

hypothesi, the factors which enter into and produce faith in it are unknown to him. But the martyrs are not sceptics. And they do not die, really, because they believe in immortality—though once immortality has become a commonplace of faith it may be put so; immortality is revealed and becomes sure to them because they find it in their hearts to lay down life itself for God.

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(*To be continued.*)

THE JÂHÛ TEMPLE IN ELEPHANTINE.¹

THE last century has been a period of discovery in the history of the ancient East. The earth has been forced to give forth her treasures; old writings have been deciphered, and the stones have begun to speak; an entire past world has arisen before our astonished gaze. But (until the present moment), the Old Testament has had too small a share in the great discoveries. For some time past the soil of Palestine has been diligently dug and searched. Yet, though remains have been found of various ancient civilisations, documents have, as yet, been few. We have still gained all our knowledge of David and Solomon from the Bible. We have had the Israelite-Moabite inscription of King Mesa; and one book was recently found of the later period, the volume of Jesus-Sirach, in its Hebrew dialect. But now, for the first time, Jewish papyrus writings, of the later Persian period, have come to light, and amongst these one which has excited interest far beyond the circle of "savants." It refers to an episode in Jewish history, hitherto unknown, and confirms several important suppositions concerning the life of the nation.

The site of the discovery is the extreme south of ancient

¹ From *Deutsche Rundschau*. Paetel, Berlin. Translated by Mary Gurney, with additions by the author.

Egypt, where two fortresses are placed near together at the north of the Nile Cataract, to protect the frontier towards Nubia. The two are "Syene," now Assuan (in Aramaic Sewan); and Elephantine (in Egyptian "Abu," "Ibu," or "Ib," that is "ivory"), so named because the city was the headquarters for the sale of ivory, imported from the South; in Aramaic "Jeb." A year previous, ten well preserved documents were published by Sayce and Cowley; they were found at Assuan,¹ whither they had been brought from Elephantine. These were written in Aramaic, and were dated in the years 471 to 411 B.C., in the reigns of Xerxes, Artaxerxes I. and Darius II. They represent family archives, and treat of matters relating to property and possessions, and had evidently been carefully preserved (probably in an earthen vessel) in case of counter-claims. The names are Jewish. Thus we can trace the fortunes of a Jewish family far away in the south of Egypt, at the Persian period. The documents give a clear picture of the circumstances of the Jewish colony in Elephantine. We realise the narrow and tangled streets of the Egyptian fortress, bisected by the King's Way. In these streets the Jews lived, together with Nubians² from the vicinity, native Egyptians, the ruling Persians, and immigrants from other lands, such as Arameans and Babylonians. The Jews used the Aramean language for business, it being at that time in the West the language of trade, and also of official life. The language and civilisation of the Aramaic-speaking peoples reached Palestine; Judæo-Aramaic tales and songs have been found, and await publication. The Jews of Jeb are likely to have known the language of their fathers only as a sacred tongue.

The Jews had much intercourse with the strangers

¹ *Aramaic papyri discovered at Assuan.* A. H. Sayce. London, 1906.

² *Herodotus*, iii. 19.

amongst whom they dwelt ; they traded, carried on lawsuits, and even intermarried ; they had natives as slaves. Their religious views were sometimes affected. We read of a woman who is asked to swear by the Egyptian Goddess Sati (wife of Anubis, god of the district), and does so ; they also made proselytes. The same woman converted her second husband, an Egyptian, to the Jewish religion. Nationalities became intermixed by political circumstances, or by voluntary emigrations, and thus an understanding was arrived at between the various religions ; an important fact for the explanation of later Jewish history, and also of the early history of Christianity.

