

TRANSLATIONS OF EARLY DOCUMENTS
SERIES I

PALESTINIAN JEWISH TEXTS
(PRE-RABBINIC)

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JEWISH DOCUMENTS OF THE
TIME OF EZRA

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JEWISH DOCUMENTS OF THE TIME OF EZRA

TRANSLATED FROM THE ARAMAIC

BY
A. COWLEY



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TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF
THE HOUSE OF COMMONS
IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED



1911

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EDITORS' PREFACE

THE object of this series of translations is primarily to furnish students with short, cheap, and handy text-books, which, it is hoped, will facilitate the study of the particular texts in class under competent teachers. But it is also hoped that the volumes will be acceptable to the general reader who may be interested in the subjects with which they deal. It has been thought advisable, as a general rule, to restrict the notes and comments to a small compass; more especially as, in most cases, excellent works of a more elaborate character are available. Indeed, it is much to be desired that these translations may have the effect of inducing readers to study the larger works.

Our principal aim, in a word, is to make some difficult texts, important for the study of Christian origins, more generally accessible in faithful and scholarly translations.

In most cases these texts are not available in a cheap and handy form. In one or two cases texts have been included of books which are available in the official Apocrypha; but in every such case reasons exist for putting forth these texts in a new translation, with an Introduction, in this series.

W. O. E. OESTERLEY.
G. H. BOX.

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INTRODUCTION

THE Papyri translated in this volume were found, probably all at Elephantine, together with others not included here, between the years 1898 and 1908. No. 27 was published by Euting in the *Mémoires présentés . . . à l'Académie des Inscriptions* (Paris, 1903); No. 11 by Cowley in the *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* for 1903; Nos. 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13-15, 20, 25, 28 by Sayce and Cowley in *Aramaic Papyri Discovered at Assuan* (London, 1906); the rest, published by Sachau in *Aramäische Papyrus . . .* (Leipzig, 1911), are now translated into English, mostly for the first time. The last two publications contain excellent facsimiles. The texts have given occasion to a very considerable literature, dealing with the many interesting questions which they raise in history, religion and language.¹

Documents on papyrus, such as these, have a special interest, because they preserve to us the actual words and writing of a remote past. In fact, they are records contemporary with the events to which they relate, and are therefore (like inscriptions) first-hand historical evidence, uncorrupted by the errors which inevitably appear when a text is transmitted by repeated copies through the centuries.² Inscriptions are also first-hand

¹ For fuller information the reader is referred to a complete edition, which, it is hoped, will be published as soon as circumstances permit.

² Thus No. 5 was rolled up, tied and sealed in 471 B.C., and was not opened again till 1904 in the Bodleian Library at Oxford.

evidence, but they are as a rule short, formal, and concerned only with the greater events of history. Papyri not only tell us of public events, but also give us an insight into the private life and circumstances of the past.

The present texts, which are nearly all dated, cover practically the whole of the fifth century B.C. (494 to *circ.* 400), during which time Egypt was under Persian rule. They are dated by the regnal years of Darius I, Xerxes, Artaxerxes I, Darius II, and the Egyptian king Amyrtæus, and have been arranged here chronologically, so as to give something of an historical picture. They emanate from a hitherto unknown colony of Jews settled in the south of Egypt at Elephantine and Syene. Thus they are the earliest Jewish documents in existence (except one or two inscriptions) outside the Bible, and are a valuable contemporary illustration of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

The language in which they are written is Aramaic, a language distinct from, though closely allied to, Hebrew: not, as used to be thought, a debased form of Hebrew, but related to it somewhat as Italian is related to Spanish. And this Aramaic is, with some reservations, the same as that in which parts of the Book of Ezra are composed. We need not here discuss the reasons why that book is written partly in Hebrew and partly in Aramaic, but it may be pointed out that if Ezra wrote Aramaic, this is the sort of Aramaic he would write. It was, in fact, like modern French, the diplomatic¹ or international language of that time in the East, and was used by the Persian Government in the administration of the provinces, as we see from the version of the Behistun inscription (p. 96) sent to

¹ Cf. 2 Kings 18²⁶, where the "Jews' language" is Hebrew, and "Syrian" is Aramaic, which an official messenger might be expected to use.

the colony in Egypt for their information. Even long before this time it was used in Babylonia by the royal scribes, as well as in everyday business,¹ and Ezra, as a "skilled scribe," must have been familiar with it. It was not because they were Jews that Ezra or the people of Elephantine employed it. The kind of writing used in the papyri is also that in which Ezra must have written his copy of the Law, and from which the modern square Hebrew character is lineally descended. Arguments as to the form of the text from his time onwards must therefore be based on this sort of writing and not on the old Hebrew.

As to the origin of the colony whose existence is here revealed to us, we have no evidence in the texts themselves. That it was Jewish, and conscious of being so, seems to be certain.² Individual members of it are described as *Yehudi*, "Jew," the community is called "the Jewish force," and the names of the people are good Jewish names of the post-exilic type, mostly ending in *-iah*.³ They were, however, not the only inhabitants of Elephantine, for we find names of various other nationalities, Babylonian, Persian, Egyptian, Arab, etc. The Jews lived apparently on equal terms with the people of other races, doing business with them, and even intermarrying without compunction.

Probably the connexion between Judæa and Egypt was always close, and Jewish settlers in Egypt must have become more numerous as trade increased; cf. *e. g.* Deut. 17¹⁶, Jer. 44. But this colony seems to have had a more definite origin. It was essentially military, since it is called the "Jewish force" (army

¹ This is shown by the Aramaic "dockets" or endorsements written in ink on cuneiform contract-tablets.

² Though Dr. Hoonacker has argued (*Schweich Lectures*, 1914 (London, 1915)) that it was Samaritan.

³ No names in *-el*.

or garrison), was divided into *degalin* (companies or detachments), and received pay and rations from the Government. It consisted, therefore, *originally* of mercenaries in the employment of the Government. Now, the writer of the letter of Aristeas¹ incidentally mentions (§ 13) that Psammetichus, King of Egypt, used Jewish mercenaries in his campaign against Ethiopia. This must be Psammetichus II (see Herodotus ii, 159), who reigned from 595 to 590 B.C., and the statement agrees very well with what we gather from these papyri. After the war the soldiers were settled in the two fortresses of Syene and Elephantine as a protection to the southern boundary of the kingdom. Possibly other Jewish settlers joined them there afterwards. At any rate they had their wives and families, who were also reckoned as members of a "company," like the men, and they held property and engaged in various civil pursuits. The members of other races were no doubt mercenaries by origin, enrolled in companies according to race, as was the case in Ptolemaic times. We sometimes find a man who is called a Jew of Elephantine elsewhere described as an Aramæan of Syene (but never a Jew of Syene), which seems to show that the Jews, as such, were stationed at Elephantine, while various western Asiatics, called vaguely Aramæans, were at Syene. The latter, as the more important place, would give its name to the whole district, including Elephantine, just as Aramæan (= western Semite) might be taken to include Jews.

These colonists, then, were already settled in the south of Egypt at the time when their brethren were returning to Jerusalem, and they were developing inde-

¹ An account of the origin of the "Septuagint" translation of the Old Testament (and of Jewish religion, etc.), written perhaps in the first century B.C. See Charles's *Apocrypha*, II, p. 83, and Thackeray's *The Letter of Aristeas* in this series.

pendently as a religious community during all the constructive, or re-constructive, activity of Ezra and Nehemiah. What was the relation of this outlying branch to the main body of the Jewish people? To pre-exilic or post-exilic Judaism? How far was Jeremiah (chap. 44) justified in his denunciation of the Jews in Egypt? Did they remain true to the faith of their pre-exilic fathers, or were they influenced by the new gospel of Ezra? Some of these questions will perhaps never be conclusively answered. A few only of the facts can be stated here, and the reader may be left to form his own conclusions.

