

THE OTHER GROUPS THAT WERE ... SOME REMARKS ON DIFFERENT MINOR ETHNICITIES IN PERSIAN PERIOD ELEPHANTINE

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ABSTRACT

Despite the renewed attention for Persian period Elephantine, the focus of many publications is still on the history, identity, and religion of the Yehudite group in the Persian border garrison. This article displays the data on the other ethnic groups. Next to Persians, Egyptians, and Judeo-Arameans, some fifteen ethnic groups are referred to in the Aramaic and Demotic inscriptions. The analysis of the material leads to the conclusion that members of these other groups had various social roles in the local community: mercenaries, merchants, administrators, and slaves.

INTRODUCTION

Recent years have shown an increase of attention for Persian period Elephantine.¹ This current research is mainly focused on the role of the Jews – or better Yehudites – in the multi-ethnic community. Although scholars are aware of the presence of many other ethnic groups next to Babylonians, Judeo-Arameans,² and Egyptians, not much attention is paid to these minorities. In this article, I will collect the information known on the other groups who lived at Elephantine and in Syene. A first reading of the Aramaic and Demotic inscriptions evokes the impression that they can be divided into four groups: people from the Eastern satrapies; people from West-Asian satrapies; Phoenicians; and a few persons from neighbouring areas. The focal question in analysing the material will be: what role(s) did persons from these groups play in the

¹ See, e.g., Botta (2009); Azzoni (2009); Rohrmoser (2014); Granerød (2016) and various essays.

² On them see recently Van der Toorn (2016).

community in and around Elephantine? Were they merchants, mercenaries, general labour-force, or involved in the administration?

MEDES AND MAGIANS

The Medes were an Iranian group who formerly were an independent and powerful nation. After the conquest by Cyrus the Great of their territories in 550 B.C.E., the Median area in the Zagros Mountains became a satrapy in the Achaemenid Empire.³ The Persians apparently moved people from Media to its military outpost in Egypt. Only once in the documents from Elephantine is someone indicated as “a Mede”: the witness Atrfarna son of Naisaya, a Mede, who is one of the three witnesses to the testamentary manumission by which the Yehudite Meshullam, son of Zaccur, releases his handmaiden Tapamet.⁴

The Magians were a subtribe of the Medians.⁵ Greek prejudice and misunderstanding has led to the incorrect idea that the Magians were magicians of some sort.⁶ The Persepolis Fortification Texts dating from the reign of Darius I offer a historically more trustworthy picture.⁷ Here, the Magians are depicted in their twofold function. On the one hand, they were involved in the Persian administration, especially as what we now would call financial experts. On the other hand, they were responsible for the *lan*-sacrifice, an important part of the cult of Ahura-Mazda.⁸

In a legal document regulating the gift of the Yehudite Ananiah existing in “half of the large room and its chamber” to “Tamet, his wife, in affection”⁹ the following witnesses are mentioned:

³ Briant (1996:23–40); Wiesehofer (2003:391–396).

⁴ *TADAE* B3.6:16–17; on the name Atrfarna see Skjærvø (1983); Tavernier (2007:62).

⁵ Already noted by Herodot, *Hist.* I, 101.

⁶ Attested in a quote of Heraclitus of Ephese *apud* Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus*, 2.13: “And in truth against these Heraclitus the Ephesian prophesies, as the night-walkers, the magi, the bacchanals, the Lenæn revellers, the initiated. These he threatens with what will follow death, and predicts for them fire.” See Papatheophanes (1985); De Jong (1997:487–490).

⁷ See Briant, Henkelman and Stolper (2008).

⁸ See, e.g., *PFT* 758. The *lan*-sacrifice is discussed by Henkelman (2008:181–304).

⁹ *TADAE* B3.5 (Anani archive).

And the witnesses herein: Gemeriah son of Mahseiah, Hoshiah son of Yatom, Mithrasara the Magian, Tata the Magian.¹⁰

Next to two Yehudites, two Magians are mentioned. In the Aramaic, they are called *mgšy*, “Magians; Magoi”.¹¹ The noun is a cognate of Aramaic *mgwš*, which is used in the Aramaic version of the Behistun Inscription to indicate the ethnic background of the rebellious Gaumata as Magian.¹² The name Mithrasara is clearly Median: “Living in a bond with Mithra”.¹³ In a document concerning the donation by Mahseiah, the son of Yedaniah, of his house to his daughter Miphtahiah a “Mithrasara son of Mithrasara” is listed as one of the witnesses. Although an ethnic indicator is absent in this text, it might refer to the same person.¹⁴ The personal name Tata has an Indo-European background, since it can be connected to Old Indian/Sanskrit *tātā-*, “father”.¹⁵ The name is attested in Neo-Babylonian inscriptions but does not occur elsewhere in the documents from Elephantine.

The documents are not informative as to the role the Medians and the Magians played within the community of Elephantine. In view of their cultic function and administrative role in Persepolis, it might be suggested that the Magians held comparable positions in Elephantine. The lack of further evidence, however, makes this assumption neither falsifiable nor verifiable.

KHWAREZMIANS

In ancient times, the Khwarezmians were the inhabitants of Khwarezm or Chorasmia, a province in the eastern part of the Persian Empire. The area became part of the Persian Empire before 522 since it is listed in the Behistun Inscription as one of the areas over

¹⁰ *TADAE* B3.5:23–24.

¹¹ See *DNWSI*, 595.

¹² *DB Aramaic TADAE* C2.1:74–175. The versions in Persian, Elamite and Babylonian corroborate this interpretation; see Kuhrt (2007:141–157).

¹³ See Tavernier (2007:251).

¹⁴ *TADAE* B2.7:18 (Mibtaiah archive).