How were the Jews maintained in Jeb ? We read that they pursued trades, bought and sold houses and building sites ; they also lent money, and were remarkably skilled in legal matters. But to other calling of the Jews, such as agriculture or industry, is mentioned. It has been supposed that the Jews first settled in Eléphantine as soldiers ; and the Greek Aristæus writes that Ptolemy Lagus brought Jews with him to Egypt, armed them, and placed them in defence of fortresses. It is possible, however, that these Jews were only traders, trading between the frontier and the garrison towns ; all that can be certainly said is that each Jewish family must have had an especial connexion with some Persian officer or official, to stand surety for its good behaviour. The Jews had a temple¹ (Agûrâ) with an altar, dedicated to their God, Jâhû. The name Jâhû presents a difficult problem ; it appears constantly in the documents in place of the name Jahve, given in the Old Testament, and also in the inscription of the Moabite king, Mesa.

¹ Some authorities do not regard Agûrâ as a dwelling, but only as a temporary abode.

In the matter of language, the papyri give us a peculiar form of Aramaic, connected with the Old Aramaic, and also a number of Persian, Egyptian, and Babylonian names. The writings are composed in finished official style, proving a developed business life in the Aramaic-speaking world; the legal principles showing also the influence of Egyptian and of Babylonian law. The days and months are dated by the Jewish Babylonian as well as by the Egyptian calendar, the years by the reigns of the Persian kings, and afford a number of valuable synchronisms.

All this is, however, cast into shade by the papyrus lately discovered on the site of the ancient Jeb by Dr. Rubensohn, and now placed in the Berlin Museum. It comes from the archives of the Jews at Jeb, and gives a glimpse into the history of their temple.¹ The original must have been copied several times in old days; two copies have been found, one incomplete. A third and fourth portion also refer to the same event; one of these was published in 1903 by Professor Euting.² All these papyri, whether private or official, belong to the same period, as is shown by dates and names, and they explain one another.

We shall first deal with the text of the earliest temple document, with a short explanation. It begins with an inscription, the address being at the head; all written in the distinct style already familiar to us. "To Our Lord Bagôhî, ruler of Juda, thy servant—Jedonja, with his colleagues—the priests in the fortress of Jeb."

Bagôhî, the Persian Governor of the small province of Judea, is known in Josephus as Bagoses, the governor of Judea under Artaxerxes II. (404–358). Our document was composed in the years 408–7, under Darius II. Nothos

¹ Sachau, *Drei Aramäische Papyrusurkunden aus Elephantine*. Berlin, 1907.

² *Notice sur un Papyrus Égypto-Aramien*. M. J. Euting. Paris, 1903.

(424–404). Bagoses (or Bagôas) therefore held his office under various sovereigns. He was one of the successors of Nehemiah. We read in Josephus that, during the reign of Artaxerxes II. Bagôas laid a fine upon the temple, at a time when the High Priest John had slain his own brother, who had been conspiring with Bagôas. The High Priest Jehôchânân of Jerusalem is also mentioned in our document. The name Bagôas is Persian.

The document is compiled by the Jewish priests, their head being Jedonja, who may therefore be considered the High Priest of Jeb. His name occurs frequently in the private documents already mentioned. The Jews in Elephantine were a religious community, and were governed by priests, as in Palestine. After the fall of the State, only priestly authority remained.

The benediction, usual in letters, then follows. “ May our God, the God of Heaven, bless thee richly, and for all time ! May He grant thee increase of grace a thousandfold, before King Darius, and before the Princes of the Royal house, with length of life. Be ever glad, and of good health.”

Pathetic words of blessing, showing the desire of the writers to obtain the favour of Bagôas, and their consciousness that his chief concern must be to gain grace with the Autocrat and his Princes, he being entirely dependent on the favour of his rulers. The Princes with the King are named also in the Persian records in the Aramaic language contained in the book of Ezra (chapter vi. 10, and vii. 23), where the writers, as was usual, name their God “ the God of Heaven,” this title having been long used by the Jews when attempting to explain their religion to the heathen, in order to indicate that the Jewish God was “ the highest God ” of the nations. There seems to have been an unwritten law amongst the Jews, that the name should be

especially used in addressing Persians (who prayed to the "God of Heaven") with the view of gaining advantages for the Jewish religion by a suggestion that the two nations worshipped the same God. Darius ordered the building of the temple at Jerusalem to "The God of Heaven," and Artaxerxes I. commanded Ezra to carry out the law of "The God of Heaven in Judah," see Ezra (chap. v. 11, vi. 10, and vii. 12, 23). It was hoped that Bagôas, also, would not close his ear against the priest of "The God of Heaven." The wish at the end of the letter, "Be glad and of good health," corresponds exactly to the formula required in Egypt to follow the name of Pharaoh.

