Elephantine Judaism / Yahwism in the context of Elephantine during the Achaemenid Period

Stökl, T.J.

Amsterdam University Press

NTT JOURNAL FOR THEOLOGY AND THE STUDY OF RELIGION 79.1 (2025) 61-80
HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.5117/NTT2025.1.004.STOK

Elephantine Judaism / Yahwism in the context of Elephantine during the Achaemenid Period

Jonathan Stökl
Leiden University
t.j.stokl@hum.leidenuniv.nl
ORCID ID: 0000-0001-7892-4877

Abstract
This paper explores the religious identity and practices of the Jewish community in Elephantine during the Achaemenid period, focusing on the archaeological and textual evidence from the site itself, rather than the Hebrew Bible. It critiques previous scholarship's reliance on biblical texts to interpret Elephantine Judaism, which often viewed it as either a deviation or a purer form of biblical Judaism. The study emphasizes a need for a fresh approach that considers Elephantine's own cultural context and artifacts, highlighting the diversity of religious practices, including syncretic elements and unique customs, as distinct expressions of Elephantine's community identity.

Keywords: Elephantine Judaism; Achaemenid period; Syncretism; Religious identity

Introduction

This paper aims to provide a sketch of Yahwism / Judaism in Achaemenid period Elephantine that makes little or no recourse to the Hebrew Bible in order to do so. I will begin with a review of recent attempts to understand the group of Jews / Judeans on the island that are themselves contextualised in the broader history of research on the topic. In discussing these recent studies, the centrality of the Hebrew Bible to virtually all interpretations of the identity of the group settled in Elephantine will become apparent, whether that be because the group's religion and culture are regarded as, in

some form, a deviation from it in terms of what is often called syncretism, or as a corrective to the image gathered from the Hebrew Bible in understanding Elephantine Judaism as some kind of a pure and/or pre-biblical form of Judaism. In this, the discussion has not moved on fundamentally since the publication of the first Elephantine papyri in the early 20th century. I therefore argue for a perspective that—while in touch with the discussion so far—will drive for a new approach.[1]

Individual members of the group under investigation identify as *yhwdy* in the texts or are identified thus by others. This term can justifiably be translated into English as "Jewish" or "Judean," rather distinct in many modern languages but not in Aramaic.[2] This identification strongly suggests a link with the Southern Levant where the Achaemenid province of Yehud and previously the kingdom of Judah were located. The translation "Judean" aims not to interpret the religious identity of the community *a priori*, while the translation "Jewish" aims to emphasise the diversity of Judaism in antiquity. The main reason to remain agnostic about religious identity is the complete absence of biblical quotations or similar in the texts from Elephantine. Conversely, however, this implies that Judaism is only Judaism if it defines itself vis-à-vis the Bible.

The terminology of "Yahwism(s)" stresses the centrality of the particular deity YHWH, creating a "super"-category of religions and cultures linked to this deity including also the Samaritans.[3] It has the strength of communicating both the continuity and the difference of the groups in question. For

1 Reinhard G. Kratz, "Fossile Überreste Des Unreformierten Judentums in Fernem Lande? Das Judentum in Den Archiven Von Elephantine Und Al-Yaḥudu," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 132 (2020): 23-39 takes some steps into this direction. See further below.

2 See Steve Mason's seminal article "Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism: Problems of Categorization in Ancient History," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 38 (2007): 457-512, and the broader discussion by Yair Furstenberg, "Contesting Identities: The Splitting Channels from Israelite to Jew," in *A Companion to Late Ancient Judaism: Third Century BCE to Seventh Century CE*, ed. Naomi Koltun-Fromm and Gwynn Kessler, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World (Hoboken: Wiley Blackwell, 2020), 183-199. Jonathan Klawans, "Judaism Was a Civilization: Toward a Reconstruction of Ancient Jewish Peoplehood," *Religion Compass* 12 (2018): e12286. https://doi.org/10.1111/rec3.12286, goes so far as to argue for the use of the category of "peoplehood" to describe ancient Judaism. See also see the broad discussion of the translation of the Greek equivalent of *yhwdy*, *ιουδαιος* in Timothey Michael Law and Charles Halton, eds., "Jew and Judean: A Marginalia Forum on Politics and Historiography in the Translation of Ancient Texts." (2014): http://marginalia.lareviewofbooks.org/tag/ioudaios/).