¹⁵ See Tavernier (2007:322).

which Darius reigned.¹⁶ Ctesias remarks that Cyrus the Great would have installed on his deathbed his youngest son Tanyoxarkes as lord over a group of satrapies, among them Khwarezmia.¹⁷ The area was famous for its lapis-lazuli.¹⁸ The trilingual Susa foundation charter of Darius I mentions that the turquoise stones in his palace were brought there from Chorasmia.¹⁹ This might be related to a remark in Herodotus that the Khwarezmians had to pay a (yearly) tribute to Darius I of three hundred talents.²⁰ In a Persian inscription from the reign of Xerxes, Khwarezmia is mentioned in a list of people who were under the Persian law.²¹ The Persian or Greek sources do not reveal any reason why Khwarezmians would have been brought to serve in the garrison in Elephantine. Herodotus mentions the existence of a Khwarezmian cohort in the army of Xerxes that was led by a certain Artabazus.²² It is not impossible that mercenaries from this cohort were recruited to serve in Elephantine. Arrianus only gives the name of an Achaemenid satrap over the Khwarezmians from the times of Alexander the Great: *pharasma-nè*.²³

Two interesting documents from the Mibtaiah archive from Elephantine refer to “Dargamana, the son of Xvarshaina, a Khwarezmian”.²⁴ His name as well as the name of his father is Old-Persian.²⁵ The two legal documents refer to a quarrel about a piece of land between Dargamana and the Yehudite Mahseiah son of Jedaniah. The first document is dated in the *Thronbesteigungsjahr* of Artaxerxes I (= 464 B.C.E.). Dargamana complained that Mahseiah had taken his property into possession. The judge – the Persian Damidata – ordered Mahseiah to swear an oath. He swore an oath:

¹⁶ DB:6; Kuhrt (2007:141).

¹⁷ Ctesias, *Persica* = *FrGH* 688 F 9; see Kuhrt (2007:101). Tanyoxarkes is better known by the name Bardiya or Smerdis.

¹⁸ See Ferrier (1972:23–27); Von Rosen (1988).

¹⁹ DSf:10; Kuhrt (2007:492).

²⁰ Herodotus, *Hist.* III 93; see Kuhrt (2007:674).

²¹ XPh § 3; see Lecoq (1997:256–258); Kuhrt (2007:304–306).

²² Herodotus, *Hist.* VII 66; see Barkworth (1993:149–167); Kuhrt (2007: 519).

²³ Arrian, *Anab. Alex.* IV 15.4; see also Livshits (2015:319).

²⁴ *TADAE* B2.2; B2.3; Botta (2009:123–126); Van der Toorn (2016:160–161); Becking (2017:39–43).

²⁵ See Tavernier (2007:168); Livshits (2015: 318–319): “Long-minded”.

You swore to me by Yahô, and satisfied my heart about that land²⁶

after which Dargamana relinquished his claim.²⁷ Some five years later, Mahseiah bequests this plot of land and the building upon it to his daughter Mibtaiah. In the cadastral boundaries in the document on that bequest it is stated that “above it [= the land of Mahseiah/Mibtaiah] the house of Dargamana the son of Xvarshaina adjoins”.²⁸ Most probably Dargamana had become or remained the owner of an adjacent plot. From the two documents, it can be deduced that the Khwarezmian served in the garrison and that his position was important enough to make him the owner of a property. He is labelled as someone “whose place is made in Elephantine” indicating that he had a fixed place and position in the garrison.²⁹ Below, I will return to these two documents showing that they contain evidence for the peaceful coexistence of various groups in Elephantine.

Only one other text refers to a Khwarezmian. This accounts fragment, however, is badly damaged which makes it impossible to reconstruct the name of this person or his role in the community.³⁰

CASPIANS

In ancient times, Caspia was the area on the southwestern shore of the Caspian Sea. It was part of the eleventh satrapy.³¹ Its inhabitants had to pay tribute to the central Persian power. The Caspians have traditionally been seen as a pre-Indo-European nation related to or identical with the Kassites and like them speaking a non-Indo-European language.³² In the documents from Elephantine a few Caspians are mentioned by name. Their names being etymologically related to ancient Persian, however, indicates that the

²⁶ *TADAE* B2.2:11–12.

²⁷ *TADAE* B2.2.

²⁸ *TADAE* B2.3:5–6.

²⁹ *TADAE* B2.2:2–3. That he was a general, as argued by Gropp (1998:20), is slightly hyperbolic.

³⁰ *TADAE* D3.39b:3; see below.

³¹ See Herodotus, *Hist.* iii 92, 93.

³² Herzfeld (1968:195–199).

Caspians might have spoken an Iranian language.³³ This argument – strong as it is – is not completely convincing since the Caspians might have taken over some personal names from their Persian overlords.

They are not mentioned in the Persian lists of nations which could be construed as a sign that they were of minor importance to the Persians.³⁴ Some Caspians are mentioned in the Elephantine documents.³⁵

In a document on the sale of an abandoned property to Ananiah, a Yehudite, the sellers are Caspians.³⁶ Their names are clearly Iranian: Bagazushta son of Buza and Ubil daughter of Shatibara. Bagazushta as well as his father-in-law are presented as Caspians from the *degel* of Namasava. Hence, they were mercenaries. Bagazushta is an Old Iranian personal name: **Baga-zušta*- “beloved of the god(s)”.³⁷ The fact that he and his wife were able to sell a property in the centre of Elephantine might be an indication that they belonged to the upper class.³⁸ Among the witnesses to this contract are “*hwḥ/hyrw* son of *’trly*, a Caspian; house of *vyzbl*, a Caspian”.³⁹ Their role in the community is not mentioned. The same property is referred to in a document regulating the gift by the same Ananiah of “half of the large room and its chamber” to “Tamet, his wife, in affection”.⁴⁰ The house as such is referred to as the one that Ananiah bought from “Ubil, daughter of Shatibara, and from Bagazushta”.

Another Bagazushta is mentioned in a document concerning the sale by Anani, son of Azariah, and his wife Tapamet of their house to Anani, son of Haggai.⁴¹ It is twice stated in the document that the house under sale once belonged to “Bagazushta, the son of Pallin, a Caspian” and that earlier on the property was in the hands of “Yanbulu the son of Misday(a), a Caspian” who was a hereditary property holder in Elephantine

³³ See Grelot (1971:101–107).

³⁴ DNe; A²Pa.

³⁵ See also Van der Toorn (2016:160–163).

³⁶ TADAE B3.4; see Porten, Szubin (1982); Botta (2009:108–111).

³⁷ See Grelot (1971:108I); Hinz (1975:55). The name is attested about ten times mainly in documents from the fifth century B.C.E. from various parts of the Persian Empire.

³⁸ TADAE B3.4:7–10 describe the boundaries of the property as between the Temple of Khnum and the Temple of Yahô.

³⁹ TADAE B3.4:23–24; the identity of the second person is uncertain.

⁴⁰ TADAE B3.5.

⁴¹ TADAE B3.12.

which implies that the property was given to him as reward for military duties.⁴² Among the witnesses no Caspians are listed.

Other Caspians are given witness in a document concerning the donation by Mahseiah, the son of Yedaniah of his house to his daughter Miphtahiah.⁴³ Their names are “vyzb[l(w)] son of ’trly, a Caspian; Barbari son of Dargi(ya), Caspian”.⁴⁴ The remark might indicate that vyzbl was a brother of ḥwḥ/ḥyrw son of ’trly mentioned above.