"Further, thy servants Jedonja, and his colleagues, speak thus: 'In the month Tammûz, in the 14th year of King Darius, when Arsham had departed, and had gone to the King, the priests of the God Chnûb, in the fortress of Jeb, made a conspiracy with Waidrang, who was then Governor, to destroy the temple of the God Jâhû in the fortress of Jeb.'"

This event happened in the month of "Tammûz," named from a Babylonish god (the Phœnician Adonis); the name having spread through the East, with the Babylonian calendar. The time is nearly identical with our July. The year is 411-410. The conspiracy was formed, as is repeated again, when Arsham (evidently the Persian governor of Egypt) was absent at the Persian Court. The writers do not complain of their satrap; it being distinctly stated that the conspiracy originated with the priests of Chnûb. In Elephantine stood a celebrated sanctuary of the ram-headed Chnûb (in Greek Anubis) honoured as God of the Cataracts, a shrine visited by the Nubians also since the conquest of the South by Egyptians. Chnûb was originally the chief god of the district, but in later times was superseded on the island of Philæ, on account of the vicinity of

the sanctuary of Isis. The mummies of the sacred rams of Anubis have been recently discovered in their granite sarcophagi. We see here that the priests of the god had a hatred against the neighbouring temple of Jāhū. The newly-introduced god excited their jealousy by alienating their followers ; we may remember the case of the Egyptian induced by his wife to become a Jew. It has been explained by commentators that the Jews offered chiefly rams to their God ; these animals were sacred to Chnûb, and were deemed inviolable by his worshippers. Therefore the ram offerings of the Jews excited the fanaticism of the Chnûb priests !

The Persian satrap had hitherto protected the Jāhū temple ; it was in his absence that the Chnûb priests ventured their attack. We know that the Jāhū priests fully returned the animosity ; they did not bestow the title of Priest on their opponents, but made use of an expression, common in Aramaic, but implying contempt in the mouth of a Jew. The Jewish nation felt themselves far superior to the heathen in the matter of religion, and expressed the feeling without reserve ; this is the chief reason for their unpopularity amongst the nations with whom they came in contact. An underling, the Governor of Jeb, united with the Chnûb priests. His name, "Waidrang," is Persian, but its meaning and pronounciation are uncertain. We are ignorant of his motives ; the records state that he was bribed by the priests.

"Thereupon this cursed Waidrang sent a letter to his son, Nephājân, who was colonel in the fortress of Sewên, saying that the temple in the fortress of Jeb must be destroyed."

Waidrang, himself a civilian, sent for help to his son, who was colonel in the neighbouring Syene. Judging by the expression used, the temple of Jāhū appears to have been the only temple in the precincts of the fortress ; implying

that the Jews, or at any rate their forefathers, must have been soldiers.

“Then Nephâjân brought Egyptian and other troops; they, having weapons, entered the fortress of Jeb, forced their way into the temple, and razed it to the ground.”

The troops who acted thus were Egyptians, the Persians being accustomed to raise native levies; we hear of Egyptian soldiers from the military caste as being employed in the marine.¹ Here native fanaticism was utilised against the foreign temple.

“They broke the stone pillars which were there; they also destroyed the five gateways hewn out of stone which were in the temple, and the doors with bronze hinges; the roof, entirely constructed of cedar beams, and the remaining furniture, they burned with fire. The golden and silver vessels for sprinkling, and the utensils in the temple, they carried away, and appropriated.”