3 See recently Gad Barnea and Reinhard G. Kratz, eds., *Yahwism Under the Achaemenid Empire: Professor Shaul Shaked in Memoriam* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2024); and already Diana V. Edelman, ed., *The Triumph of Elohim: From Yahwisms to Judaisms* (Kampen: Pharos, 1995) and Rainer Albertz and Bob Becking, eds., *Yahwism After the Exile: Perspectives on Israelite Religion in*

discussions that are restricted to the field of the study of Jewish and Yahwist religions and cultures in the pre-Hellenistic period this terminology can be helpful. But it has the disadvantage of making pre-Hellenistic Judaism disappear entirely from the record as well as being rather cryptic for a broader audience.[4] I will, therefore, be using the terminology of "Jew" and "Judaism" in the following instead of Yahwist, Yahwism and Jud(a)ean. This is not to say that all these terms could not legitimately be used to describe the group under investigation here.

The presence in Elephantine of this group of people, together with many other non-Egyptians who undertook garrison duties there, was the result of migration. The following remarks should, therefore, all be understood under the heading of the broader context of migration and the traces of the effects it had on the Elephantine Jews.

In his concise edition of the first eleven papyri for the Society of Biblical Archaeology, Arthur Cowley comments only briefly on the question of religious practice at Elephantine, referring to Jeremiah 44:1 and 15, which accuses the communities of Jews in Egypt of religious apostasy.[5] The larger edition by Sayce and Cowley notes that the group of Jews at Elephantine had no problem with having an altar outside Jerusalem. Here we can already see many of the elements which would determine the first one hundred years of research: scholars measured Elephantine Judaism using the Hebrew Bible as a yardstick; essentialist ideas about what Jews should or could do; and plenty of speculation. Consequently, most interpretations of Elephantine Judaism can be grouped in one of three categories:

1. Elephantine Judaism represents a form of Judaism that has mixed elements of Judaism with Aramean and Egyptian religion. The word used to describe this is often 'syncretism', but more recently the terminology of a particular form of language creation through language contact in a particular situation of significant power inequality ("*pidgin*"; see below for a broader discussion) has been suggested. A variant suggests that the

the Persian Era: Papers Read At the First Meeting of the European Association for Biblical Studies, Utrecht, 6-9 August 2000 (Assen: Van Gorcum, 2003).

4 See Adele Reinhartz's contribution to the Marginalia discussion edited by Law and Halton cited in footnote 2.

5 A. E. Cowley, "Some Egyptian Aramaic Documents," *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology* 33 (1903): 202-208; 259-266; 311-314 (here 204) displays his antisemitic prejudice in this publication by writing: "The authors of these documents were evidently engaged in trade (apparently as bankers or money-lenders), and this was no doubt usually the case with Jewish settlers in Egypt. Agriculture was not available for them, and they were not likely to be able to compete with natives in industrial skill. Moreover, trade connexions [sic!] with Judaea were always close." .

additional deities mentioned in the texts are hypostases of *Yahu* and that Elephantine religion remains (sic!) monotheistic.[6] Most scholarly analyses can be grouped in this category.

2. Elephantine Judaism represents a form of Yahwism *before* the Torah. Where in the first model, Elephantine Judaism represents a less pure, syncretic form, here scholars as early as Wellhausen argue that Elephantine Judaism represents a Judaism that is as yet "unsullied" by the Torah as we know it.

3. Picking up on a recent trend and rethinking it from the ground up, this essay argues for a non-biblical Elephantine Judaism—a non-Torah-centred Yahwism that is neither older nor purer but simply different from that represented by the texts in the Hebrew Bible. Reinhard Kratz sees his own work in this category, but his work is beholden to the Hebrew Bible as a *comparandum* and as an indication of what to look for as significant. It is noteworthy in this context that for the Achaemenid Persian period, the richest corpus that can be securely dated on the basis of archaeological text finds rather than theories of literary growth or transmission is the broader Elephantine and Syene corpus, and it represents a source that has been underutilized.[7]

Brief review of material and textual remains of Elephantine Judaism

Elephantine is an island in the river Nile situated near the first cataract at the southern border of Egypt and Nubia (modern North Sudan). The