The religious and internal affairs of the community were directed by priests, as we see from No. 30¹ and frequently, but these priests (*kahanin*) are never called sons of Aaron. They acknowledged the God of the Jews, who is called Yahu,¹ the older (not an abbreviated) form of the name which we used to pronounce Jehovah, now generally written Yahweh. They had no scruple, as the later Jews had, about writing or uttering the name. But we also find mention of Ishumbethel and 'Anathbethel (No. 22¹²⁴⁻¹²⁵), apparently as gods associated with Yahu, though their relation to him is obscure. Elsewhere Herembethel and 'Anathyahu seem to be gods, and we find personal names compounded with Bethel and Herem, just as others are formed with -yah(u). Whatever may be the origin of the other names, it is probable that Bethel is the old Canaanite god (cf. Gen. 31¹³ in the Hebrew), whom the colonists had brought with them. Not only so, but in No. 14⁵ a Jewess of good position (therefore presumably not from ignorance), in a transaction with an Egyptian,

¹ This spelling is used here provisionally, because it has been adopted by most writers on these papyri. It probably does not represent the true pronunciation of the name.

takes an oath by the Egyptian goddess Sati. Yet it is evident throughout that they regarded Yahu as the supreme God, and themselves as specially devoted to the worship of Yahu.

This worship was conducted in a temple—not merely a synagogue or meeting-house, but (from the description in No. 30) a building of considerable dignity, containing an altar on which burnt-sacrifice was offered to Yahu. Now, according to Deuteronomy (12⁵⁻⁶, etc.) this ought to have been impossible. The law is very definite: sacrifice was only to be offered in the place which the Lord should choose, to put His name there. It is a clear restriction of the earlier practice recognised in Exodus and frequently illustrated in the Books of Samuel.¹ Was the colony, then, ignorant of Deuteronomy, or did it understand the command to apply only to Judæa, or was it frankly heretical? Not the last, apparently, for when their temple was destroyed they appealed to Jerusalem for help to rebuild it. Clearly they saw no reason why they should not offer sacrifices in their local temple, just as Samuel sacrificed at Gilgal (1 Sam. 11¹⁵) and others elsewhere. Both this practice and the worship of other (subsidiary) gods look like a continuation of earlier, pre-exilic customs, which became impossible in Judæa after the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah. It was Deuteronomy which centralised the religious life of the people by making Jerusalem the place where alone men ought to worship. The usually accepted view now is² that Deuteronomy was composed at some time not long before the eighteenth year of Josiah (621 B.C.), and that his abolition of “high places” and celebration of a great central national Passover were intended to emphasise the royal sanction

¹ See Driver, *Literature of the Old Testament*, ed. 9, p. 85.

² See Driver, *ibid.*, p. 86.

of its enactments. It is not to be supposed, however, that the old practices could be changed all at once, especially as the exile followed soon after, thereby breaking all continuity. So that, on this view, Deuteronomy failed in its effect temporarily, until its provisions could be enforced by Ezra and Nehemiah. If this view be accepted, it becomes intelligible that Jews who went on foreign service, and were settled abroad before (perhaps long before) 590 B.C., should have been little influenced by the new legislation. Their descendants would soon lose all memory of Josiah's reforms, since there was nothing to preserve that memory after the fall of Jerusalem (588). They were as sheep without a shepherd in the spiritual desert of Egypt. Their national existence was ended, and it is not surprising or discreditable that they should have organised themselves as an independent religious community, and, since the temple at Jerusalem was destroyed, should have erected a temple of their own at Elephantine.¹ According to the statement in 30¹³, it was built before the Persian conquest of Egypt, and when Cambyses came into the country (in 525) it was already there, and was not injured by him.

Much more difficult to understand is the complete silence of these texts as to some of the fundamental facts of Jewish history and religion. One would suppose that the colonists had never heard of Moses or the Exodus, of Abraham or Jacob, of David or Solomon. There is not the faintest allusion to the Sabbath, nor to the Law.² Though there are priests, they are not

¹ The case of the 'Onias-temple' (about 150 B.C.) is on a different footing, and need not be discussed here.

² There might have been such an allusion in the letter to the High Priest Johanan (30¹⁸), which we do not possess. As No. 30 is addressed to Bigvai, a *Persian*, it may have been thought unnecessary to speak of the Law.

called sons of Aaron, and there is no mention of Levites, nor of the tribe of Levi, nor indeed of any other tribe. Nor is there any reference to any of the festivals—except only the Passover and Unleavened Bread (on which see below). All this may be accidental: it may be merely that the texts are not of a kind to involve such allusions, and it is always dangerous to argue from silence. Still, we should expect a hint of some of these special characteristics of Judaism in so considerable an amount of literature. The fact that there is none suggests a doubt whether these isolated colonists in the fifth century B.C. really knew anything of their early history and institutions—and this doubt again suggests a question whether they had forgotten it all, or, supposing their mental attitude to be that of their ancestors in 600 B.C., whether the ordinary Jew of that date, in Judæa, was equally uninstructed.

Even the mention of the Passover does not make the case better, for a special order seems to have been necessary for its celebration, and the regulations for the feast of Unleavened Bread, which is connected with it, have to be explained to the people. Such, at least, seems to be the meaning of No. 21. The papyrus is, unfortunately, very imperfect, but there is enough to show that it is an order from the Persian king (Darius II) relating to a festival of the Jews. The gaps can be filled with a certain amount of probability, since we know the approximate length of the lines, and some of the sentences can only be completed in one way. In any case it is an announcement by a certain Hananiah (a man of importance, as appears elsewhere) that an order has been sent *by the king* to Arsames (satrap of Egypt), and if our conjecture is right, it was an order to celebrate a feast. Then Hananiah proceeds to give instructions, first to reckon *fourteen days* (the next

clause being lost), and then from the 15th to the 21st day of *Nisan* to abstain from leaven, etc. There can therefore be no doubt that it is the Passover which is meant to be kept on the 14th day of *Nisan*, and that the seven days following it are the days of Unleavened Bread. The gap in which the celebration of the Passover is presumably ordained is too short to allow of any instructions as to the manner of celebrating it, while the instructions for the feast of Unleavened Bread are relatively full. Thus it would seem that the colony knew about the Passover,¹ although they had not kept it regularly, but that the feast of Unleavened Bread was either unknown to them or had been entirely neglected.

The important point, about which there can be no question, is that the order was sent by the Persian king. It was a curt command, and the details were added by the messenger, who was a Jew. If, then, Darius could be induced, for whatever reasons, to issue a special edict concerning a single religious observance in an obscure colony of Jews, we need not question the authenticity of the letter of Artaxerxes in Ezra 7¹², dealing with the much more important matter of Ezra's mission. In neither case need we suppose that the details are due to the king himself. In the papyrus they certainly are not, and in Ezra 7¹² one can imagine the king, when once his consent had been obtained, saying, "Very well, then, give the man an order for what he wants." The order would then be drawn up by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, probably advised by Ezra himself, and sealed by the king's seal-bearer. Granted the initial good-will of the king, there is nothing improbable about the rest.

Prof. E. Meyer begins his book on these papyri with

¹ There is also a reference to it on an ostrakon (inscribed potsherd) of this date, not included in the present volume.

the remark: "Judaism is a creation of the Persian Empire."¹ This is perhaps an over-statement, but there can be no doubt that, humanly speaking, the reconstruction of Judaism (and therefore the modern development of it) was greatly helped and strengthened by the good-will of the Persian kings. There was first the original edict of Cyrus, then the respect shown by Cambyses for the temple at Elephantine (30¹⁴), then the help given by Artaxerxes, and lastly this order of Darius. The good-will is manifest: the reason of it is not so clear. It may have been due to a real religious sympathy between the worshippers of Auramazda and the people of the God of heaven, or it may have been part of an enlightened policy of toleration, or the Jews in Babylonia may have made themselves so useful and powerful as to be able to gain concessions by their influence, or, since we know from numerous cuneiform contracts of their great commercial activity, they may have become rich enough to be able to bribe the necessary officials. However we account for the fact, it is clear from the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah that their work could never have been successful under a Government which was either hostile or neutral.

Such are some of the larger questions raised by the new texts. Many details may also be gathered from them incidentally as to the daily life of the colonists: as to the legal procedure (which is in the main Babylonian, not Egyptian), the commissariat and pay of the garrison, the Government offices and officials, the relations existing between Jews and other inhabitants, the right of the colonists to hold real property, the customs relating to marriage, divorce and inheritance, the contributions to the temple expenses, the situation of the

¹ *Der Papyrusfund von Elephantine* (Leipzig, 1912). See also his *Entstehung des Judentums* (Halle, 1896).

houses, the position of women, the attitude of the Egyptian priests, and other matters. The relative values of the money may be made out best from No. 15. It is always described as *k'saph*, "silver" (there is no mention of gold in this connexion), and it is reckoned by the "royal weight." The commonest denomination is the *shekel*. Ten shekels are a *karash* (or *karsha*, a Persian name), also called a "ten" (*'asarta*). The shekel itself is subdivided into quarters (*R* for *rib'a*), and each quarter into 10 *ḥallurin* (a Babylonian name), so that 40 *ḥallurin* make 1 shekel. The quality of the silver is sometimes described as "pure," but more often as "2 R to the 10," indicating an alloy of $\frac{1}{2}$ in every 10, *i. e.* 1 in 20, or 5 per cent. Rarely we find minæ and talents, but usually the transactions are not concerned with such large amounts. In the latest documents we have the Greek *stater* = 2 shekels.