This description is so detailed, because the petitioners desired that their temple should be re-erected like it had been, which actually occurred. The account is interesting to ourselves, and indicates the great wealth of these Jews. They could procure blocks of stone for the building of doors and pillars from the world-renowned stone quarries of Syene, especially in Elephantine: ² their riches also enabled them to procure beams of cedar-wood from remote Lebanon to the borders of Nubia: and we know that such beams were brought by the Egyptians, from the report found some time ago of the Egyptian priest Wen-Amon, who fetched beams from the Phœnician city of Byblos. The Jewish temple possessed silver bowls used for the sprinkling of blood,³ or for the mixing of the meal-offering.⁴ These we suppose to have been very heavy and valuable; in Jewish legend a silver bowl is

¹ Herodotus, vii., 8, 9; viii. 17; ix. 32.

² Herodotus, ii. 175.

³ Zech. ix. 15.

⁴ Num. vii. 13.

mentioned weighing 70 shekels. One motive for the destruction of the temple may therefore have been greed. The Book of Esther presupposes that the Jews in the eastern provinces of the Empire must have been very rich at a later period. Did the State help in the building and furnishing of the Temple, as appears possible with a military colony? It is not clear whether the stone pillars were supports to the building, or sacred symbols, like the two symbolic pillars standing before the Temple of Solomon. This had only one doorway, whilst the Temple of Jeb had five, a proof that the old temple at Jerusalem was not exactly copied in the newer building; an important fact as showing the frame of mind of the founders; they did not yet believe that the house of God at Jerusalem was the only true place of worship, or normal type of building, although these views became a dogma after the exile. It is further remarkable that no Jew appears to have perished in the destruction of the temple at Jeb, else this would have been recorded by the writers. Evidently no opposition had been risked to the superior might of the heathen. On the other hand, we read in Joel iii. 19 (a passage written about the period of our document) that the Egyptians had attacked the Jews and had shed innocent blood. Thus occasional murder of the Jews occurred. We now comprehend the causes of hatred; and the atrocities were probably committed in the following decades, when Egypt had thrown off the Persian yoke.

“ In the days of the Kings of Egypt, our fathers had built this Temple in the fortress of Jeb; when Cambyses conquered Egypt, he found the temple already built. He destroyed the temples of the gods of the Egyptians, but this temple was not injured.”

The history of the Temple is now related, to show that protection had long been bestowed by the Persian rulers. The account may be considered authentic as relating to the

Jews, for the papyri show that there was an archive in the temple of Jeb, giving these people accurate information of its origin. In like manner, in Ezra v. 11, the elders of Jerusalem relate the history of their sacred edifice from the documents in the archive. The temple of Jeb was built before the Persian invasion, that is before 525, and when Egypt had her own kings. At the time of its destruction this temple had therefore existed more than 115 years. The last kings of Egypt were Apries (588-70), Amasis (569-26), and Psammeticus III. (525). We read in the book of Jeremiah that (after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans in 586) many Jews took refuge in Egypt. Contrary to the advice of the aged prophet, they settled in the Delta cities of Migdol and Tahpanhes (or Daphnae) in Nôph (or Memphis) and in the land of Patros (or Upper Egypt); that is in all parts of the country (see Jeremiah xlii. to xliv.). These immigrants must have been well received; the Jewish State, before its calamities, having been in treaty with the Egyptians. They must have met with other Jews whose families had inhabited the foreign country for centuries past, when the rich land of Egypt had been overrun by Canaanites. We even find in Deuteronomy xvii. 16 a distinct prohibition against the return to Egypt. In those early days the Jews sought Egypt for purposes of trade; thus the Jewish state procured horses from Egypt; the law before the captivity forbade the monarch to buy many horses and thus to lead his people back (Deut. xvii. 16). The letter by Aristæus further relates that Psammeticus II. (594-589) had enlisted Jewish soldiers as allies in his campaign against the Ethiopians. In Isaiah xi. 11 (a passage added to the original version) there is mention of Jews in Lower Egypt, and even in Ethiopia. In Isaiah—chap. xix.—we have a remarkable prophecy concerning Egypt. We read that there would be five cities in Egypt speaking the Canaanite tongue, and praying to Jehovah, the