6 For scholars who use the concept of syncretism see, e.g., Herbert Niehr, *Der höchste Gott: Alttestamentlicher JHWH-Glaube im Kontext syrisch-kanaanäischer Religion des 1. Jahrtausends v. Chr.,* BZAW 190 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1990), 43-48; Karel van der Toorn, "Anat-Yahu, Some Other Deities, and the Jews of Elephantine," *Numen* 39 (1992): 80-101 (here esp. 94-96); Bob Becking, "Exchange, Replacement, or Acceptance? Two Examples of Lending Deities among Ethnic Groups in Elephantine," in *Jewish Cultural Encounters in the Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern World*, ed. Mladen Popović, Myles Schoonover and Marijn Vandenberghe, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 178 (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 30-43; Collin Cornell and Brent A. Strawn, "Is Judean Religion at Elephantine a Pidgin? Reassessing Its Relationship to Its Antecedents and Congeners," in *Elephantine in Context: Studies on the History, Religion and Literature of the Judeans in Persian Period Egypt*, ed. Reinhard G. Kratz and Bernd U. Schipper, FAT 155 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2022), 153-182. Famous examples of a monotheistic interpretation are Bezalel Porten, *Archives from Elephantine: The Life of an Ancient Jewish Military Colony* (Berkeley / Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968), 173-179; Lester Grabbe, "Elephantine and the Torah," in *In the Shadow of Bezalel: Aramaic, Biblical, and Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honor of Bezalel Porten*, ed. Alejandro F. Botta (Leiden: Brill, 2013), here 127-128.

7 Cf. Bezalel Porten and Ada Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt,* 4 vols. (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Press, 1986); Hélène Lozachmeur, *La collection Clermont-Ganneau: Ostraca, épigraphes sur jarre, étiquettes de bois* (Paris: de Boccard, 2006).

Western scholarly world first encountered Elephantine in the immense—and problematic—*Description de l'Égypte* that was produced in the context of Napoleon's fated and ultimately failed invasion of Egypt.[8] Additionally, the Western imaginary had recourse to reports by European travellers on whose itineraries Elephantine soon featured. Since then, the topography of Elephantine has changed considerably not just due to archaeological excavations, but due to building activity by Ottoman and British administrations. Local agricultural practice was another factor, as the soil on part of the island has excellent fertilizing qualities. This soil has been used accordingly, so that even in the late 19th century the ancient settlement was already decimated. The building of a sizeable house for the Overseer of the Service for Irrigation, Arthur Webb, was responsible for considerable further loss of heritage, as were several military building projects throughout the 19th century.

On the mainland stood the city of Syene (modern Assuan). Many temples were built at these two sites. On Elephantine alone temples for Khnum, Satet, Sethnach, deified Pharaohs such as Thutmose III and Amenhotep III and a local nomarch called Heqaib were found in addition to the Yahu temple. Written evidence for a group of Jewish inhabitants comes from the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, that is during the time in which the Achaemenid dynasty ruled Egypt. This religious diversity is also evinced by the Aramaic and Egyptian papyri and ostraca through the deities who are invoked.[9] Little evidence of literary texts has survived, with the exceptions being the impressive Ahiqar papyrus (TAD C1.1) as well as the translation of the Behistun inscription (TAD C2.1+3.13).[10]

8 Charles-Louis Balzac, François-Charles Cécile, and Gilbert-Joseph-Gaspard de Chabrol de Volvic, *Description de l'Egypt ou recueil des observations et des recherches qui ont été faites en Égypte pendant l'expédition de l'armée Française* (Paris: L'Imprimerie Royale, 1809).

9 See, e.g., Matthias Müller, "Among the Priests of Elephantine Island: Elephantine Island Seen From Egyptian Sources," *Welt des Orient* 46 (2016): 213-243; Myriam Krutzsch, "Papyrusmaterial aus Elephantine und seine Signifikanten Merkmale," *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 147 (2020): 47-56. For a summary and reconstruction of Egyptian religion at Elephantine during the Achaemenid period see now Alexandra von Lieven, "Spätägyptische Religion in und um Elephantine," in *Elephantine in Context: Studies on the History, Religion and Literature of the Judeans in Persian Period Egypt*, ed. Reinhard G. Kratz and Bernd U. Schipper (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2022), 131-151.

10 See James Moore, *New Aramaic Papyri From Elephantine in Berlin* (Leiden: Brill, 2022), who is editing the 'new' fragments and has not identified evidence for further literary texts. Naturally, however, the absence of evidence should not be read as evidence that no other literary texts were used read and / or written by members of the Aramaic writing communities in Syene and Elephantine.