The collection consists for the most part of business documents and letters or reports. There are, however, two texts of a literary character, namely, considerable fragments of the story of Aḥiḳar, and parts of a translation of the Behistun inscription. The facts about the former may best be studied in Conybeare, Rendel Harris and Lewis, *The Story of Aḥiḳar* (2nd ed., Cambridge, 1913), and in Charles's *Apocrypha*, ii, p. 715 (Oxford, 1913), by the same editors. The story was evidently very popular, for it exists in several versions, besides forming the basis of other stories. Recently it was recognised that Aḥiḳar was the same as the Achiacharus in Tobit 14¹⁰, who was Tobit's nephew (*ibid.*, 1²²). No early (*i. e.* pre-Christian) recension of the story was known, however, until the discovery of these papyri. Although the papyrus-text is not dated, there can be no doubt (judging from the appearance of the writing) that it belongs to the same period as the majority of the dated

documents, namely, the latter part of the fifth century B.C., say about 420. Therefore, if the Book of Tobit is to be dated about 230 B.C.,¹ there is no difficulty about the allusions to Aḥiḳar. It is also probable that the author of Tobit read the story in this (or a similar) Aramaic form, for we cannot suppose that it was confined to Elephantine.

The story, however, was not originally composed in 420 B.C., nor was Aramaic the original language of it, nor was it Jewish in origin, for there is no trace of Judaism in the papyrus-text. There is good reason to believe that it was first composed in the Babylonian language, about 550 B.C., was afterwards translated into Persian, and thence into Aramaic. Thus, since Aramaic was an international language, it became accessible to all the East.

In the later versions, Syriac, Arabic, Armenian, which grew out of the original draft, the book is divided into four parts: (1) the introduction down to the adoption of Nadin; (2) the maxims by which he was educated; (3) the rest of the narrative, including Nadin's treachery, the restoration of Aḥiḳar and an episode in Egypt; (4) the maxims by which Nadin was punished. In the papyrus (of which only a part is preserved, and even that is much injured) the whole of the narrative seems to have preceded the whole of the maxims. The story is more simply and briefly told than in the later versions. It is continuous up to the point at which Nabusumiskun reports to the king that he has killed Aḥiḳar, then it breaks off, and we cannot say how much more of the story the papyrus originally contained. The maxims, no doubt, followed the end of the narrative, but they have very little in common with

¹ See Simpson's Introduction to the book, in Charles's *Apocrypha*, I, p. 185.

those of the later versions. Of special interest is their occasional resemblance to parts of Ben Sira (Ecclesiasticus) and the biblical Proverbs. This is not due to direct borrowing on either side. They are part of that common stock of popular "wisdom" so abundant in the East, which was collected, revised and enlarged over and over again by successive authors of "wisdom literature," sometimes anonymously, sometimes under a traditional name. Thus we have the Proverbs of "Solomon," including the "words of Agur" (Prov. 30¹), and the "words of King Lemuel" (31¹). They might equally well have included some of the words of Aḥikar. The *story* was composed for the purpose of conveying a moral lesson—the punishment due to ingratitude—as Tobit 14¹⁰ shows), just as the Books of Esther, Ruth, Judith and Tobit each inculcate a particular lesson, and the *proverbs* seem only occasionally to have any connexion with it. The latter are translated here as far as possible, but the point of some of them is quite lost, and some are too much broken to give any sense. They are much more difficult than the narrative.

The other literary piece is part of a translation of the great inscription of Behistun, famous as having formed the basis of the decipherment of cuneiform writing. The inscription was engraved about 510 B.C. to commemorate, in three languages, the means by which Darius Hystaspes consolidated his power. At the end of it, in an obscure passage, the king alludes to "inscriptions in another manner" which he "sent into all lands." This is generally taken to mean that copies of the great inscription were disseminated in the provinces. A fragment of such a copy, on stone, in cuneiform Babylonian, was recently found at Babylon.¹

¹ Published by Weissbach, in *Wiss. Veröffentl. d. Deutschen Or. Gesellschaft*, 1903.

But for transmission abroad some more portable form was required, such as this papyrus. The version was no doubt made soon after 510 B.C., and is therefore the earliest specimen of a translation in any but cuneiform writing. This papyrus, however, cannot be the actual document issued by Darius Hystaspes. The writing is of about the same date as, *e. g.*, the Aḫīkar fragments, say 430 B.C., and there are omissions in it which show clearly that it was copied from a text which had become worn out and partly illegible. Although it is so much broken that hardly a line is complete, there is enough to show that it is as a rule a close translation, following the Babylonian original (not the Persian), so that the gaps can usually be filled by merely translating the Babylonian text into Aramaic. In some places, however, the Aramaic must have diverged from the Babylonian. There are also among the smaller fragments some which evidently belonged to a duplicate copy or copies. Thus it seems that the official translation of the great inscription, which probably reached Elephantine a few years before 500 B.C., became worn out in course of time, and that these Jews had sufficient interest in it as history to make at least two copies of it, omitting what they could not read. If only Darius had thought good to engrave this Aramaic version, with the others, on the rock at Behistun, how much labour and time would have been saved in the decipherment of cuneiform! He might very well have done so (see above, p. x), but his advisors probably regarded Aramaic as the writing suitable for pen and ink, and not to be used for monumental purposes.

The original texts of the inscription may best be studied in King and Thompson, *The Sculptures and Inscriptions of Darius the Great* (London, 1907).

In general, the value of these records for students of

early Christianity is parallel to that of the apocryphal books. They mark a stage in religious development. We have come gradually to recognise that the primitive Church had its roots in the Judaism of the first centuries B.C. and A.D. The character of Judaism at that date has been well illustrated by Box from Rabbinical sources and by Charles from the study of apocryphal literature. But it is also evident that religious development, whether you ascribe it to revelation or to the natural growth of the human mind, is a gradual process. The religion of Judæa in the time of Christ was not the same as that of the book of Judges. A thousand years had fashioned it in a thousand ways, and anything which throws light on the process is as instructive as it is interesting. Much has been done by the careful analysis of the Old Testament text, but hitherto the external evidence has been very slight. For this reason the present texts are of first-rate importance. At the present time the daily life of the practising Jew is one continuous religious exercise: there is a *dîn*, a religious rule, for every act. In the business documents of this collection, on the contrary, we see a people whose daily life appears to be wholly uninfluenced by religious considerations, and who seem to be quite unconscious of any religious past. In the Aḥiḳar story we have a sample of the literature they read. It may have been, and almost certainly was, of entirely foreign origin. There is nothing Jewish about it, and the proverbs are as different as can be from the high standard of collections like the Pirḳe Aboth. Yet such documents as No. 30 show that they held to one essential fact—the worship of Yahu—regarding the interruption of it as a national calamity. They may have been less spiritually minded than the main body of their contemporaries in Judæa, but it seems likely that they had remained at much the same

level as their forefathers of the sixth century B.C. There could have been no natural religious development among a people such as these colonists appear to be. Nothing short of an earthquake could make the dry bones live. It was in the shock of Ezra's reforms that modern Judaism was born, and the system of morality in which Christianity was afterwards planted. As the rabbis said, "the Law was forgotten, and Ezra restored it."

One other point. The existence of this colony, unsuspected fifteen years ago, shows that the Diaspora, or Dispersion of the Jews (1 Peter 1¹), had already begun several centuries before the Christian era. Besides the colony at Elephantine, there was a settlement at Abydos, and no doubt others elsewhere. The use of Aramaic, which was common all over the East, came easily to the Jews abroad, and eventually became their natural language. (Though there are Hebraisms in these documents, there is not a single text composed in Hebrew.) Probably intercourse between the colonists and the mother-country helped to establish Aramaic in Judæa, as we find it in the time of Christ. But the important thing is that these outlying settlements, with their common language and common belief in a revived Judaism, were there as a field prepared for the scattered seed of Christianity. The records of this colony show us an earlier type of the communities so often mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles (2^{5, 9-11}). They are therefore not merely of antiquarian interest. They reveal the rock whence we are hewn, and appeal to our human sympathy with the difficulties of a people seeking God in their darkness, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us.