God of Sabaoth—a prophecy hitherto applied to Hellenistic times ; but now there seems probability that it applies to a much earlier epoch. One of these colonies is the Jeb now known to us. But the “ Altar of Jahve ” referred to in verse 19 as in the midst of the Land of Egypt, cannot be “ Jeb,” which lay at the extreme south of the land. The prophecy is very remarkable, that Egypt should be converted to Jehovah ; the Egyptian Jews were then so numerous, and their propaganda was so active, that they set this hope before them. Though not fulfilled, it may explain the hatred of the priests of Chnûb.

When Cambyses conquered Egypt, he did not spare the Egyptian temples ; we read in Greek authors (as now corroborated) that he plundered the Egyptian temples, and derided the gods ; but we also know ¹ that he did homage to “ Neit ” of Sais. In this matter, then, the papyrus appears to exaggerate in an interest which we can understand. The Jewish Temple of Jeb was not molested. Cambyses followed the same policy as Cyrus. Cyrus rebuilt the temple at Jerusalem, and Cambyses spared the temple of Jeb. The Jews, in Babylon, as in Egypt, understood how to gain the favour of the world’s conqueror for their God. Doubts have been thrown on the story of Cyrus rebuilding the temple of Jerusalem : this now appears less improbable. The favour shown by the Persians to the Egyptian Jews was repaid when revolt occurred. Euting’s document records, “ When the Egyptians revolted, we remained faithful to our lords, and no evil has been found in us.” From the text it appears that reference is made to a circumstance before the year 411–10. But it is not clear whether the revolt of Egypt is intended, suppressed according to Ed. Meyer in 454 (in which an Athenian army took part, under the leadership of the Libyan Princes

¹ Eduard Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, Bd. iii. p. 101.

Inaros and Amyrtaios), or the great Egyptian struggle against the Persian Empire, which for two generations won the freedom of Egypt.

“ After the deeds of Waidrang and the priests of Chnûb, we, with our wives and children, wore sackcloth, and we fasted and prayed to Jâhû, the Lord of Heaven.”

Upon the destruction of the Temple, the Jews began a great and universal religious mourning, as frequently described elsewhere ; many of the Psalms preserved to us were sung at these mourning festivals—for example, Psalms, lxxiv. lxxix., and xlv. relating to a similar catastrophe befalling the temple at Jerusalem. Whether these Psalms, as is generally supposed, were composed in the time of the Maccabees, may seem doubtful in the light of this new document from Jeb. The writing proceeds to show that soon there appeared a sign from the Lord of Heaven.

“ He granted us a spectacle of joy regarding Waidrang ; the dogs tore the fetters from off his feet ; all the treasures which he had amassed were lost, and all the men were slain who had wished evil to the temple ; this we beheld with joy.”

Thus there was vengeance for the destruction of the temple, regarded by the Jews as a sign from their God, Who would not allow an attack on His sanctuary to go unpunished—we are reminded of the legend of Belshazzar in Daniel v. Waidrang is ignominiously slain, his body, still fettered, is given to the dogs as food, his spoil from the temple is taken from him ; the other offenders are also killed. We are not told by whom the Divine judgment is carried out, but we may suppose that the Persian armies arrived to repair the breach of peace, and that Arsham, the satrap, returned to Egypt, and punished the evil-doers. The unconcealed delight of the Jews at the destruction of their enemies recalls the joyful record of the fall of Haman, in the Book of Esther.

The document published by Euting appears to be a memorial of the men of Jeb to Arsham, describing the wrong done to them, nearly in the same words as our papyrus. They add that Waidrang was personally answerable for all their sufferings ; he had built up a wall, and the Chnûb priests had closed a well in the midst of the fortress, from which the soldiers also drank. Such was the address sent to Arsham.