The first Aramaic papyrus likely from Elephantine was published in 1903 by Julius Euting, who published a papyrus held at the Bibliothèque impériale in Strasbourg, which had been bought in Egypt by Richard August Reitzenstein and Wilhelm Spiegelberg, while Arthur Cowley published a first edition of the papyri purchased by Baroness Mary Cecil and Robert Mond in the *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* already in 1903.[11] The official *editio princeps* of the 11 papyri Cowley had published in 1903 was published in 1906 by the Assyriologist Archibald Sayce and Cowley.[12]

From the first published papyri the presence of a Yahu temple at Elephantine has been known, as the papyrus published by Euting referred to the destruction of the Yahu temple (TAD A4.5). Further letters in this matter such as the famous petition letter by Jedaniah to Bagavahya, governor of Jerusalem (TAD A4.7-8), as well as the memorandum containing the response by Delaiah, the governor of Samerina (the Achaemenid Persian province centred on Samaria) and the aforementioned Bagavahya that the temple should be rebuilt (TAD A4.9) indicate that this temple had been destroyed in antiquity.[13] In 1996 Cornelius von Pilgrim identified the archaeological remains of the temple, including traces of an attempt at rebuilding it in

11 Julius Euting, "Notice sur un papyrus Égypto-araméen de la Bibliothèque impériale de Strasbourg," *Mémoires présentés par divers savants à l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres de l'Institut de France* 11 (1904); A. E. Cowley, "Some Egyptian Aramaic Documents," 202-208; 259-266; 311-314. Euting's papyrus is now known as TAD A4.5, and is the so-called draft version for the petition for the restitution of the Elephantine temple of Yahu. This document was picked up by Mark Lidzbarski, *Ephemeris für semitische Epigraphik: Zweiter Band: 1903-1907* (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1908). There Julius Wellhausen used it in the famous rewrite of chapter 14 'Die zweite Hälfte der Persischen Periode' in the seventh and last edition of his *Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte* (Berlin: Reimer, 1914), 176-178. Cowley's documents were part of the Mibtaḥiah 'archive' (later known as TAD B2.1-11). Like all papyri sold in the 19th century, they did not come from controlled archaeological excavations but at least some were likely found in what today would be referred to as illicit excavations. The first Aramaic papyri bought by Europeans from Syene and Elephantine were likely those bought in 1815 by the colourful Giovanni Battista Belzoni and subsequently donated to the Musei Publici di Padua in 1819. There they languished unrecognised until their edition by Edda Bresciani in 1960 after photographs had been published in 1936 by Luigi Gaudenzio, see Edda Bresciani, "Papiri aramaici egiziani di epoca persiana presso il Museu Civico di Padova," *Rivista degli studi orientali* 35 (1960): 11-24, tav. I; Luigi Gaudenzio, *Giovan Battista Belzoni alla luce di nuovi documenti* (Padua: Libreria Draghi di G.B. Randi, 1936).

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

13 The Achaemenid Persian name of the region goes back to the Akkadian name of the capital of the Northern Kingdom (Israel)—*Samerina* (*sa-me-ri-na*).

antiquity.[14] In most ancient Middle Eastern societies a temple was at least the temporary earthly abode of the deity, suggesting that Jews of Elephantine considered their deity Yahu to be resident on the island of Elephantine.[15]

Several inscribed mummy labels were also identified. One of these (D19.7) bears the name of a certain "Sheba, son of Hosea." While the name Hosea is not exclusively Jewish the majority of individuals bearing this name have a link to a Jewish identity. The spelling of the name Sheba or Shabah corresponds to the Aramaic spelling of 'Sabbath' elsewhere in the corpus. If so, this suggests that some Elephantine Jews may have chosen mummification as an option for an afterlife.