No information on the reasons why these Caspians were brought to Elephantine is given in the texts. No signs of problematic relations with other groups are available. Van der Toorn has argued that Caspians and Khwarezmians lived peaceful and in close proximity to each other in Elephantine/Syene.⁴⁵

BACTRIANS

Bactrians were the inhabitants of the satrapy Bactra, an area in the east of the Persian Empire in the present territory of Afghanistan.⁴⁶ The area was incorporated by Cyrus the Great into his empire. Ctesias notes that after the Cyrus had incorporated Astyages and Amytis in his royal household, the once inimical Bactrians submitted themselves to Cyrus.⁴⁷ Ctesias remarks that Cyrus the Great would have installed on his deathbed his youngest son Tanyoxarkes as lord over a group of satrapies, among them Bactria.⁴⁸ Bactria is mentioned in the Behistun inscription in the list of territories over which Darius became ruler.⁴⁹ In a Persian inscription from the reign of Xerxes, Bactria is mentioned in a list of people who were under the Persian law.⁵⁰ The Persian or Greek

⁴² *TADAE* B3.12:4–5, 12. On the Persian army see http://www.cais-soas.Com/CAIS/History/hakhamaneshian/achaemenid_army.htm.

⁴³ *TADAE* B2.7.

⁴⁴ *TADAE* B2.7:18–19.

⁴⁵ Van der Toorn (2016:160–163).

⁴⁶ See Shaked (2003).

⁴⁷ Ctesias, *Persica* = *FrGH* 688 F 9:2; see Kuhrt (2007: 58).

⁴⁸ Ctesias, *Persica* = *FrGH* 688 F 9; see Kuhrt (2007:101). Tanyoxarkes is better known by the name Bardiya or Smerdis.

⁴⁹ DB:6; see Kuhrt (2007:141).

⁵⁰ XPh § 3; see Lecoq (1997:256–258); Kuhrt (2007:304–306).

sources remain silent on the reason why Bactrians would have been recruited to serve in the border garrison in Elephantine. Herodotus remarks that Bactrians were incorporated in the army of Xerxes.⁵¹ It is not impossible that some of them were recruited for service in Egypt. Ctesias remarks that in the early days of the reign of Artaxerxes (I) a rebellion against the central Persian power would have taken place. The historicity of this remarks is challenged.⁵² The recently published Aramaic documents from Bactria only deal with internal affairs in homeland Bactra in the middle of the fourth century B.C.E.⁵³

As far as I can see, only one Bactrian is mentioned in the texts from Elephantine. A contract dating from 403 B.C.E. reads as follows:

[Ba]rznava son of Artabazana, that is Patou, a Bactrian, whose [p]lace is fixed in Elephantine, the fortress, of the detachment of Marya, 1 to Yedaniah [son of Na]than, a Y[ehudi]te, wh[o] is hereditary-property-holder in Elephantine, the fortress, in the detachment of [...] ⁵⁴

The personal names of the Bactrian and his father are clearly Persian.⁵⁵ From the inscription, it can be deduced that [Ba]rznava held an important military position, comparable to that of Dargamana, the Khwarezmian.

CARIANS

I will now move to Western Asia or Anatolia. One of the Persian satrapies was Caria, to be found in south-western Anatolia. The Carians were an indigenous Hittite-Luwian people probably already referred to in Hittite and Mesopotamian inscriptions as Karkissa. Homer's *Iliad* presents a mythic memory of the Carians siding as soldiers with the Trojans.⁵⁶ I will not discuss here the question of whether the Hebrew noun *k'rēî*

⁵¹ Herodotus, *Hist.* VIII 113; see Kuhrt (2007:272–273).

⁵² Ctesias, *Persica* = *FrGH* 688 F 14 (35); see Neuffer (1968:60–87); Kuhrt (2007:315).

⁵³ Edited by Naveh and Shaked (2012); see also Shaked (2003).

⁵⁴ *TADAE* D2.12:2–4; see Hoftijzer (1988).

⁵⁵ See Porten (2003).

⁵⁶ *Iliad* 2, 867.

could refer to Carians as mercenaries in the Hebrew Bible.⁵⁷ Herodot (*Hist.* II 30.152.154) remarks that Carians were settled in Daphne, Migdol, and later Memphis during the Saite dynasty. Together with some very short Greek inscriptions from Abu Simbel and the reports in the Egyptian Annals, it can be concluded that Carians – as well as Greeks and Phoenicians – participated in the campaign of Psammetich II against Nubia in 593 B.C.E.⁵⁸

Throughout Egypt Carian graffiti, funerary and votive inscriptions have been found dating from before the Persian period.⁵⁹ These inscriptions, however, are not informative on the role of the Carians in Egypt during the Persian period. With the Persian conquest of Egypt, the Carians seem to have lost their mercenary status. At Elephantine or Syene, no Carian inscriptions have been found. Gosline has, incorrectly, argued that some mason marks discovered at Elephantine would have a Carian origin.⁶⁰ Adiego has shown that the letters on these marks are clearly not from the Carian alphabet.⁶¹ The remarks in Herodot and in the Egyptian annals could hint at the fact that the Carians at Elephantine were settled there as mercenaries.⁶² This assumption, however, is not confirmed by the documents at our disposal.⁶³

As for Elephantine, Carians are mentioned in a document concerning the authorisation of the repair of a boat dated in 411.⁶⁴ From this text, it becomes clear that a group of Carians – whose names are not mentioned – were the users of a boat owned by Psamsineith that they held in hereditary lease. The maintenance of this boat was overdue and the Carians received not only the right of repair. They were also supplied with the necessary commodities for restoration, among which copper.⁶⁵ The *prmnkry*,

⁵⁷ 2 Sam 8:18, 15:18, 20:23; 2 Kings 11:4, 11:19; as has been suggested by Masson (1975); Avishur and Heltzer (2004).

⁵⁸ Phoenician graffiti: CIS I, 112; Greek inscriptions: Bernard and Masson (1957:1–46); stela of Psammetich II: Lichtheim (2006:85); see now Ray (1995); Schmitz (2010); Schmitz (2012:32–42); Rohrmoser (2014:78–79); Fischer-Bovet (2014:35).

⁵⁹ Peden (2001); see now Adiego (2007:22–127).

⁶⁰ Gosline (1992); see also Avishur, Heltzer (2004).