But he neither rebuilt the temple, nor did he give permission to the Jews to rebuild it. The temple lay three years in ruins. The cause of the Persians' conduct is evident ; the destruction of the temple had revealed a fanatic hatred on the part of the natives against the sanctuary, and the Persians considered it wiser to add no fresh fuel to the flame. Here is an instructive illustration of Persian religious policy ; it sought for peace in the land, and endeavoured to steer a middle course between varied religious beliefs.

Finding only indifference from the Government of their province, the Jews turned to their mother-country. The presumption of such an appeal was that, notwithstanding long distances, the Jews held together all over the world and kept up communications and cherished solicitude for each other. As Nehemiah had used his influence at the Persian Court on behalf of Jerusalem, so the men of Elephantine hoped that the Jews in Canaan would feel for them.

“ Also at the time that this misfortune happened to us, we sent a writing to our lords, and also to Jehôchânân, the High Priest, with his colleagues, the priests of Jerusalem, to Ostân, the brother of Anâni, and to the nobles of the Jews ; but they returned no letter to us.”

The first application had been to the Persian Governor at Jerusalem, and he is now applied to for a second time ; showing the confidence felt in the righteousness of the Persian

and their protection of religions. As already pointed out, the Persian kings from the time of Darius and Cyrus endeavoured to spare the religions of their subjects, and to base power on the strength of organised religious bodies. But the Persian ruler had now refused to intervene. Application was therefore made to the Jewish authorities, the High Priest Jehôchânân, mentioned in Nehemiah xii. 22, with the other priests. Then follow the "Nobles of the Jews," the heads of the noble families named frequently by Ezra and Nehemiah, and sharing government with the priests. The head of these must have been Ostan, whose name (of Persian origin) is otherwise unknown to us. But even these disregarded the distress of the Jews of Elephantine. This can be readily understood. The inhabitants of Jerusalem had long held as a sacred dogma that their Temple was the only legitimate sanctuary of Jehovah. And they had every reason to maintain this dogma. In Jerusalem it was natural to wish that the temple should remain the only Jewish sanctuary, the central point of Judaism; and that Jews from the whole world should undertake pilgrimages to it. It was even hoped, that this temple would become the central point of the world (see Isa. ii. 2; Zech. xiv. 16). Thus the temple at Jeb was probably regarded with displeasure, and its destruction considered the righteous punishment of God; and the petitions of the Egyptian Jews were disregarded.

The Jews of Elephantine continued their lamentations for three years with true Jewish pertinacity.

"We have worn sackcloth, and have fasted since the "Tammûz" day of the 14th year of King Darius unto this day; our wives have become like unto widows; we have not anointed ourselves with oil, and we have drunk no wine."

The usual religious services were not celebrated.

“ Also until the present day of the 17th year of King Darius no meal-offering, no offering of frankincense, or burnt offering, has been brought to the temple.”

The names of these offerings are interesting to us because they represent the offerings of earlier days. In Jerusalem a new Book of the Law had been lately introduced by Ezra, the so-called Priestly Code, in which sin and trespass-offerings are conspicuous. This book had not reached Egypt, yet the same sacrifices are mentioned in the Persian documents quoted in the book of Ezra.¹

Then follows the special petition. “ Thy servants now speak, Jedonja with his companions, and the Jews, all citizens of Jeb. If it appear right unto my Lord, have regard to this Temple, to rebuild it, for we are forbidden to rebuild it. Behold us here in Egypt, who have received thy benefits and favours. We pray thee to send a letter to thy servants concerning the temple of the God Jāhû, that it may be rebuilt in the fortress in Jeb, as it was before.”

Then follow various undertakings.

“ Then will we offer meal-offerings, frankincense, and burnt-offerings upon the altar of the God Jāhû in thy name ; and at every time we, with our wives and children, and with all the Jews here assembled, will offer prayer for thee if this be so, until the rebuilding of this temple.”