* * * * *

In the following translations the numerous gaps have

been filled up as far as possible, in order to show the general sense. Otherwise several of the texts would at first sight appear meaningless. These restorations have been made with great care and after much thought, but the reader must be careful to distinguish them from the true text, and must not regard them as having any authority in themselves. Many of them are indeed certain, for reasons to be given in the larger edition; others rest only on my personal view as to the connexion of thought.

Restorations are printed in italics.

Where single letters are restored with certainty, they are often not indicated, to avoid too much complication.

Words inserted for clearness, owing to difference of idiom between the two languages, are put in parentheses (thus).

Proper names found in the Old Testament have been spelt as in the Revised Version, though this causes some inconsistencies.

Where the vocalisation of a name is unknown its consonants only are printed, in capitals.

When unknown words have to be reproduced sometimes to show the form of a sentence, the consonants are printed in small capitals.

The dates of the kings mentioned are added here for convenient reference :

Cambyes, 530-522.

Darius I, 522-486.

Xerxes, 486-465.

Artaxerxes I, 465-424.

Darius II, 424-404.

Artaxerxes II, 404-358.

Amyrtæus, the Egyptian, about 405-399.

ARAMAIC PAPYRI

No. 1.

Agreement, dated 494 B.C. (Sachau, p. 113.)

- 1 On the 2nd day of the month Epiphi of the 27th
year of King Darius, said Sallua daughter of
2 Koniah and Yethoma her sister to Yeha'or daughter
of Shelomim, We have given to you half
3 the share which was granted to us by the king's
judges and Ravaka the commander, in exchange
for half the share which
4 accrued to you with Ne'ehebeth. Hereafter, on a
future day, we shall not be able to sue you in the
matter of this your share,
5 and say, We did not give it to you; nor shall a
brother or sister (of ours), son or daughter, relative
6 or alien be able to sue you; and whoever shall sue
you in the matter of this your share which we
have given you, shall pay to you
7 the sum of 5 karash and the share remain yours.
8 Witnesses :
9 Hosea b. Hodaviah.
10 Shelomim b. Azariah.
11 Zephaniah b. Maki.

1. 1. Darius I, since Darius II did not reign so long. Year 27
is more probable than 17.

No. 2.

Contract for supplying Corn to the Garrison.

483 B.C. (Sachau, p. 99.)

- 1 On the 28th of the month Paophi in the 2nd
year of King Xerxes *in the city of Yeb, said
Hosea*
- 2 b. Hodaviah and Ahiab b. Gemariah to *Espemet
b. Pest'onith the sailor and X . . . son*
- 3 of Hanani, the carpenter, saying, You have delivered
to us barley
- 4 8 (?) and beans, 11 ardabs to 44 (?) ardabs of barley
.
- 5 total barley and beans together 55 ardabs
- 6 . . . 11 men of the company of Betheltaķem *every
5 ardabs for the ration of*
- 7 2 men, to each man 2 ardabs of barley and 2 G
. . . *also 11 men*
- 8 *of the company of Nabushalliv, 2 men to 5 ardabs
of barley; we have accepted it*
- 9 and our heart is content therewith. We will convey
the corn
- 10 *to these troops of the company of Betheltaķem and
of the company of Nabushalliv as*
- 11 written in this document. We will render an account
before the company commander and the authorities of
- 12 Government House and before the clerks of the
treasury (and) they shall *give out the corn which
you have delivered*
- 13 to us to be conveyed to those men who are described
above; and if we do not deliver all that is
- 14 yours in full at Government House and before the
clerks of the treasury, *as aforesaid*
- 15 we shall be liable to you in the sum of 100 karash,
pure (?) silver as we swear by Yahu

- 16 the God, and you have a right to our payment from Government House *and the brick house (?) and all that is*
- 17 ours you have a right to seize until you are indemnified in full for the corn *as aforesaid, and no suit shall lie.*
- 18 Written by Hosea at the dictation of Aḥiab.
- 19 Witnesses: Ki' b. Iskishu; Nushku-idri b. N
20. Dukal b. Abijah; Shuri b. Kadu; Ata-idri b. . . .
- 21 Asradata b. Jonathan; Shabbethai b. Nabda.
- 22 (Endorsement.) *Deed which Hosea and Aḥiab wrote for Espemet.*

1. 1. Yeb is the Egyptian name of Elephantine.

1. 4. ardab, a corn-measure of about a bushel and a half.

1. 16. "the brick house" is supplied from No. 3. The precise meaning is uncertain.

The ends of the lines are lost.

No. 3.

A Duplicate of No. 2. (Sachau, p. 106.)

- 1 On the 28th of
- 2 b. Hodaviah and Aḥiab
- 3 *property-holders in Elephantine* to Espemet
- 4 to us barley
- 5 lentils, 20 ardabs
- 6 total *barley* and lentils
- 7 to 5 (?) men
- 8 lentils, 1 (?) ardab
- 9 this corn Syene
- 10 in this deed and shall
- 11 the company, and the officers
- 12 the corn which you gave
- 13 in full *at Government House*
- 14 which you delivered to us

- 15 which does not belong to
 16 treasury
 17 the gold, silver
 18 and the brick-house (?) and
 19 mine (?) *and you have a right to seize*
 20 as aforesaid, and
 21 Written by Hosea at the hands (?) of *Ahiab*.
 22 Witnesses: Shuri b. *Kadu*
 23 Nushku-idri b. *Nabnitu*
 24 *Bagadata b. ISMSHD* . . .

Only the beginnings of the lines remain. They are not restored, in order to show better the connexion with No. 2.

No. 4.

**A small Fragment, apparently connected with
 Nos. 2 and 3. (Sachau, p. 136.)**

- 1 they made for me
 2 s, and also for
 3 he prepared, also
 4 what you wish with it
 5 we have found barley
 6 here. Now
 7 *Espemet*
 8 since we

No. 5.

Grant of Building Rights. 471 B.C.
 (Sayce and Cowley, A.)

- 1 On the 18th of Elul, that is the 28th day of Paḥons,
 year 15 of King Xerxes, said
 2 *Ḳoniah b. Zadok*, an Aramæan of Syene, of the
 detachment of *Warizath*, to *Mahseiah b. Yedoniah*,
 an Aramæan of Syene,

- 3 of the detachment of Warizath, saying : I came to you and you have given to me the gateway of your house to build
- 4 a portico (?) there. This portico is yours. It adjoins my house at its upper corner.
- 5 This portico shall adjoin the side of my house from the ground upwards, from the corner of my house at the upper end to the house of Zechariah.
- 6 To-morrow or on any later day I have no power to restrain you from building above (*or upon*) this portico of yours.
- 7 If I restrain you, I will pay you the sum of 5 karash, royal weight, pure silver, and the portico is yours
- 8 assuredly. If Koniah dies to-morrow or on a later day no son or daughter, brother or sister,
- 9 relative or stranger, soldier or citizen, shall have power to restrain Maḥseh or his son from building above
- 10 this portico of his. Whoever restrains one of them shall pay him the sum aforesaid, and the portico
- 11 is yours assuredly, and you have the right to build above it upwards, and I Koniah have no power
- 12 to speak to Maḥseh saying : This gateway is not yours, and you shall not go out (by it) into the street which
- 13 is between us and the house of Peft'onith, the boatman. If I restrain you, I will pay you the sum aforesaid.
- 14 And you have the right to open this gate and go out into the street which is between us.
- 15 Pelatiah b. Ahio wrote this document at the dictation of Koniah. Witnesses thereto :
- 16 Witness Maḥseh b. Isaiah. Witness Satibarzanes b. Mithrili.
17. Witness Shemaiah b. Hosea. Witness Phrathaphernes b. Artaphernes.

- 18 Witness Bagadata b. Nabukudurri. Nabu-ili b. Darga.
- 19 Witness Bentirash b. Raḥamrea' (?). Witness Shalum b. Hoshaiah.
- 20 (Endorsement.) Deed (relating to) the portico which he built, which Koniah wrote for Maḥseh.