⁶¹ Adiego (2007:26).

⁶² As suggested by Porten (1968:8–9); Kaplan (2003).

⁶³ As noted by Fischer-Bovet (2014:34).

⁶⁴ TADAE A6.2; this papyrus was discovered at Elephantine see Cowley (1923:89–102).

⁶⁵ Stieglitz (2004); Granerød (2016:66).

“responsible foreman”,⁶⁶ Shamou the son of Kanufi, an Egyptian, functioned as a middleman between the satrap Arsames and the Carians. Since the character of the ship is not mentioned, it remains uncertain whether the Carians functioned as merchants or mercenaries.

CILICIANS

Cilicia had been a Persian satrapy in south-eastern Anatolia. The area was brought under Persian rule under Cyrus the Great. The area was ruled by tributary native kings. The Persian or Greek sources remain silent as to why Cilicians would have been recruited to serve in Egypt. According to Herodotus, the Cilicians paid a yearly tribute of 360 white horses and 500 talents in the days of Darius, a part of which was spent on the cavalry guarding the Cilician region.⁶⁷ This, however, is no direct evidence for Cilician mercenary activities in Egypt.

In the documents from Elephantine, some Cilicians are mentioned. By the end of the fifth century, Arsames sent a letter to Artavant who held an important legal office.⁶⁸ In this letter, Arsames requests the release of a group of 13 Cilician slaves who, during the Egyptian uprising, had run away from their duties.⁶⁹ The Cilicians had been working at various domains of Arsames in Upper and Lower Egypt. The names of these 13 persons are given; they are mainly of an Anatolian character.

In another letter, Arsames requests to *Mrdk* for the delivery of rations to – among others – “two Cilician persons (and) one artisan” who are his servants. Their names are not given and it is also not clear at which domain they worked. Arsames hopes that they will receive each day one handful of flour per caput.⁷⁰ *Mrdk* is not to be construed as

⁶⁶ A Persian loanword, see Hinz (1975:121).

⁶⁷ Herodotus, *Hist.* III 90; see Kuhrt (2007:673–677).

⁶⁸ *TADAE* A6.7.

⁶⁹ They are characterised as *'bšwkn*, an Old Iranian loan word meaning “those who run away”, cf. Hinz (1975:18).

⁷⁰ *TADAE* A6.9; on this text see Colburn (2013).

the god Marduk, but as the personal name of a Persian official.⁷¹ In a third letter, Varfish orders Nakhtor to return five Cilician slaves to Arsames.⁷² Finally, *TADAE D6.7*, a very broken and fragmented text, mentions Cilicians, but nothing can be deduced.

The evidence found hints at the assumption that the Cilicians belonged to the lower societal stratum at Elephantine and Syene.

PHOENICIANS

As for the Phoenicians, Kaplan argues that their presence in Achaemenid Egypt had a military function.⁷³ Others stress their function as traders.⁷⁴ Generally the Phoenicians lived harmoniously with the other groups, probably due to the control of the Persian power. It is only in the final quarter of the fifth century that, parallel to Egypt's strife for independence, quarrels between the different groups occur, such as the devastation of the Yehudite temple for Yahô by the priests of Chnum in conspiracy with the Persian officer Vidranag.⁷⁵

The documents show the presence of some Phoenicians on and around the island. The aim of the present contribution is threefold. (1) How vast was the contingent of Phoenicians at Elephantine? (2) What role did they play in the local society? (3) Did they contribute to the harmony between the groups?

PHOENICIANS IN EGYPT THROUGH THE CENTURIES

Already in pre-Pharaonic times there had been trade contacts between Egypt and the Phoenician harbour cities. Although on a small scale, Phoenician sailors transported merchandise from the Levant and sometimes from Mesopotamia to the Egyptian delta

⁷¹ Like *Mordekay* in the Book of Eshter; Marduka in the Murashu archive; and Mardu/aku in the Persepolis Fortification Texts, e.g., PF 81; 412; 489; 1858, see Yamauchi (1992); Henkelman (2008:244).

⁷² *TADAE A6.15*; on these letters see Whitehead (1974).

⁷³ Kaplan (2003).

⁷⁴ E.g., Porten (1968: 9, 85); Briant (1996:395–398).

⁷⁵ On this incident and its aftermath see *TADAE A4.7 // A4.8*; Porten (1968:284–298); Schäfer (1997:121–136); Kratz (2006); Rohmoser (2014:278–285); Granerød (2016:81–127).

in that era.⁷⁶ Phoenician trade with Egypt continued over time.⁷⁷ There is no room here for a full history on the mercantile relations of Phoenicia and Egypt, I will only hint at a few pieces of evidence for the ongoing trade and the presence of Phoenician merchants in Egypt. The “serpent spells” in the Egyptian Pyramid Texts from the third millennium contain incantations against *kbnw*, “Byblite snakes”, that would have come as stowaways on Phoenicians ships to Egypt.⁷⁸ The report on the travel of Wenamun to Byblos makes clear that at the end of the second millennium the Egyptians obtained the timber for the great ark of Amun-Re from Phoenicia and that Phoenician ships regularly sailed to the Delta.⁷⁹ Herodot refers to Phoenician presence in Memphis in the area of the palace assuming trade-relations:

Round about this enclosure dwell Phoenicians of Tyre, and this whole region is called the Camp of the Tyrians.⁸⁰

A few Phoenician inscriptions from the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid periods have been found in Egypt. On the stele of a seated Rameses II from Abu-Simbel Phoenician graffiti were inscribed. Together with some very short Greek inscriptions on the same figures and the reports in the Egyptian Annals, it can be concluded that Phoenicians – as well as Greeks and Carians – participated in the campaign of Psammetich II against Nubia in 593 B.C.E.⁸¹ In North Saqqâra two dozen Phoenician ostraca have been unearthed.⁸² In Abusir near Memphis, three short inscriptions in Phoenician were discovered in a funerary context.⁸³ Unfortunately, these inscriptions are not very informative as to the role of the Phoenicians in Egypt. They mainly contain some personal names. Nevertheless, they inform us about the widespread presence of

⁷⁶ See, e.g., Prag (1986); Joffe (2000); Elayi (2013:39–95).

⁷⁷ See Pons Mellado (2006).

⁷⁸ See Steiner (2011).

⁷⁹ Schipper (2005:111–138).

⁸⁰ Herodot, *Hist.*, ii 112.2; on the reliability of Herodot’s remarks on Egypt – or the lack of it – see already Josephus, *Contra Apionem* I 73; Africa (1963).