The meaning is, that in case of his granting their request, they promise intercession for him till the restoration of the temple and subsequently offerings on his behalf. The decree of Darius is parallel, see Ezra vi. 10, that the temple of Jerusalem should be rebuilt, and that prayer and sacri-

¹ Ezra vi. 3, vii. 17. This petition shows that the Egyptian Jews had already received favours from Bagôas. “ We have received thy favours,” and therefore hope that the Persian ruler in Jerusalem will sympathise with the Egyptian Jews. It is not clear whether the desired aid is to be official, or from kindness of heart.

rice should be offered in it for himself and for his sons. In Egypt also had Persian kings offered and ordered sacrifices. And in Jerusalem in later times, the Jews sacrificed on behalf of the Seleucid kings as well as for Roman Emperors, until the rebellion broke out. It was hoped that Bagôas also, although a Zoroastrian, would value the favour of the God Jâhû; an observation pointing to the syncretism of the religions of the period.

“If thou continue thine aid, until the temple be rebuilt, thy deed will be acknowledged by Jâhû, the God of Heaven, with the gift offered unto Him of a whole offering, or part offering; thou shalt receive 1000 talents of silver.”

Thus the name of Bagôas would be introduced in all private sacrifices as the benefactor of the temple, and all offerings should be considered as sent by him. What blessings from the God Jâhû would fall upon the head of the Persian! The sum named is 1000 talents of silver! (£300,000.)

“As regards the gold, we have sent our message and communication.”

It has been suggested by Professor Sachau that perhaps these words imply that a sum of gold was sent with the writing, or promised within a short interval.

“All these things we have notified in our own letter to Delâjâ and Shelemjâ, the sons of Sanballat, ruler of Samaria.”

For safety's sake they wrote to two other distinguished persons. It may be remarked that the High Priest of Jerusalem was not selected. During the three years in which they had gazed anxiously towards their old home, the Jews had learned enough to know that no help could be expected from the priests of Jerusalem. Therefore they turn to the sons of Sanballat. This Sanballat, ruler of Samaria, is well known to readers of the Bible as the enemy

of Nehemiah, who endeavoured to hinder the building of the walls of Jerusalem. What a surprise to find his name here! By the mention of the name the date of our papyrus is fixed certainly in a decade of the reign of Darius II., and Nehemiah is placed in the reign of Artaxerxes I., Sanballat's conflict with Nehemiah being some decades earlier. At the date of our document Sanballat appears to have been no longer alive, as his sons are mentioned, and not himself; his son Delâjâ granted the request. The sons did not inherit the governorship from their father, but were regarded as distinguished men; and the leaders of the Samaritan community. They had names in Jâ; a proof that their father, though not of Jewish birth, yet felt himself a believer in Jahve; as may be gathered from the Book of Nehemiah (ii. 20). That these men were addressed was the result of shrewd calculation. The Samaritan community had long been at bitter enmity with the Jews of Jerusalem. As inhabitants of the former Northern Empire the Samaritans had observed with displeasure the rise of the Temple and city from ruin, and had done all in their power to frustrate the plans of the Jerusalem Jews, by means of denunciations to the Persian authorities, or other devices. They were deeply offended by the great pretensions of the men of Jerusalem, who considered themselves the only true believers in Jahve, abominated the "people of the land" as half-caste, and even forbade intermarriage with them. In previous years the Samaritans had organised themselves into a separate religious community. Their leader, who had been exiled from Jerusalem, was Manasseh, the brother of Jehôchânân, the son-in-law of Sanballat—and they had built their own temple in Sichem (see Nehemiah xii. 28). It can easily be understood that these men would gladly stretch out a hand to support the rival undertaking in Egypt, so hated by the Jerusalemites.

The incident once more exhibits the Jews hanging together, wrangling with each other, and thoroughly acquainted with each other's affairs. Evidently also Sanballat's sons had distinguished acquaintances in Egypt, and could aid, if willing.

"Arsham has known nothing of all that we have suffered."

They repeat this assurance, for had Arsham approved its destruction, Bagôas could not have aided the rebuilding of the temple.

"Dated 20 Marcheschwan (November), the 17th year of King Darius."