1. 4. "portico": the meaning is uncertain. A covered way? The upper corner is on the south. So perhaps in l. 11?

1. 16. "Mithrili," or perhaps Atharili.

↓ No. 6.

Conveyance. 465 B.C. (Sayce and Cowley, B.)

- 1 On the 18th of Chisleu, that is the 7th day of Thoth, in year 21, the beginning of the reign when
- 2 King Artaxerxes sat on his throne, said Dargman b. Harshin the Khorasmian, whose station
- 3 is fixed in Yeb the fortress, of the detachment of Artabanu, to Maḥseiah b. Yedoniah, a Jew who (lives) in the fortress of Yeb,
- 4 of the detachment of Warizath, saying: You have *sworn* to me by the God Yahu in Yeb the fortress, you and your wife
- 5 and your son, three in all, about my land in regard to which I lodged a complaint against you before
- 6 Damidata and his colleagues the judges, and they imposed upon you an oath to me, to swear by Yahu in regard to this land,
- 7 that it was no longer the land of Dargman, mine, that is (belonging to) me. Now these are the boundaries of this land
- 8 in regard to which you swore to me: My house, of me Dargman, is to the East of *it*, and the house of Koniah b. Zadok,

- 9 Jew, of the detachment of Athroparan, to the West
of it, and the house of *Jezaniah* b. *Uriah*,
- 10 Jew, of the detachment of *Warizath*, at the lower
end of it, and the house of *Espemet* b. *Peft'onith*,
- 11 boatman of the cataract, at the upper end of it.
You have sworn to me by *Yahu*, and have
satisfied
- 12 my mind about this land. I shall have no power
to institute suit or process against you, I and my
son and my daughter,
- 12a brother and sister of mine, relative and stranger,
- 13 concerning this land, (against) you and your son and
your daughter, brother and sister of yours, relative
and stranger.
- 14 Whoever sues you in my name concerning this land,
shall pay you the sum of 20 (twenty) *karash* royal
standard,
- 15 at the rate of 2 R to the ten, and the land is assuredly
yours, and you are quit of
- 16 all claim that they may bring against you in
regard to this land. *Ethan* b. *Aba* wrote this
deed
- 17 in *Syene* the fortress, at the dictation of *Dargman*.
Witness, *Hosea* b. *Peṭekhnum*. Witness,
- 18 *Gadol* b. *Yigdal*. Witness, *Gemariah* b. *Ahio*.
Meshullam b. *Hosea*.
- 19 *Sinkasid* b. *Nabusumiskun*. Witness, *Hadadnuri*
the *Babylonian*.
- 20 Witness, *Gedaliah* b. *Ananiah*.
- 21 Witness, *Aryisha* b. *Arusathmar*.
- 22 (Endorsement.) Deed of renunciation written
by *Dargman* b. *Ḥarshin* for *Mahseiah*.

1. 12a is written between the lines.

1. 22. The space is where the deed was tied and sealed.

No. 7.

A Case of Burglary. 461 B.C. (Sachau, p. 103.)

- 1 On the 18th of Paophi, in the 4th year of Artaxerxes
the king, in Yeb
2 the fortress, said Malchiah b. Joshibiah, Aramæan,
holding property in Yeb
3 the fortress, of the detachment of Nabukudurri, to
Phrataphernes b. Artaphernes of the detachment
4 of Nabukudurri, saying: You declared to me (or
concerning me) in Nepha *that you entered my house*
5 by force, and struck my wife, and removed goods
from my house by force,
6 and took them for yourself. I have made a petition
and the appeal to the gods
7 has been laid upon me by the court, on me Malchiah,
that I should challenge you by Herembethel
8 the god, before 4 judges (?), thus: "I did *not* enter
your house by force,
9 and did not strike *your* wife, and did not take goods
from your house by force."
10 And if I challenge you before these judges (?) I am
entitled also to challenge . . . (the rest is lost).

1. 1. Probably Artaxerxes I. If it is Artaxerxes II the date will be 400 B.C.

1. 4. "Nepha" seems to be a place-name. Cf. 20⁴.

} No. 8.

Conveyance. 459 B.C. (Sayce and Cowley, D.)

- 1 On the 21st of Chisleu, that is the 1st day of Mesore,
the 6th year of Artaxerxes, the king, said Mahseiah
2 b. Yedoniah, a Jew holding property in Yeb the
fortress, of the detachment of Haumadata, to
Mibṭaḥiah, spinster (?),

- 3 his daughter, as follows : I give to you for my life-time and after my death a house and land of mine.
- 4 Its measurement is : its length from the lower to the upper end 13 cubits and 1 handbreadth; width from East
- 5 to West 11 cubits by the measuring-rod; its boundaries, at the upper end of it the house of Dargman b. Harshin
- 6 adjoins it; at the lower end of it the house of Koniah b. Zadok; East of it the house of Yezan b. Uriah, your husband, and the house of Zechariah b. Nathan; West of it the house of Espemet b. Peft'onith
- 8 boatman of the cataract. This house and land I give to you for my life-time and after my death;
- 9 you have full rights over it from this day for ever, and your children after you. To whom
- 10 you wish you may give it. There is no other son or daughter of mine, brother or sister, or other
- 11 woman or man who has rights over this land, except you and your children for ever. Whoever
- 12 shall institute against you suit or process, against you or son or daughter of yours or anyone belonging to you on account of this land
- 13 which I give to you, and shall appeal against you to governour or judge, shall pay to you or to your children
- 14 the sum of 10 (that is, ten) kerashin, royal weight, at the rate of 2 R to the ten, and no suit or process (shall lie),
- 15 and the house is your house assuredly and your children's after you; and they shall have no power to produce against you
- 16 any deed new or old in my name concerning this land to give it to anyone else. Any deed

- 17 which they produce against you will be forged. I shall not have written it and it shall not be accepted by the court
- 18 while this deed is in your hand. And further, I, Mahseiah will not to-morrow or on any other day take it away
- 19 from you to give it to others. This land is yours. Build (on it) or give it to whom you will.
- 20 If to-morrow or on any other day I institute against you suit or process, and say I did not give it to you,
- 21 I will pay you the sum of 10 kerashin, royal weight, at the rate of 2 R to the ten, and no suit
- 22 or process (shall lie), but the house is your house assuredly, and (if) I go into court I shall not win my case while this deed is in your hand.
- 23 There is also a deed of renunciation which Dargman b. Harshin the Khorazmian wrote for me concerning
- 24 this land, when he laid claim to it before the judges and I took an oath to him and swore to him
- 25 that it was mine, and he wrote and gave me a deed of renunciation. This deed I give to you.
- 26 You are to take charge of it. If to-morrow or another day Dargman or his son should lay claim
- 27 to this house, produce this deed and in accordance with it contest the case with him. 'Atharshuri
- 28 b. Nabu-zira-ibni wrote this deed in Syene the fortress at the dictation of Mahseiah. Witnesses hereto :
- 29 witness, Gemariah b. Mahseiah. Witness, Zechariah b. Nathan.
- 30 Witness, Hosea b. Pelaliah. Witness, Zechariah b. Meshullam. Witness, Ma'uziah b.
- 31 Malchiah. Witness, Shemaiah b. Yedoniah. Witness, Yedoniah b. Mahseiah.
- 32 Witness, Nathan b. Ananiah. Zaccur b. Zephaniah.

- 33 Witness, Hosea b. Re'uah. Witness, Maḥseh b. Isaiah.
- 34 Witness, Hosea b. Yigdal.
(Endorsement :)
- 35 Deed of a house *which* Maḥseh b. Yedoniah gave
- 36 to Mibṭaḥ daughter of Maḥseh.

l. 23. The deed is No. 6.

ll. 33, 35, 36. Maḥseh is a shortened form of Mahseiah (as Mibṭaḥ is of Mibṭaḥiah) with the divine name *-iah* omitted.

No. 9.