⁸¹ Phoenician graffiti: CIS I, 112; Greek inscriptions: Bernard, Masson (1957:1–46); stela of Psammetich II: Lichtheim (2006:85); see now Ray (1995); Schmitz (2010); Schmitz (2012:32–42); Rohrmoser (2014:78–79); Fischer-Bovet (2014:35).

⁸² Edition: Segal (1983).

⁸³ See Dušek and Mynářová (2012).

Phoenicians in Egypt. Phoenician amphorae have been found throughout Egypt even as far south as the fortress of Dorginarti that was situated near the second cataract in present day Sudan. The numerous Phoenician amphorae from the Persian period indicate that the Levantine trade had spread its wings deep into Africa.⁸⁴ Although the majority of the evidence hints at a mercantile background of the Phoenician presence in Achaemenid Egypt, the participation in the campaign against Nubia makes a military background possible too.⁸⁵

EVIDENCE FROM ELEPHANTINE

There are some indications of the presence of Phoenicians in Elephantine and Syene. Although the evidence is not very abundant – especially when compared with the documents referring to the Yehudite community on the island – a few inferences can be made.

Inscriptions on jar fragments

Already in 1911, Sachau published a set of inscribed jar fragments found at Elephantine, the majority of which had a Phoenician inscription – the others were written in Aramaic.⁸⁶ One year later Lidzbarski offered an improved reading of the material.⁸⁷ The collection consists of about fifty inscriptions. Almost all inscriptions contain personal names in the formula: (to) X (son of Y), some examples:

1. to Ger-Baal, the son of Yotan-Apis⁸⁸
2. Abd-Baal, the son of Chalpas⁸⁹
3. Shamel⁹⁰

⁸⁴ See Heidorn (1991); Briant (1996:397).

⁸⁵ See also Vittmann (2003:44–83), on Phoenicians in Egypt during the Persian period.

⁸⁶ Sachau (1911).

⁸⁷ Lidzbarski (1912).

⁸⁸ Text 2.

⁸⁹ Text 10.

⁹⁰ Text 23.

I construe the second and third forms to be abbreviations of the fuller first form. It stands to reason, in view of the material on which the small inscriptions were written, that these texts were parts of the administration of the deliverance of commodities. Lidzbarski assumes that the jars might have contained wine.⁹¹ He bases this surmise on the form of the jars which he considers to be Phoenician while referring to a passage from Herodot:

into Egypt from all parts of Hellas and also from Phoenicia are brought twice every year earthenware jars full of wine.⁹²

The – reconstructed – jars were about 50 to 65 centimetres high.⁹³ They were coated on the inside in order to be impermeable. The type of jar on which the inscriptions were written parallels the Phoenician amphorae well known in many examples from the Persian period.⁹⁴ Although they resemble jars found in Egypt that were used for the transport of wine, they also might have contained grain to supply the garrison at Elephantine.⁹⁵ In sum it can be inferred that the Phoenicians acted as merchants.

Of great importance are the personal names in the inscriptions, since they show a broad ethnic background among the receivers of the commodities. Among the receivers are persons with Phoenician,⁹⁶ Egyptianized Phoenician,⁹⁷ Egyptian,⁹⁸ Semitic,⁹⁹ Arabic,¹⁰⁰ Aramaic,¹⁰¹ and Iranian¹⁰² names. This list makes clear that the Phoenician merchants were supplying an international clientele. Next to that, the inscriptions testify to harmonious relations between the various groups. The jar fragments were found on the island of Elephantine.¹⁰³ It is not clear whether the Phoenician merchants and their

⁹¹ Lidzbarski (1912:20).

⁹² Herodot, *Hist.*, iii 6.1; see Porten (1968:85).

⁹³ See the excavation report by Honroth, Rubensohn and Zucker (1909–10).

⁹⁴ See also Bettles (2003).

⁹⁵ See Porten (1968:85).

⁹⁶ E.g., Abd-Eshmun; Text 37.

⁹⁷ E.g., Abd-Osiris; Texts 1; 34b.

⁹⁸ E.g., Anch-Pamose; Text 14b.

⁹⁹ E.g., Akbor; Text 15c.

¹⁰⁰ E.g., Machlam; Text 14c.

¹⁰¹ E.g., Nabû-Barakh; Text 33b.

¹⁰² E.g., Maday; Text 55; probably a nickname.

¹⁰³ See Honroth, Rubensohn and Zucker (1909–10).

clientele lived on the island or in Syene on the banks of the Nile. The find spot could have been the dwelling of a Phoenician merchant or a storehouse as well.

Erased customs account

It has long been assumed that on the scroll on which the Aramaic Achiqar found at Elephantine was written an earlier text had been erased.¹⁰⁴ It lasted, however, until 1993 for the erased text to be recovered and reconstructed by Yardeni.¹⁰⁵ The text contained the notes of the administration of duties and taxes that had to be paid on cargo brought to Egypt by boat. They were part of the *mindāh*-duty. The Aramaic noun *mindāh* or *middāh*, compare Akkadian *mandattu*, “gift”, was a taxation that had to be payed to the Persian king in silver or in *natura*. The taxation was mainly based on the number of acres of land a person owned, but could also be levied on the import of merchandise.¹⁰⁶ The destination of the revenues was always the *byt mlk*’, “(store)house of the king”.¹⁰⁷ The text is dated in “year eleven”, most probably of Xerxes I, which is 475 B.C.E.¹⁰⁸ In the account, two groups of ships are referred to. The first two types of ships clearly refer to large Ionian Sea-vessels: the *spynh rbh* and the *'swt kḥmwš spynh rbh*.¹⁰⁹ In the account, these vessels are sometimes said to be steered by an Ionian captain. Some names of the captains are mentioned in the text, for instance, “Timokedes the son of Mikkos”.¹¹⁰ The other two types of ships – *dwgy qnd/rt*’ and *dwgy qnd/rtšyry* – are not connected with a land or region of origin.

Before discussing the area of origin of this second group of vessels, a few remarks must be made about the commodities that are charged with taxes. Goods that are levied with the *mindah*-duty are, among others: *mšh*, “oil”; *ḥmr*, “wine”; *spn ryqnn*, “empty

¹⁰⁴ Already by Sachau (1911:148).

¹⁰⁵ *TADAE* C3.7; Yardeni (1994); see also: Kuhrt (2007: 681–703).

¹⁰⁶ On this tax see which is also referred to in Ezra 4:13 and Nehemiah 5:4, e.g., Wiesehöfer (1994:94–98).