It is presumable that Bagôas granted the petition of the Jews of Elephantine, and saw to the erection of their temple, otherwise the document would not have been so highly prized; and it would not have been re-copied several times had not the right of the Elephantine temple rested upon it. A leaf, subsequently discovered, supports this view.

"A protocol, on the reports of Bagôhi and of Delâjâ" (Sanballat's elder son). The protocol follows.

"It is for thee to command in Egypt, before Arsham, concerning the Altar-House of the God of Heaven, which was built in the fortress of Jeb, before our days, and before Cambyses; and afterwards destroyed by the cursed Waidrang, in the 14th year of King Darius, that it be rebuilt on its own place, as it was before; meal-offering and frankincense to be again offered on the altar, as in ancient days."

This protocol is not the reply of the original writer, but is probably a private note, composed by the unknown messenger, in order to make sure of the import of his message. He may have been the same man whom the Jews of Jeb had sent to Jerusalem; writing, in joyful mood, after the happy termination of his visit; he knew that his temple would arise again. But one point of the petition was not granted; only meal-offerings and frankincense, but no

burnt-offerings, were to be brought to the new sanctuary: Our translators, Smend and Zidzbarski, assigned a reason for this restriction; the Judaic sacrifices of rams, which were regarded with unspeakable horror by the priests of Chnûb, were forbidden in order that peace might not be again disturbed. Yet the priests of Jerusalem had stirred no finger in aid. As the temple of Jerusalem was rebuilt by the great kings Cyrus and Darius, so the less famous temple of Elephantine was rebuilt by the intervention of a Persian ruler, and with the aid of a family who were no well-wishers to Jerusalem, and who, for that very reason, supported the Egyptian temple.

We have a further trace of the later fortunes of the temple. Under Ptolemy VI. (Philometor), Onias, a man from Jerusalem of highpriestly descent, about the year 160, with the consent of the king, built a Judæo-Egyptian temple at Leontopolis, in the northern part of the land at the south-east of the Delta: about 250 years after our document we read in Josephus¹ that Onias, when founding this temple, made reference to disputes about sanctuaries between the Syrian and Egyptian Jews; he hoped to put an end to strife by building a new Egyptian temple. He therefore assumed that there had previously existed in Egypt one or more Jewish sanctuaries. Amongst the Egyptian Jews some revered these spots, but others looked only to the temple at Jerusalem. Was the sacred place in Elephantine one of those known to Onias, or had it been destroyed at an earlier date, during the great revolt of the Egyptians against the Persians? Josephus never refers to the older temple. As late as the time of Philo, Jews dwelt "as far as the borders of Ethiopia";² these must have been descendants of the men of Jeb.

¹ *The Antiquities*, xiii. 3.

² In Flaccum § 6, Mang. ii. 523.

In the consideration of our papyrus, we have traced the light thrown on various questions ; the religious policy of the Persian rulers, the frictions between the provincial religions, and the condition of the Jews in the Persian kingdom. It shows us especially for the first time the antiquity of the Egyptian Jewish colony ; afterwards to play such an important part under Greek and Roman rule. We realise that the history of the Jews, after the destruction of Jerusalem, extended over three areas, Babylon, Palestine, and Egypt. The document also throws light on Old Testament Scripture. We have in the strong resemblance of the language of these records to that of the official documents inserted in the Book of Ezra, a proof of the authenticity of the latter : we have also valuable references to the Jewish religion. The men of Jeb dared to build a new temple, unlike Solomon's temple, whilst Onias, centuries later, copied the temple of Jerusalem. Thus at Jeb there were pious men, faithful to their God, who did not know that there should be only one temple, that at Jerusalem. The law of Deuteronomy containing the command cannot have been generally understood. The marriages with other nations also, such as took place in Jeb, were forbidden in Deuteronomy, and strongly condemned by Ezra. And in the description of the decoration of the temple there is no mention of images, or of sacred symbols, with the exception perhaps of the pillars. Yet these were common in ancient Israel ; such traces of heathendom were banished later by the polemic of the Prophets.

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