**Deed relating to the Reversion of the Property in
No. 8. 459 B.C.** (Sayce and Cowley, C.)

- 1 On the *21st* of *Chisleu*, that is the *1st* of *Mesore*, the
6th year of Artaxerxes the king, said Mahseiah
- 2 b. Yedoniah Jew, of Yeb, of the detachment of
Haumadata, to Jezaniah b. Uriaḥ, of the same
detachment
- 3 as follows: There is the land of 1 house belonging
to me, west of your house, which I have given to
Mibṭaḥiah
- 4 my daughter, your wife, and I have written for her
a deed concerning it. The measurement of this
house is 13 cubits and a hand-breadth
- 5 by 11, by the measuring-rod. Now I, Mahseiah, say
to you, lay out this land and rear cattle on it (?),
- 6 and dwell on it with your wife, but you have no
power to sell this house, or to give it
- 7 as a present to others; but your children by
Mibṭaḥiah my daughter have power over it
- 8 after you. If to-morrow or another day you lay
out this land and then my daughter divorces you
- 9 and goes away from you, she has no power to take
it or give it to others, but your children by

- 10 Mibṭaḥiah have power over it in return for the
 work which you have done. If you put her away
 11 from you, half the house *shall be* hers to take, and
 as to the other half you have power over it in
 return for
 12 the development which you have made in this house.
 And again as to that half, your children by
 Mibṭaḥiah
 13 have power over it after you. If to-morrow or
 another day I should institute suit or process
 against you
 14 and say I did not give you this land to develop,
 and did not draw up this deed for you, I
 15 will pay you the sum of 10 kerashin by royal weight,
 at the rate of 2 R to the ten, and no suit or
 process (shall lie).
 16 'Atharshuri b. Nabu-zira-ibni wrote this deed in
 Syene the fortress at the dictation of Mahseiah.
 Witnesses
 17 hereto :
 Witness, Hosea b. Pelaliah. Witness, Zechariah b.
 Nathan.
 18 Witness, Gemariah b. Mahseiah. Witness, Zechariah
 b. Meshullam.
 19 Witness, Ma'uziah b. Malchiah. Witness, Shemaiah
 b. Yedoniah.
 20 Witness, Yedoniah b. Mahseiah. Witness, Nathan
 b. Ananiah. Witness, Zaccur b. Zephaniah.
 21 Witness, Hosea b. Re'uah. Witness, Maḥseh b.
 Isaiah.
 22 Witness, Hosea b. Yigdal.

The deed was evidently drawn up at the same time as No. 8, since the scribe and witnesses are the same in both.

1. 5. "rear cattle" is uncertain. The land is distinguished from the house.

No. 10. ✓

Contract for a Loan. 456 B.C. (Sachau, p. 108.)

- 1 On the 7th of Chisleu, that is the 4th day of the month Thoth, the 9th year of Artaxerxes
- 2 the king, said Yehoḥan daughter of Meshullak, spinster (?), of Yeb the fortress, to Meshullam b.
- 3 Zaccur, Jew, of Yeb the fortress, as follows: You have given to me as a loan the sum of 4 shekels,
- 4 that is four, by royal weight, at interest, which shall be due from me
- 5 at the rate of 2 ḥallurin per shekel per month, being at the rate of 8 ḥallurin
- 6 for each month. If the interest is added to the capital, it shall pay interest like the capital,
- 7 both alike, and if there come a second year and I have not paid you your money
- 8 and interest on it as written in this deed, you, Meshullam, and your children have the right
- 9 to take for yourself any security which you may find of mine in the brick-house, whether silver or gold,
- 10 bronze or iron, male or female slave, barley, spelt or any food that you may find of mine,
- 11 till you have full payment of your money and interest thereon, and I shall have no power to say to you that I have paid you
- 12 your money and the interest on it while this deed is in your hand, nor shall I have power to lodge a complaint
- 13 against you before governour or judge on the ground that you have taken from me any security while this deed

- 14 is in your hand. If I die without paying you this
 money and interest thereon,
 15 my children are to pay you this money and interest
 thereon. If
 16 they do not pay you this money and interest thereon,
 you Meshullam have a right
 17 to take for yourself any food or security that you
 may find of theirs until you have full payment
 18 of your money and interest thereon, and they shall
 have no power to lodge a complaint against you
 before governour
 19 or judge while this deed is in your hand. Even
 if they go to law they shall not win their
 case
 20 while this deed is in your hand. Nathan b. 'Anani
 wrote this deed
 21 at the dictation of Yehoḥan. Witnesses hereto :
 Witness, Oshea' b. Gilgal.
 22 Hodaviah b. Gedaliah. Ahio b. Pelaṭiah. Agur b.
 Ahio.
 (Endorsement :)
 23 Deed of money lent (?), which Yehoḥan daughter of
 Meshullak wrote
 24 for Meshullam b. Zaccur.

Cf. No. 11.

1. 6. "added to the capital," *i. e.* because it is not paid.

NO. 11.

Contract for a Loan. About 455 B.C.

(Sayce and Cowley, L.)

- 1 Said X b. Y to Z b. Yathma as follows: You have
 given me the sum of

- 2 4 *shekels by the weight of Ptaḥ*, at the rate of 1 shekel
to 10, and interest shall be due from me at the
rate of 2 ḥallurin
- 3 for the sum of 1 shekel per month, till the day
when I repay it to *you*, so that the interest on
- 4 your money shall be 8 ḥallurin each month. Any
month in which I do not give you
- 5 interest, it shall be (added to the) capital and shall
bear interest. I will pay it to you month by
month
- 6 out of my salary which they give me from the
treasury, and you shall write me a receipt for
all
- 7 money and interest which I pay to you. If I do
not pay you all
- 8 your money and the interest thereon by the month
of Thoth in the 9th year, your money shall be
doubled (?)
- 9 and the interest on it which is outstanding against
me, and interest shall be due from me month by
month
- 10 until the day when I repay it to you. Witnesses :
- 11 'Uḳban b. Shemesh-nuri.
- 12 Ḳoḻri b. Yeha-dari.
- 13 Mahseiah b. Yedoniah.
- 14 Malchiah b. Zechariah.
- 15 Gemariah b. Ahio wrote the deed before the witnesses
who(se names) are upon this deed.

The beginning is lost, with the date.

1 2. "the weight of Ptaḥ" is the native Egyptian standard, not the royal weight, as usually. This indicates a time of revolt against the Persians, *i. e.* either about 455 or 400. The names require the earlier date, as some of them occur in other deeds about that time.

1 8. "doubled," or perhaps "counted as one sum," capital and interest together.

1. 13. Yeha-dari or Yah-hadari, an unusual name.

No. 12.

List of names, undated. (Sachau, p. 71.)

- 1 Haggai b. Nathan.
- 2 Harman b. Oshea'.
- 3 Oshea' b. Yathom.
- 4 Oshea' b. Hodav.
- 5 Shamua' b. Haggai.
- 6 Nathan b. Neraiah.
- 7 Menahem b. Posai.
- 8 Yeosh b. Azaniah.
- 9 Bethel'aqab b. Achar.
10. Total 9 men.
- 11 Nabu'aqab (?) b.

A similar list is No. 19. The purpose of these lists is not evident. The names suggest a date about 450 B.C.

1. 11 is written upside down. The name occurs in No. 26²³, 28.

No. 13.

Conveyance of a House. 447 B.C.

(Sayce and Cowley, E.)

- 1 On the 3rd of Chisleu, that is the 10th day of the month Mesore, year 19 of Artaxerxes the king, said Mahseiah b.
- 2 Yedoniah, Aramæan of Syene, of the detachment of Warizath, to Miphtaḥiah his daughter as follows :
I give you the house
- 3 which Meshullam b. Zaccur b. Atar, Aramæan of Syene, gave me for its price, and wrote a document for me about it,
- 4 and I give it to Miphtaḥiah my daughter in return for the goods which she gave me when I was inspector (?) in the fortress. I borrowed (?)

- 5 them and did not find money and goods to pay you.
Consequently I give you this house
- 6 in return for those your goods of the value of 5
kerashin, and I give you the original document
which
- 7 the said Meshullam *wrote* for me about it. This
house I give to you and I resign all claim to it.
It belongs to you and to your children
- 8 after you and to *whomsoever you please* you may
give it. I have no power, I or my children or
my descendants or any
- 9 other man, to bring against you suit or process
in the matter of this house which I give you, and
have written the document for you
- 10 about it. Whoever raises against you suit or process,
(whether it be) I or a brother or sister, relative
or *stranger, soldier* or citizen,
- 11 shall pay you the sum of 10 kerashin, and the house
is assuredly yours. Moreover no other man shall
produce against you a document
- 12 new or old, other than this document which I
have written and given to you: *whoever* pro-
duces against you such document, I have not
written it.
- 13 Moreover note, these are the boundaries of this
house: At the upper end of it is the house of
Yeosh b. Penuliah, at the lower end of it is
- 14 the temple of the God Yahu, at the east of it is the
house of Gadol b. Oshea' and the street between
them,
- 15 on the west of it is the *land* of b. Palto,
priest of the gods Khnum and Sati (?). This
house
- 16 I give you and resign all claim to it. It is yours
for ever. To *whomsoever* you wish, give it.