¹⁰⁷ On the transfer of taxes from Egypt to Babylonia, see *TADAE* A6.13 with Kuhrt (2007:720).

¹⁰⁸ Thus Yardeni (1994:67); Briant (1996:297–298); Tammuz (2005:151–153).

¹⁰⁹ Yardeni (1994:70).

¹¹⁰ *TADAE* C3.7 KR 2:23–24.

jars”; *q*, “wood(en implements)”; *q ’rz*, “cedar wood”; *ntr*’, “natron”¹¹¹; *lq*, “oar”. Interestingly, two types of wine are mentioned: (1) *hmr ywn*, “wine of Ionia”, referring to Greek wine,¹¹² and (2) *hmr sydynn*, “wine of Sidonians”.¹¹³ This distinction has led to the assumption that the other group of ships would have a Phoenician origin.¹¹⁴

Twice, the “Phoenicians ships” are referred to as *spnt kzd/ry*, “ships from X”.¹¹⁵ Briant – who reads *spnt kzry* – toyed with the idea that all Levantine ships in this account came from Gezer. He, however, rejects this proposal since Gezer was not a harbour-city. He then opts for an identification of *kzr* with “Gadaron, a city of Sidon” mentioned by Pseudo Skylax (*Periplus* 3.35).¹¹⁶ Tal proposes an identification with *tell ghazza* on the Mediterranean coast near modern Gaza. In antiquity, the site was known as Gazara.¹¹⁷ All these proposals are disputable.

The main qualifier for the ships – *dwgy qnd/rt*’ and *dwgy qnd/rtšyry* – have been left untranslated so far which is not without reason: even Porten and Yardeni dared not give a translation.¹¹⁸ The language of the noun *dwgy* is still unknown: it could be Greek, Egyptian, or Semitic. In the Memphis Shipyard Journal – a text excavated at Saqqâra – which is to be dated only a few years after the erased customs account a noun, *dwgyt*, “fishing boat”, occurs about a dozen times.¹¹⁹ The fragmentary state of this administrative document makes it impossible to infer any information on the character, function, and origin of the ships beyond the fact that they were used for fishing. More important is to observe that this word for ship is etymologically related with the common West-Semitic noun *dg*, “fish”. The same might be true for the word *dwgy*. In this little

¹¹¹ Natron is a salty mixture of decahydrate sodium carbonate and sodium bicarbonate that as such can be found in nature. In ancient Egypt natron was an important ingredient for the production of the colour Egyptian blue that was used while decorating Egyptian faience.

¹¹² E.g., in *TADAE* C3.7 GR 2:7.

¹¹³ E.g., in *TADAE* C3.7 GR 2:8.

¹¹⁴ Yardeni (1994); Briant (1996:397–398); Johnson (1999:215–216); Tammuz (2005:151–153).

¹¹⁵ *TADAE* C3.7 FR 1:6; FV 3:25.

¹¹⁶ Briant (1996:63–64).

¹¹⁷ Tal (2009).

¹¹⁸ In the glossary of *TADAE* C, xxx, they refer to it as a “sea-going vessel”; see also Stieglitz (2000:11.15), who incorrectly renders the Hebrew *sirôt dūgāh*, “fish hooks”, of Amos 4,2 with “fishing boats”; Kuhrt (2007:701), “in origin a fishing boat”.

¹¹⁹ *TADAE* C3.8.

thought experiment the *dwgy* from the customs account is not seen as a fishing boat. In his analysis of the Leviathan in Psalm 104, Uehlinger noted that Phoenician ships were often depicted with the head of an animal on the bowsprit. This animal frequently was a dragon or a fish as for instance on the coin form Ozbaal the king of Byblos (mid fourth century).¹²⁰ His remarks lead to the assumption that ships as animals and animals as ships could be imagined. All this provokes the possibility that the noun *dwgy* could refer to Levantine ships. On the nouns *qnd/rt'* and *qnd/rtšyry* nothing can be said beyond the assumption that both words refer to “large seafaring ships”.¹²¹

In sum, the evidence does not falsify the idea that the ships *dwgy qnd/rt'* and *dwgy qnd/rtšyry* came from Phoenicia. We simply do not know from which port they came.

Although the scroll on which the customs account originally was written was found at Elephantine, there is no proof that the text was written on the island. The scribe who wrote the text Achiqar on the erased scroll could have used a writing material that came from elsewhere. In the customs account no name of a harbour or a quay on the Nile is mentioned. Tammuz, however, argues that the not infrequent mention of *ntr'*, “natron”, might hint at a port in the Delta not far away from *wadi el natrun* where in ancient times natron was quarried.¹²² Since natron was only one of the commodities, this argument is not fully convincing. All in all, the text testifies to the mercantile presence of Phoenicians in Egypt, probably as far south as Elephantine. Any connection with the military or an argument for Phoenician mercenaries in Egypt cannot be read from this text.

A disbursement of wine

A much shorter text contains an account for wine to be dated in the last quarter of the fifth century B.C.E.¹²³ The text was originally published as *CIS II/2:146* and included by Cowley in his addition of the Aramaic Papyri.¹²⁴ Although the papyrus is

¹²⁰ Uehlinger (1990); on the coin see Betlyon (1982:14).

¹²¹ *DNWSI*, 1246.

¹²² Tammuz (2005:151); on natron in ancient *wadi el natrun*, see Shortland (2004).

¹²³ *TADAE C3.12*.

¹²⁴ Cowley (1923, No. 72).

unprovenanced and has generally been located in Elephantine, the papyrus might have been excavated at Memphis or Saqqâra.¹²⁵

The fragmentary text contains notices on the deliverance of portions of wine. To whom the wines had to be given is not mentioned in the text. Two clues, however, might be of help. A few times the noun *srw*, “dinner”, is mentioned as the occasion of the deliverance.¹²⁶ This would hint at a connection with a formal meal at the house of an important person. Twice it is indicated that the wine would function as an *nqyh*, “libation”, once for Ptah and once for Isis.¹²⁷ This would hint at a religious context either in a private sanctuary or in a temple.

Three times the delivery of Levantine wine is mentioned:

for diner: wine from Sidon¹²⁸

This text does not testify the presence of Phoenicians in either Memphis or Elephantine, but underscore the importance of Sidonian wine for Egypt.