A considerable number of deities are invoked in the corpus. Among these are Eshem-Bethel, Ḥerem-Bethel, Anat-Yahu and Anat-Bethel.[16] But the two main local Egyptian deities, Khnum and Satet are also well represented, Thus, D7.21 Gaddel blesses his master by Yahu and Khnum and Mibtahiah even swears an oath by Satet in the context of a court text (B2.18). Equally,

14 See, Cornelius von Pilgrim, "Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine: 25./26./27. Grabungsbericht: XII. Der Temple des Jahwe," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts in Kairo* 55 (1999): 142-145; Cornelius von Pilgrim, "Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine: 28./29./30. Grabungsbericht: VI. Das Aramäische Quartier im Stadtgebiet Der 27. Dynastie," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts in Kairo* 58 (2002): 192-197; Cornelius von Pilgrim, "Tempel des Jahu und "Straße des Königs": Ein Konflikt in der späten Perserzeit auf Elephantine," in *Egypt, Temple of the Whole World / Ägypten, Tempel Der Gesammten Welt: Studies in Honour of Jan Assmann*, ed. Sibylle Meyer (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 303-317.

15 In addition to the temple and remains of ancient Egyptian temple worship and life, the German excavations also unearthed a number of figurines, which Hedwig Anneler interpreted as the deities of the Jewish community, particularly deities such as Eshem-Bethel, Ḥerem-Bethel or Anat-Yahu (*Zur Geschichte der Juden von Elephantine* [Bern: Drechsel, 1912]). Collin Cornell, "The Forgotten Female Figurines of Elephantine," *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 18 [2018]: 111-132 brings recent work on figurines and shrine plaques together to argue that the figurines of lying naked women with a child next to them likely dated to a time before the Judeans' arrival on Elephantine and therefore tell us nothing about them which is in line with Egyptological interpretations of these figurines. The shrine plaque which was unique when it was reported in 1910 has since been joined by several further similar models of a naked female figure standing at the entrance of a shrine or small temple; these plaques feature Egyptian-style columns to indicate the shrine, while the female figures are heavily influenced by Levantine styles. Alas, the plaque was not found at one of the houses known to be a Jewish house.

16 Cf, e.g., C3.15:127-28 (Eshem-Bethel and Anat-Bethel), B7.2:7 (ḤeremBethel), B7.3:3 (Ḥerem and Anat-Yahu). According to Gard Granerød, *Dimensions of Yahwism in the Persian Period: Studies in the Religion and Society of the Judaean Community At Elephantine* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 30, Eshem-Bethel and Ḥerem-Bethel can be linked to the famous city Bethel in Benjamin, and thus between Israel and Judah, irrespective of whether the name is a compound divine name or whether it refers to something dedicated to a deity or sanctuary at Bethel.

an individual bearing a Persian name, Dargamana, accepts an oath by Yahu in a juridical context (B2.2).[17]

Furthermore, many scholars have posited the existence of two central Jewish festivals, Passover and Sabbath, based on indications in the textual record. The Aramaic equivalent of Passover, *psḥ*, likely vocalised like the Hebrew term Pessach is attested on two ostraca: D7.6 and D7.24. In the first the anonymous sender wants to be informed when Pessach is celebrated; in the second ostracon the context remains unclear.

The third text is TAD A4.1 in which the word "Passover" is not mentioned in the extant part of the papyrus; but already in the *editio princeps* by Eduard Sachau we can find it reconstructed, based on the dates mentioned in connection with the festival of Maṣṣot in Exod 12:1-28, Lev 23:5-8 and Deut 16:1-8.[18] However, based on the fact that there is no reason to assume that the two originally independent festivals of Maṣṣot and Passover had merged at Elephantine one could equally well reconstruct the word Maṣṣot here. The main reason against such a reconstruction is that the word is otherwise unattested at Elephantine and Syene. If the text originally contained a reference to the Passover, this would provide interesting circumstantial evidence for interference of the Achaemenid authorities in the celebration of religious festivals by religious, cultural and/or ethnic communities. But whatever historical reality lies behind this text, it is too fragmentary and leaves too much space for historical speculation. Becking's reconstruction that a continuation of the celebration of a festival in the face of local opposition may be a better solution than a fully-fledged *Reichsautorisation der Torah*.[19]

17 Gard Granerød (*Dimensions of Yahwism*, 245, 256) argues that this implies that the relevant partners "recognised" the respective deity. He defines "recognise" here as meaning that the involved parties understood the invoked names to refer to deities. Granerød hedges whether that means that Mibtaḥya acknowledges that the Egyptians understand Satet as a deity, or whether she herself understands her as a deity. If Granerød intends the latter he is correct. There is no reason to assume that an oath sworn by a deity implies that the individual swearing it thinks that the deity in question is merely one of Isaiah's wooden statues rather than a real deity.