- 17 Nathan b. Ananiah wrote this document at the direction of Mahseiah and the witnesses hereto. Mahseiah signed for
- 18 himself (?).
Mithrasari (?) b. Mithrasari (?), and *Satibarzanes* b. Atharili, silversmith.
- 19 Witness, Barbari b. Dargi, silversmith of the place (?).
Witness, b. Shemaiah.
- 20 Zaccur b. Shallum.
(Endorsement :)
- 21 Document concerning Mahseiah b. Yedoniah *and Miphṭahiah* his daughter.

1. 4. "inspector" is uncertain. "I borrowed": others take this as a name.

1. 14. This is the first mention of the temple. See further No. 30.

1. 18. "for himself," etc.: the writing is hasty and not very legible. Atharili, or perhaps Mithrili: cf. No. 5¹⁶.

1. 19. "of the place" is strange. It may be a name "of Athra."

No. 14.

Settlement of Claim. 441 B.C.

(Sayce and Cowley, F.)

- 1 On the 14th of Ab, that is the 19th day of Paḥons, year 25 of Artaxerxes the king, said Pi
- 2 b. Paḥi, builder, of Syene the fortress, to Mibṭahiah daughter of Mahseiah b. Yedoniah
- 3 Aramæan of Syene, of the detachment of Warizath (as follows): In accordance with the action which we took at Syene, let us make a division concerning the money
- 4 and corn and garments and bronze and iron, all goods and possessions, and the marriage-document. Then an oath

5 was imposed on you and you swore to me concerning
 them by the goddess Sati and my heart was content
 6 with that oath which you took to me concerning those
 your goods and I renounce all claim on you from
 7 this day for ever. I have no power to institute
 against you suit or process, you or son
 8 or daughter of yours in the matter of those your
 goods concerning which you have sworn to me.
 If I institute against you
 9 suit or process, or my son or daughter sue you in
 the matter of that your oath, I, Pi, or my son
 10 will pay to Mibṭaḥiah the sum of 5 kerashin, royal
 weight, without suit or process,
 11 and I renounce all suit and process.
 12 Peṭisi b. Nabunathan wrote this document
 in Syene the fortress, at the direction of Pi b. Paḥi.
 Witnesses hereto : Nabure'i b. Nabunathan.
 13 Luḥi b. Mannuki. 'Odnahar b. Duma. Nabure'i b.
 Vashtan.

(Endorsement :)

14 Deed of quittance which Pi wrote for Mibṭaḥiah.

Probably a settlement on the dissolution of Mibṭaḥiah's marriage with Pi, who would have been her second husband. This seems to be indicated by his giving up the marriage-deed in l. 4.

l. 5. She swore by the Egyptian goddess, because Pi was an Egyptian. None of the witnesses have Jewish names. Perhaps she was not recognised by the community as long as she was married to an Egyptian.

l. 14. "quittance" may be a term for divorce.

No. 15.

Marriage Contract. About 441 B.C.

(Sayce and Cowley, G.)

1 On the 25th (?) of Tishri *that is* the 6th day of the month Epiphi year . . . of Artaxerxes the king,

- 2 said Ašor b. Zəho, builder to the king, to Mahseiah,
Aramæan of Syene, of the detachment of
- 3 Warizath, as follows: I came to your house that
you might give me your daughter Miphtaḥiah in
marriage.
- 4 She is my wife and I her husband from this day
for ever. I have given you as the price
- 5 of your daughter Miphtaḥiah *the sum* of 5 shekels,
royal weight. It has been received by you and
your heart is content
- 6 therewith. You have delivered to your *daughter*
Miphtaḥiah into her hand for the cost of furniture
1 karash 2 shekels royal
- 7 weight, of the standard of 2 R to 10. You have
delivered to her into her hand 1 woollen robe,
new, striped,
- 8 dyed on both sides, (whose) length was 8 cubits by 5,
worth the sum of 2 kerashin 8 shekels,
- 9 royal weight; 1 closely-woven (shawl) new, (whose)
length was 8 cubits by 5, *worth*
- 10 the sum of 8 shekels royal weight; another woollen
robe, finely woven, (whose) length was
- 11 6 cubits by 4, *worth* the sum of 7 shekels; 1 mirror
of bronze, *worth*
- 12 the sum of 1 shekel 2 R; 1 tray of bronze, *worth*
the sum of 1 shekel 2 R; 2 cups of bronze,
- 13 *worth* the sum of 2 shekels; 1 bowl of bronze, *worth*
the sum of 2 R; total money
- 14 and value of goods being the sum of 6 kerashin
5 shekels 20 ḥallurin, of the standard of 2 R to 10,
royal weight.
- 15 I have received, and my heart is *content* therewith,
1 couch of reeds with 4 supports (?)
- 16 of stone; 1 PK of SLK; 2 ladles, holding (?) 8 Ḥ;
1 MŠ'N knife (?); 1 cosmetic box of ivory new.

- 17 To-morrow or *another* day (if) Ašor should die and
there is no child male or female
18 belonging to him by Miphṭaḥiah his wife, Miphṭaḥiah
has a right to the house
19 of Ašor, *his* goods and his chattels and all that he
has on the face of the earth,
20 all of it. To-morrow or (another) day (if) Miphṭaḥiah
should die and there is no child male or female
21 belonging to her by Ašor her husband, Ašor shall
inherit her goods
22 and her chattels. To-morrow *or* another day (if)
Miphṭaḥiah should stand up in the congregation
23 and say, I divorce Ašor my husband, the price of
divorce (shall be) on her head; she shall return to
24 the scales and weigh out to Ašor the sum of 7
shekels 2 R and all that she has taken
25 into her hand she shall give up, both shred (?) and
thread, and she shall go away whither she will,
without
25 suit or process. To-morrow or another day (if)
Ašor should stand up in the congregation
27 and say, I divorce my *wife* Miphṭaḥiah, her price
shall be forfeited, but all that she received
28 into her hand, she shall give up, both shred (?)
and thread, on one day at one time, and she
shall go
29 away whither she will, without suit or process. But
if he should rise up against Miphṭaḥiah
30 to drive her out from his, Ašor's, house and his
goods and chattels, he shall give her
31 the sum of 20 kerashin, and the provisions of this
deed shall be *annulled*, as far as she is concerned.
And I shall have no right to say
32 I have another wife besides Miphṭaḥiah and other
children than the children whom

- 33 Miphtaḥiah shall bear to me. If I say I have children and wife other than
 34 Miphtaḥiah and her children, I will pay to Miphtaḥiah the sum of 20 kerashin, royal weight,
 35 and I shall have no right to *take* away my goods and chattels from Miphtaḥiah; and if I remove them
 36 from her [erasure] I will pay to Miphtaḥiah the sum of 20 kerashin, royal weight.
 37 Nathan b. Ananiah wrote *this deed at the direction of Ashor* and the witnesses hereto :
 38 Penuliah b. Jezaniah : . . . iah b. Uriah : Menahem b. Zaccur :
 39 Witness, Re'ibel (?) b. . . .

The number of the year is lost, but since the two sons by this marriage were old enough to be parties to a case in 421, they must have been born somewhere about 440 B.C., and the date of the contract must be as given above.

This was Mibṭaḥiah's third marriage, if we are right about the meaning of No. 14.

ll. 6, 7. "You have delivered" is probably the meaning, but the first person ("I have") would have the same form.

ll. 15, 16. The meaning of some of the words in this list is unknown.

l. 16. "8 Ḥ," probably a measure here, not ḥallurin.

l. 23. "on her head," etc.: the translation is uncertain, though the general meaning is clear.

No. 16.

An Appeal to a Higher Court. About 435 B.C. (Sachau, p. 41.)