A Sidonian

At the 2013 SBL International meeting in St Andrews, Cornelius von Pilgrim presented a set of ostraca that had been found during excavation at Syene in the spring of 2013.¹²⁹ I am very grateful to him for sharing his findings. One of the ostraca – 12-2-4-6/4 – had an inscription of only four letters:

šdny

Šdny, “Sidonian”, should be construed either as a gentilicium or as a personal name derived from the gentilicium. In both cases, the inscription would refer to a Sidonian. The ostracon as such is indecisive to the question in what role this person was staying at Syene.

¹²⁵ See Rohrmoser (2014:41).

¹²⁶ *TADAE* C3.12 ii:7,8,15,22,32.

¹²⁷ *TADAE* C3.12 ii:27,27.

¹²⁸ *TADAE* C3.12 ii:9,15,28.

¹²⁹ They will be published in a volume to be edited by Margaretha Folmer, Annalisa Azzoni, Alejandro Botta, and Ingo Kottsieper.

A fragmentary account

From the second half of the fifth century dates a rather fragmentary text that contains a few names and two gentilicia.¹³⁰ The names are Aramaic, "... idri"; Egyptian, "Pasi[...]; Peṭese", and Babylonian, "Mushezib-Nabu". A Khwarezmian is referred to, but the name of the person is not present.¹³¹ Lines 4–5 of the fragment is to be read:

4 [...]Mushezib-Nabu of the detachment of Mary[a...]

5 [...]ma, who is a Sidonian [...]

Mushezib-Nabu clearly was a mercenary serving in the *dègèl* of Marya which was one of the detachments of the garrison.¹³² It would be a premature conclusion to state that the nameless Sidonian too was part of the garrison, since he is mentioned in the next line. The fact that in line b:2 someone is referred to "who is over the estates", a more civil officer controlling the agricultural side of the society, is an indication that the account would have listed persons with a variety of professions.

Azarbaal

In a very fragmentary inscription – the text contains only the remains of two lines – mention is made of:

'zrb'l sydney Azarbaal, a Sidonian¹³³

His name is common Phoenician.¹³⁴ The purpose of the account and the role of Azarbaal cannot be inferred in view of the fragmentary character of the text.

An incomplete jar-inscription

In 1998, Lozachmeur edited a Phoenician jar inscription from Elephantine that contained only two letters:

¹³⁰ *TADAE* D3.39.

¹³¹ *TADAE* D3.39:b3. On Khwarezmians see above.

¹³² On the name see Porten, Zadok and Pearce (2016:10). The *dègèl* of Marya was one of the three detachments present at Elephantine in the last decade of the fifth century. Bactrians, Persians, and Babylonians are among the members of this detachment, see Kaplan (2003:10).

¹³³ *TADAE* D3.40:1.

¹³⁴ Benz (1972:56–58, 165–168).

[...]gt[...]¹³⁵

The two letters might be the remains of the name of the owner or a place-name. The inscription is difficult to date, but as such gives evidence of the administration of Phoenician trade in Elephantine.

Contracts and letters

It is intriguing to note that in the many contracts and letters found at Elephantine no mention of a Phoenician is made.¹³⁶ An ethnic indicator like *sydny* is absent in these documents as are clear Phoenician names. Although it is difficult to argue from absence, this “Phoenician silence” might hint at the fact that although the Phoenicians were trading with Elephantine and Syene, they were not settled citizens.

CONCLUSION ON THE PHOENICIANS

The analysis above has made a few things clear. (1) The number of Phoenicians at Elephantine was relatively small. It does not seem that many Phoenicians were permanently settled on the island or in Syene. (2) No connections with the Persian garrison have been found. It is safe to say that the Phoenician continued to play their role as in the *longue durée*: they were merchants supplying commodities such as wine and grain to the community. (3) No quarrels between Phoenicians and other groups at Elephantine and Syene are detected. Although it is possible that their trade interests would at times conflict with local merchants, the Phoenicians contributed to the harmonious togetherness of various ethnic groups.

LYBIAN TRIBES

Finally, I will pay attention to persons belonging to territories that were adjacent to ancient Egypt. As far as I can see, there is one reference to the Lybian tribe of the

¹³⁵ Lozachmeur (1998).

¹³⁶ *TADAE* A (letters); B (contracts).

Meshwesh, a tribe that probably was of central Berber origin.¹³⁷ In a demotic letter on a problematic delivery of grain written by Khnumemahket to the Persian official Farnava in October 486 B.C.E., mention is made of an anonymous Ma or Meshwesh who functioned at the quay where the grain had to be delivered.¹³⁸ During the third intermediate period the Lybian Meshwesh were in control of greater parts of Egypt. In later periods their descendants became members of the upper lower class working as policemen and controllers on quays. Spiegelberg originally read *mf.w*, “sailors”. Vittmann correctly proposed to read *M.w* which is the standard Egyptian abbreviation for the name of this tribe.¹³⁹ The role of this subordinate person is limited. He is only spoken to.

ARABS

The position of the Arab tribes, Bedouins as well as oasis-dwellers, in the Persian period is complicated. The Persians obviously did not conquer the whole peninsula but nevertheless executed their power. The Arabs in the northernmost part were under direct Persian control, while the greatest part of the population had some sort of client status that made the Persian profit from the trade routes.¹⁴⁰ According to Herodotus, the Arabs had been friendly towards Cambyses giving him consent to cross Arab territory on the road to his conquest of Egypt.¹⁴¹ There is no evidence that the Persian recruited Arabs for military services. A document from North-Saqqara might hint at the presence of Arabs in Egypt.¹⁴² Line 15 of this rather damaged report contains the word ‘*rby*’ that could be rendered with “Arabs” but also translated as “guarantors”. Since the context is broken, it is difficult to make a decision here. In the next lines of the document mention

¹³⁷ See Wainwright (1962). They might probably be equated with the Maxyes mentioned in Herodotus, *Hist.* IV 191.

¹³⁸ P. Loeb 1; Spiegelberg (1928:13–21).

¹³⁹ Vittmann (1999).

¹⁴⁰ See, e.g., Knauf (1990); Retso (2003:119–211); Fitzpatrick-McKinley (2015:110–126).

¹⁴¹ Herodotus, *Hist.*, iii 88; Hoyland (2001:62–63).

¹⁴² Segal (1983), Text 29 = *TADAE* B8.1.

is made of *nbyh* which could be construed as a reference to Nebayoth.¹⁴³ Arguing from a parallelism, ‘*rby*’ could be seen as the indicator of an ethnic group. Arabic names occur sparsely in the documents from Elephantine. Their Arabic character can only be inferred from the name-form since the gentilicium Arab is absent in the letters and legal documents.

