and Deuteronomistic historiography, be placed among the Hellenistic, supra-local intellectual elite? Would their Jewishness urge us to deny it? Each of us will say without hesitation that the authors of the Biblical texts written in Greek (such as Judith, Maccabees), and the authors of para-biblical literature composed in Greek (e. g., Demetrios, Eupolemus), despite their faith, were typical examples of the Hellenized elites of the Orient. Neither faith, nor other self-identity was an obstacle here. History provides examples for representatives of such an elite – the priests of the Oniades family, the Jerusalem priests: Jason, and Menelaos, as well as the members of the Tobiad family. One will probably hesitate, however, when looking at the authors writing in Hebrew, whom I would labeled here as crypto-Hellenists. What if, too, those who wrote in Hebrew, i. e. in the language of their God began their mornings with gymnasium exercises, with talks on Greek philosophy and with readings of classical Greek poets and writers? Only in the evening did they make their own synthesis of what was local, and therefore expressed in Hebrew, with what was fashionable, enlightened, wise. If one were to imagine such Jewish elites, then the tension between tradition and novelty would disappear and it would be easier to see the atmosphere for the emergence of a hybrid culture written in Hebrew, and therefore for a narrow audience, but drawing on what was interesting in the intellectual circulation of Greek *paideia*[35].

Secondly, still assuming that the authors of the Bible were familiar with and inspired by Greek texts and traditions, were the original recipients of the Biblical texts aware of the intellectual game being played by the authors of these texts? Thus, were the readers or hearers of the Hebrew text of Genesis 1, or of the Deuteronomistic historiography, or of some of the themes of Exodus, and Judges, aware that they would not have come into being without Greek inspiration, or rather, that their final shape was due to a process of reception and creative response? In other words, did they recognize their own literature as imitative, and if so, did they consider this mimetic feature a value or a weakness? Let us remember that originality, in the sense of innovativeness, was not necessarily an equally valued aspect of a literature in antiquity. Thus, there is no ancient literary masterpiece if it does not enter into dialogue with earlier works.

35 Cf. Honigman, Nihan, Lipschits 2021.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

One may even claim that authors of the Bible writing in Hebrew during the Hellenistic period, tried with all their might to inscribe their work in older literary and intellectual traditions, even (or perhaps especially?) if they were of foreign origins. Moreover, I would argue that this appreciation of foreign, especially Greek, culture was not only a feature of the writers, but of the entire body of the Bible's original audience[36].

The idea of the story of the God of Israel and his people having been written in a language accessible only to a limited audience with the help of references to Greek literary prototypes must be considered from an intellectual perspective as a very sophisticated intellectual endeavor. Writing about a jealous God, about a chosen people, who thanks to their status – the chosen people – are different from the rest of the world, expressing xenophobic and intolerant judgments that strike against freedom of worship, by referring to a culture that carries a clear universalistic aspect, becomes not so much the voice of a nationalist as the voice of an ironist. It is like the author of the books of Maccabees speaking of the sins of the Hellenists, whose greatest fault lies in promoting Greek culture; and all the whilst protesting in written Greek!

We have a great opportunity for a new reading of at least some of the Biblical literature. Recognizing that we are dealing with texts addressed to the inner circle of intellectuals who are aware of the dialogue between the Biblical texts and the foreign inspirations, perhaps we will be able to read them not so much as religious reproaches addressed to the faithful Jewish group, but as self-ironic intellectual constructions, representing the height of intellectual sophistication. Authors profoundly "Hellenized" their tradition by dressing it in Hebrew garments. They Hellenized their view of God and the world without becoming Greeks themselves. Is this evidence of the intellectuals' loftiness, who atop their ivory tower conduct intellectual entertainment, misleading the little ones with appearances? Is there a great mystification here, where one talks about tradition, uniqueness, closure and separation from the outside world, etc., but in fact flirts with this world, drawing all the water from its well? Or perhaps, like those masterpieces of Greek literature, the Hebrew Bible is unique because of its ability to be innovative and exploratory while immersed in its local intellectual heritage. It would therefore be dual in both fields. The literature is anchored in the local tradition of Judah and at the same time in the tradition of the Greeks. The novelty of these texts, however, is initially perceived only by a narrow circle of readers. For the text to be read more widely as innovative it was necessary to make it universally accessible. Thus the Septuagint, and later all other translations, were somewhat of a necessity.

36 Cf. Niesiołowski-Spanò 2018.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Conclusions

I would like the above discussion to be taken as general hypotheses about theoretical models by which we might describe the places and circumstances of contact between the authors of the Bible and the outside world. Recently, scholars have proposed more and more examples of analogies between Biblical and Greek texts. If we agree that Biblical literature was created in dialogue with and recourse to Greek, then our approach to the study of the Biblical texts and its authorship should apply a certain conceptual grid with which to theorize the whole process. As I have tried to show, this process should begin with historical reasoning, which, even on the basis of flawed source material, can propose some interpretive hypotheses. Thus, the challenge before us is to decide whether we recognize Greek influence as an important component that formed the Bible. If we do, then, I believe, we will be able to re-evaluate the world of the authors of the Bible, their intentions, and the message contained in the various texts of the Hebrew Bible.