- 1 to Arsames (?) and to Megaphernes
 b. WŠHI
 2 *this field our detachment owned from the 24th year to the 31st year of Artaxerxes . . .*
 3 *also I was examined before TRWH and the court, and I stated before the court*

- 4 the *field* I ploughed but the *produce* I did *not* receive from them. These judges
- 5 . . . and a wrong was done to me, and I stated before TRWḤ and the court
- 6 . . . from the year 24 to the year 31, and Megaphernes and Nephayan and Mannuki, the 3 judges, went up to Syene and *took with them* (?)
- 7 . . . the assessors (?) of Nephayan, commander of the garrison of Syene, and the judges of the province, how
- 8 I (?) before my lord have sent saying "A wrong was done to me," and *now*
- 9 ask TRWḤ and the court about this, (and) let wrong not be done to me, and

1. 3. "TRWḤ," probably a name.

1. 7. Nephayan was commander in No. 30 (408 B.C.). If the date here is right, he must be a different person.

No. 17.

Relating to Supplies for the Garrison (?).

428 B.C. (Sachau, p. 34.)

- 1 *To our lord Arsames*, your servants Achæmenes (?) and his colleagues, Bigdan (?) and his colleagues, and the notaries of the province; the welfare of our lord may the gods *seek*
- 2 *abundantly* at all times. And now you have paid us for all the contribution assuredly which we gave in the province at (?) the place which is
- 3 . . . plainly set forth, each item month by month they were sending to me. Also a written document was given to us. Now
- 4 and we will

D

- 5 our lord Arsames your *servants* Achæmenes (?) and his colleagues the recorders in
- 6 which we pay. Haruz and his colleagues the notaries of *the* province, all 3 vilains (?),
- 7 the servant (?) of SYN'BS the recorder, their colleague, in the 19th of Marḥeshwan in the 37th year of Artaxerxes, to them.

1. 6 "all 3 vilains" is added below the line. The word occurs in No. 30⁷, etc., but its meaning is uncertain.

No. 18.

End of a Marriage Contract. About 425 B.C.
(Sachau, p. 126.)

- 1 Meshullak b. Uri a deed of divorce. And Yehoḥan daughter of *Meshullak* shall have no *right to say to him*
- 2 and to Sallua her daughter, As I gave these goods and the money which are set forth in this deed, as a free gift to you, now I desire
- 3 to take them away. If she says so, she is liable, no heed shall be paid to her. Ma'uziah b. Nathan b. Ananiah wrote
- 4 this deed at the direction of Hoshaiiah *and* Yehoḥan and the witnesses hereto. Witness, Heremnathan b. Bethelnathan b. Zeḥo;
- 5 Witness, Haggai b. Penuliah; witness, Yeosh b. Azaniah; witness, Bethelnathan b. Jonathan.

1. 4. Note the names Heremnathan and Bethelnathan formed with Herem and Bethel, as Jonathan is formed with Yahu. Zeḥo is an Egyptian name, as in No. 15.

No. 19.

List of Names. About 420 B.C. (Sachau, p. 92.)

- 1
- 2 Ba'adiah b. A
- 3 Oshea' b. *Uriah* (?).
- 4 WKYN b. Shallum b. . . .
- 5 Meshullam b. Shemaiah.
- 6 Shemaiah b. Shallum.
- 7 Menahem b. Meshullam.
- 8 Haggai b. Jezaniah.
- 9 Agiri b. Ash . . .
- 10 Nathan b. Hodaviah.

No. 20.

Settlement of a Claim. 420 B.C.

(Sayce and Cowley, H.)

- 1 In the month of Elul, that is *Payni*, 4th year of Darius the king at that time in Yeb the fortress, said
- 2 Menahem and Ananiah *both sons of* Meshullam b. Shelomem, Jews of Yeb the fortress, of the detachment of Iddinnabu,
- 3 to Yedoniah and Mahseiah, both sons of Ashor b. Zehō by Mibṭaḥiah daughter of Mahseiah, Jews
- 4 of the same detachment, as follows: *We* sued you in the court of NPA before Damandin the governour (and) Widrang
- 5 the commander of the garrison, saying: There *are* goods, garments of wool and cotton, vessels of bronze and iron, vessels of wood
- 6 and ivory, corn, etc., and we pleaded saying: Ashor your father received (these) from Shelomem b. Azariah, and also

- 7 said "They are on deposit." They were deposited, but he kept possession and did not return (them) to him, and therefore we sue you.
- 8 Then you were examined, and you Yedoniah and Mahseiah, sons of Ashor, satisfied us concerning these goods,
- 9 and we were satisfied therewith. From this *day* for ever I Menahem and Ananiah, we renounce all claim on you.
- 10 From this day for ever we shall have no power, and our sons and our daughters and our brothers and any man related to us or a freeman of
- 11 the city shall have no power to bring *against* you, Yedoniah and Mahseiah, suit or process, nor shall they have the power to sue your sons
- 12 or your brothers or any one of yours *on account* of goods and money, corn, etc., belonging to Shelomem b. Azariah. If we
- 13 or our sons or our daughters or anyone of *ours*, or the sons of Shelomem b. Azariah, sue you or sue your sons or your daughters
- 14 or any one of yours, or whomsoever they shall sue about it, he shall pay you or your sons, or whomsoever they sue, a fine
- 15 of the sum of ten kerashin, royal *weight*, at the rate of 2 R to 1 karash, and he assuredly has no claim on these goods
- 16 about which we sued, and no suit or *process* (can lie). Ma'uziah b. Nathan wrote this deed at the direction of Menahem and Ananiah both
- 17 sons of Meshullam b. Shelomem. Witness, Menahem b. Gadol.
Gadol b. Berechiah.
Menahem b. Azariah.

- 18 Witness, Hodaviah b. Zaccur *b.* Oshaiah.
 (Endorsement :)
 19 Deed which Menahem and Ananiah *both* sons of
 Menahem b. Shelomem wrote
for Yedoniah and Mahseiah both sons of Ashor b.
Zeho.

1. 4. "NPA": as in 7⁴? The precise sense of the following words is uncertain.

1. 19. Menahem is a mistake for Meshullam.

NO. 21.

**Order to keep the (Passover and) Feast of
 Unleavened Bread. 419 B.C. (Sachau, p. 36.)**

- 1 *To my brethren,*
 2 *Yedoniah and his colleagues the Jewish garrison,*
your brother Hananiah. The welfare of my
brethren may the gods seek.
 3 *Now this year, the 5th year of King Darius, word*
was sent from the king to Arsames, saying :
 4 *In the month of Tybi (?) let there be a Passover for*
the Jewish garrison. Now you accordingly count
fourteen
 5 *Days of the month Nisan and keep the Passover, and*
from the 15th day to the 21st day of Nisan
 6 *(Are) seven days of Unleavened bread. Be clean and*
take heed. Do no work
 7 *On the 15th day and on the 21st day. Also drink no*
beer, and anything at all in which there is leaven
 8 *Do not eat, from the 15th day from sunset till the*
21st day of Nisan, seven
 9 *Days, let it not be seen among you ; do not bring (it)*
into your dwellings, but seal (it) up during those
days.

10 *Let this be done as Darius the king commanded.*

(Address :)

11 To my brethren Yedoniah and his colleagues
the Jewish garrison, your brother Hananiah.

1. 2. The envoy Hananiah was a person of high position.
1. 7. "beer," because it was fermented, therefore of the nature of leaven. Wine was required for the Passover.
1. 9. "seal it up": *i. e.* put it away under lock and key.

No. 22.

**Names of Contributors to Temple Funds, in
Seven Columns. 419 B.C. (Sachau, p. 73.)**

- 1 On the 3rd of Phamenoth, 5th year. This is (a list of) the names of the Jewish garrison who gave money for Yahu the God, man by man the sum of 2 *shekels* :
- 2—Meshullemeth daughter of Gemariah b. Mahseiah, the sum of 2 sh.
- 3—Zaccur b. Hodaviah b. Zaccur, the sum of 2 sh.
- 4—Seraiah daughter of Hoshea b. Harman, the sum of 2 sh.
- 5—All 3
- 6—Hoshea b. Bethelnuri, he (gave (?)) the sum of 2 sh. for himself (?).
- 7—Hoshaiah b. Nathan b. Hoshaiiah b. Hananiah the sum of 2 sh. for himself (?).
- 8—Nabu b. ah, the sum of 2 sh. for himself (?).
- 9 nani b. KTL, the sum of 2 sh. for himself (?).
- 10 b. Yehø the sum of 2 sh. for himself (?).
- 11 b. Nehebeth daughter of Mahseh, the sum of 2 sh. for himself (?).