According to Porten two witnesses to a legal document from 440 bear an Arabic name. The document concerns the withdrawal from goods and was made between the Egyptian Pau, the son of Pakhoi, a builder from Syene, and Miphtaiah, the daughter of Mahseiah, a Yehudite from Elephantine.¹⁴⁴ One of the witnesses is:

’*wsnhr br d/rwm*’ Awâs-nahâr son of D/Ruma¹⁴⁵

Both names have an Arabic character. The element ‘*ws*’, “Awâs; Uwais”, meaning “small wolf”, frequently occurs in all dialects of proto-Arabic¹⁴⁶ as does the element *nhr*, “Nahâr”, meaning “day; daytime”.¹⁴⁷ The name Awâs-nahâr, however, is not attested. The name of his father could be read as Duma or Ruma, both the name of a North Arabian trade centre from which Awâs-nahâr or his forbears might originate. This opens the possibility to assume that he lived in Elephantine for trade reasons. The fact that they could act as witness to a contract indicates that they reached a certain level of acceptance in the society of Elephantine and Syene.

An Aramaic inscription on a jar from Elephantine reads:

*m̄hlm br m’wmt*¹⁴⁸

According to Lidzbarski, both names are Arabic. *m̄hlm*, “Muhallim”, occurs regularly in Saphaic inscriptions.¹⁴⁹ In a Qatabean inscription the cognate name *m’wm*,

¹⁴³ Genesis 25:13 contains the tradition that *nebāyot* was one of the children of Ishmael; see also 1 Chron 1:29; the North Arabian tribe of the Nebayot was famous for its sheep breeding (cf. Isa 60:7). On the history of the Nebayot, see Knauf (1985:92–111).

¹⁴⁴ *TADAE* B2.8; see Porten (2011:189–191); Granerød (2016:46.266–267).

¹⁴⁵ *TADAE* B2.8:13; see Porten (2011:191).

¹⁴⁶ See Lankester Harding (1971:84).

¹⁴⁷ Lankester Harding (1971:601).

¹⁴⁸ Lidzbarski (1912:8–9), Text 14c = *TADAE* D11.4

¹⁴⁹ Lankester Harding (1971:531).

“Ma‘wum”, occurs.¹⁵⁰ He probably was the recipient of the contents of the jar. A comparable remark can be made on another jar-inscription from the same archive that reads:

ħrml Charmal¹⁵¹

In a proto-Arabic inscription the name *ħrmlh* is attested.¹⁵² In sum, Arabs were a very small minority on the island of Elephantine and in Syene.

IONIANS

Greeks and Persians were enemies throughout the existence of the Persian Empire. The sources are full of military conflicts and armed battles.¹⁵³ Greek mercenaries had served in the Neo-Babylonian Empire, but this rapidly ended after the Persians took over power.¹⁵⁴ More important is to note that the Greeks had been trading in and with Egypt. They even settled in the Nile-delta.¹⁵⁵

Above, mention is made of the erased customs account.¹⁵⁶ The text contained the notes of the administration of duties and taxes that had to be paid on cargo brought to Egypt by boat. They were part of the *mindah*-duty. The text is dated in “year eleven”, most probably of Xerxes I, which is 475 B.C.E.¹⁵⁷ In the account, two groups of ships are referred to. The first two types of ships clearly refer to large Ionian seafaring vessels: the *spynh rbh* and the *’swt kħmwš spynh rbh*.¹⁵⁸ In the account, these vessels are sometimes said to be steered by an Ionian captain. Some names of the captains are mentioned in the text, for instance, “Timokedes the son of Mikkos”.¹⁵⁹ From the text it

¹⁵⁰ Jamme (1965), Text 1066.

¹⁵¹ Lidzbarski (1912), Text 47.

¹⁵² Jaussen, Savignac (1909–1922:202); see Lankester Harding (1971:185).

¹⁵³ From the abundance of literature: Strauss (2005); Cawkwell (2006); Cartledge (2007).

¹⁵⁴ See Fantalkin, Lytle (2016).

¹⁵⁵ Herodot, *Hist.* ii, 178–179; see Coulson, Leonard (2013).

¹⁵⁶ *TADAE* C3.7; Yardeni (1994); see also: Kuhrt (2007:681–703).

¹⁵⁷ Yardeni (1994:67); Briant (1996:297–298); Tammuz (2005:151–153).

¹⁵⁸ Yardeni (1994:70).

¹⁵⁹ *TADAE* C3.7 KR 2:23–24.

becomes clear that Greek merchants imported commodities such as vine and wool into Egypt during the Persian period even as far south as Elephantine.

There is no direct evidence of Greeks or Ionians living in Elephantine or Syene. An intriguing, indirect Ionian presence is attested in one of the last Aramaic documents from Elephantine. In a document regulating the sale of an apartment to a son-in-law, the price of the property is given both in the local coinage and in Greek money:

six Ionian silver staters and one sheqel¹⁶⁰

An Ionian stater had about the value of a month's wages.¹⁶¹ Since no persons of Ionian descent are mentioned in the document, it is unclear why the price of the property is also indicated in this foreign coinage.

CRETANS

The island of Crete was never occupied by the Persians, nevertheless an Aramaic document from 440 mentions Tibrachos, a slave from Crete, and his daughter Tachmapita.¹⁶² Whose slave he was is unclear. The document seems to indicate that Tibrachos was about to be released by his master. The name Tibrachos might be identical with Thibrachus, a Lacedaemonian commander referred to by Xenophon.¹⁶³ The other name has no parallels elsewhere.

CONCLUSION

This analysis has yielded some interesting results. The population of Elephantine and Syene during the Persian period had been of a multi-ethnic character. People from all over the Persian Empire – and even beyond its borders – were living on the island or at

¹⁶⁰ *TADAE* B3.12:5–6.14; see Porten (2011:245–250).

¹⁶¹ See, e.g., Searl (1994); De Callatay, Hendin, Alexander (2013:6–17).

¹⁶² *TADAE* B8.3.

¹⁶³ Xenophon, *Hell.* ii,4: 33.

the shore of the Nile or visited the area for mercantile reasons. These persons acted in a variety of societal roles as can be read from the following diagram:

Ethnic group:		Military	Trade	Administration	Work/slaves
Arabs			x		
Bactrians		x			
Carians		?	?		
Caspians		x			
Cilicians					x
Cretans					x
Ionians			x		
Khwarezmians		x			
Lybians					x
Medians/Magians				?	?
Phoenicians			x		

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