Bibliography

Aharoni, Y., (1981), *Arad Inscriptions*, Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society.

Astour, M. C., (1965), *Hellenosemitica: an Ethnic and Cultural Study in West Semitic Impact on Mycenaean Greece*, Leiden: Brill.

Becking, B., (2020), *Identity in Persian Egypt. The Faith of the Yehudite Community of Elephantine*, University Park: The Pennsylvania University Press.

Brown, J. P., (1995–2001), *Israel and Hellas*. Vol. 1–3. BZAW 231, 276, 299. Berlin – New York: de Gruyter.

Bultman, Ch., (2001), 'Deuteronomy', in: J. Barton and J. Muddiman (eds.), *Oxford Bible Commentary*, Oxford: Oxford University Press: 135–158.

Cowley, A., (1923), *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Fantalkin, A., (2001), 'Mezad Hashavyahu: Its Material Culture and Historical Background', *Tel Aviv* 28: 3–165.

Fantalkin, A., (2014), 'Naukratis as a Contact Zone: Revealing the Lydian Connection', in: R. Rollinger and K. Schnegg (eds.), *Kulturkonekte in Antiken Welten: Vom Denkmodell Zum Fallbeispiel*, Colloquia Antiqua 10, Leuven: 27–51.

Fantalkin, A., and E. Lytle, (2016), 'Alcaeus and Antimenides: Reassessing the Evidence for Greek Mercenaries in the Neo-Babylonian Army', Klio 98:1: 90–117.

Gmirkin, R., (2006), *Berossus and Genesis, Manetho and Exodus. Hellenistic Histories and the Date of the Pentateuch*. LHBOTS 433. London – New York: T & T Clark.

Gmirkin, R., (2017), *Plato and the creation of Hebrew Bible*, New York: Routledge.

Gordon, C. H., (1955), "Homer and the Bible: The Origin and Character of East Mediterranean Literature". HUCA 26: 43–108.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Gordon, C. H., (1962), *Before the Bible: the Common Background of Greek and Hebrew Civilisations*. London: Books for Libraries Press.

Gzella, H., (2021), 'Aramaic sources', in: B. Jacobs and R. Rollinger (eds.), *A Companion to the Achaemenid Persian Empire*, Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell: 117–131.

Halpern, B., and A. Lemaire, (2010), 'The Composition of Kings', in: A. Lemaire and B. Halpern (eds.), *The Book of Kings. Sources, Composition, Historiography and Reception*, SVT 129, Leiden – Boston: Brill: 123–153.

Honigman, S., Ch. Nihan, and O. Lipschitz, (2021), *Times of Transition. Judea in the Early Hellenistic Period*, MOSAICS 1, Tel Aviv: Eisenbrauns.

Kozłowski, J., and S. Poloczek, (2022), 'Ogygia and Eden. The Odyssean Background of Genesis 2–3', *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 98/4: 621–637.

Lemche, N. P., (1993), 'The Old Testament – a Hellenistic book?', *SJOT* 7: 163–193.

Louden, B., (2011), *Homer's Odyssey and the Near East*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Louden, B., (2019), *Greek Myths and the Bible*, London – New York: Routledge.

Miller, M. J., and J. H. Hayes, (1986), *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah*. Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press.

Momigliano, A., (1971), *Alien Wisdom. The limits of Hellenisation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Momigliano, A., (1981), 'Biblical and Classical Studies. Simple Reflections upon Historical Method', *ASNSP* 11: 25–32.

Momigliano, A., (1990), *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography*. Berkeley – Los Angeles – Oxford: University of California Press.

Nielsen, F. A. J., (1997), *The Tragedy in History. Herodotus and the Deuteronomistic History*. LHBOTS 251. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

Niesiołowski-Spanò, Ł., (2007), 'Primeval History in the Persian Period?', *SJOT*, 21: 106–126.

Niesiołowski-Spanò, Ł., (2014), 'The Philistines as intermediaries between the Aegean and the Near East', in: Th. L. Thompson and Ph. Wajdenbaum (eds.), *The Bible and Hellenism. Greek Influence on Jewish and Early Christian Literature*, Durham: Acumen: 89–101.

Niesiołowski-Spanò, Ł., (2016), *Goliath's Legacy. Philistines and Hebrews in Biblical Times*, Philippika 83, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.

Niesiołowski-Spanò, Ł., (2018), 'Athens and Jerusalem, again. The New Paradigm of the Jewish and Greek Intercultural Relationships?', in: R. Koliński, J. Prostko-Prostyński, and W. Tyborowski (eds.), Awīlum ša ana la mašê – *man who can not be forgotten. Studies in in Honor of Prof. Stefan Zawadzki presented on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday*, AOAT 463, Münster: Ugarit-Verlag: 161–169.

Niesiołowski-Spanò, Ł., (2020), 'The Abraham and Esau-Jacob Stories in the Context of the Maccabean Period', in: Ł. Niesiołowski-Spanò and E. Pfoh (eds.), *Biblical Narratives, Archaeology and Historicity. Essays in Honour of Thomas L. Thompson*, LHB/OTS 680, London: Bloomsbury: 49–61.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Niesiołowski-Spanò, Ł., (2021a), 'Why Was Biblical History Written during the Persian Period? Persuasive Aspects of Biblical Historiography and Its Political Context, or Historiography as an Anti-Mnemonic Literary Genre', in: J. Unsok Ro and D. Edelman (eds.), *Collective Memory and Collective Identity: Case Studies in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History*, BZAW 534, Berlin – New York: de Gruyyter: 353–376.

Niesiołowski-Spanò, Ł., (2021b), 'Schools, Education, and Wisdom', in: B. Jacobs and R. Rollinger (eds.), *A Companion to the Achaemenid Persian Empire*, Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell: 1303–1314.

Niesiołowski-Spanò, Ł., (2022), 'The Sea Peoples and the Conquest of Canaan: Aspects of Early Iron Age Mediterranean Migration', in: J. Godlewicz-Adamiec and P. Piszczatowski (eds.), *Vagabunden – Flüchtlinge – Eroberer. Vormoderne Migrationsprozesse zwischen geschichtlichen Metanarrativen und Postkolonialismus*, Interkulturelle Rhizome 1, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz: 67–80.

Niesiołowski-Spanò, Ł., and M. Węcowski, (eds.) (2018), *Change, Continuity, and Connectivity. North- Eastern Mediterranean at the turn of the Bronze Age and in the early Iron Age*. Philippika 118, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Pakkala, J., (2009), 'The Date of the Oldest Edition of Deuteronomy', *ZAW* 121: 388–401.

Poloczek, S., and K. Ziemba, (2023), 'Greece and Yehud in the Achaemenid Period: The Background of Cultural Transfer', *SJOT* 37/2: 262–289.

Rollinger, R., (2009), 'New observations on "Greeks" in the Achaemenid empire according to cuneiform texts from Babylonia and Persepolis', in: P. Briant and M. Chauveau (eds.), *Organisation des pouvoirs et contacts culturels dans les pays de l'empire achéménide*, Persika 14. Paris: Editions de Boccard: 331–349.

Rollinger, R., (2014), 'Homer and the Ancient Near East. Some Considerations on Intercultural Affairs', in: I. Lindstedt et al. (eds.), *Case Studies in Transmission*, Münster: Ugarit-Verlag: 131–142.

Römer, T., (2015), 'The Hebrew Bible and Greek Philosophy and Mythology – Some Case Studies', *Semitica* 57: 185–203.

Rosół, R., (2013), *Frühe semitische Lehnwörter im Griechischen*, Frankfurt: Peter Lang.

Rüpke, J., (2021), 'Memorizing the Past and Writing Religion in the Roman Republic', in: J. Unsok Ro and D. Edelman (eds.), *Collective Memory and Collective Identity: Case Studies in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History*, BZAW 534, Berlin – New York: de Gruyter: 395–426.

Sano, Y., (2021), 'Memory, Identity and Theodicy in Io's Journey: The Representation of Io in Prometheus Bound', in: J. Unsok Ro and D. Edelman (eds.), *Collective Memory and Collective Identity: Case Studies in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History*, BZAW 534, Berlin – New York: de Gruyter: 377–394.

Spronk, K., (2015), 'Comparing the Book of Judges to Greek Literature', in: M.C.A. Korpel and L.L. Grabbe (eds.), *Open-Mindedness in the Bible and Beyond. A Volume of Studies in Honour of Bob Becking*, LHB/OTS 616, London – New York: Bloomsbury: 261–271.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Thompson, T. L., (2014), 'Narrative reiteration and comparative literature: problems in defining dependency', in: Th.L. Thompson and Ph. Wajdenbaum (eds.), *The Bible and Hellenism. Greek Influence on Jewish and Early Christian Literature*, Durham: Acumen: 102–113.

Tobolowsky, A., (2024), 'On Comparisons with Ancient Greek Traditions: Lessons from the Mid-Century', *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 23,6.

Van der Toorn, K., (2018), *Papyrus Amherst 63*, AOAT 448, Münster: Ugarit-Verlag.

Wajdenbaum, Ph., (2014), *Argonauts of the Desert: Structural Analysis of the Hebrew Bible*, London: Routledge.

Wesselius, J.-W., (2002), *Origin of the History of Israel: Herodotus' Histories as Blueprint for the First Books of the Bible*. LHBOTS 345. London – New York: T & T Clark.

West, M., (1997), *The East Face of Helicon: West Asiatic Elements in Greek Poetry and Myth*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

© 2024 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
https://doi.org/10.13109/9783666522208 | CC BY-NC-ND 4.0