18 Eduard Sachau, *Aramäische Papyrus und Ostraka aus einer jüdischen Militär-Kolonie zu Elephantine: altorientalische Sprachdenkmäler des 5. Jahrhunderts v. Chrs.* (Leipzig: Hinrich, 1911), 36-40, Taf. 6.

19 See also Grabbe, "Elephantine and the Torah," 130. Gad Barnea's reconstruction of an Achaemenid festival uses the multivalency of the text as it stands to similar extent, but instead of reconstructing a form of Passover, he links the letter to the celebration of Persian festivities, see Gad Barnea, "P. Berlin 13464, Yahwism and Achaemenid Zoroastrianism at Elephantine," in *Yahwism Under the Achaemenid Empire: Professor Shaul Shaked in Memoriam*, ed. Gad Barnea, and Reinhard G. Kratz (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2024), 1-34. Barnea's creative reading of D7.18 as a

The Aramaic equivalent of Sabbath (*sbh*) is attested at least 4 times on ostraca.[20] The aforementioned mummy label (D19.7) may be evidence for the use of Sabbath in its Aramaic form as a personal name. Several of these texts point to individuals carrying out labour on the Sabbath. It is impossible to extract larger rules of community behaviour from the small number of texts. Some scholars, however, read the evidence to say that work was permitted to Elephantine Jews, while others argue more cautiously that some Elephantine Jews worked on the Sabbath.[21] From the given evidence we cannot say anything about the frequency of the Sabbath at Elephantine. In Biblical Studies, it is largely agreed that historically the Sabbath started as the celebration of the New Moon (see, e.g., 2 Kgs 4:23, Isa 1:13 and Hos 2:13), but that during the exilic period it changed into a weekly celebration.[22]

Most of the names of the more than 100 individuals on the famous donation list, C3.15 are Yahwistic.[23] Becking's reading is likely correct in that this list does not represent the Jewish presence on Elephantine in its entirety.[24] The preponderance of Yahwistic names in the list is nonetheless noteworthy and comparable over practice as attested in Southern Levantine epigraphy. Also noteworthy are some individuals bearing Egyptian names, Persian names, and names invoking originally "Syrian" or "Mesopotamian" deities such as Hadad and Nabû. There is no reason to assume that any of the individuals on the list would not have identified as Jewish. Thus, all of the individuals and the naming practices were likely part of the Jewish community in Elephantine whether through birth or marriage.

The donation list finishes with the note that 126 sheqel were collected for Yahu, 70 for Eshem-Bethel and 120 for Anat-Bethel, indicating the central

curse text is similarly speculative, see Gad Barnea, "Justice At the House of *Yhw*(*h*): An Early Yahwistic *Defixio in Furem*," *Religions* 14 (2023), https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14101324.

20 D7.10, 16, 28 and 35. A possible fifth occurrence in D7.48 would represent a Hebraïsing spelling. Porten and Yardeni read D7.12 as referring to the Sabbath. Even if their reading were correct, the context is too fragmentary to provide any further historical evidence.

21 For the former, see, e.g., Granerød, *Dimensions of Yahwism*, 278. For the latter cf., e.g., Bob Becking, *Identity in Persian Egypt: The Fate of the Yehudite Community of Elephantine* (University Park: Eisenbrauns, 2020), 28-31.

22 Corinna Körting, "Sabbat," *WibiLex: Das wissenschaftliche Bibellexikon im Internet* (2018): https://bibelwissenschaft.de/stichwort/25732/.

23 Most recently Mitka R. Golub, "A Donation List From Elephantine: Judaean and Non-Judaean Onomastic Characteristics From the Persian Period in Egypt," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 69 (2023): 135-160, but see already Michael H. Silverman, *Religious Values in the Jewish Proper Names At Elephantine* (Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1985).

24 Becking, *Identity in Persian Egypt*, 39-43.

importance of these three deities for Elephantine Jews. In light of D7.29 and the Ugaritic text KTU 3.9 one may be tempted to share Becking's reading that the group on the donation account could be roughly the size of the group to be in an Elephantine Marzeaḥ.[25]

The group that is responsible for creating the documents that we now understand as the Aramaic Elephantine papyri comes across as a group which recognised a number of different deities, many of which are known from other historical sources, others which have not been identified in other sources so far, and yet others which consist of well-known elements that have not been identified together elsewhere. The most frequently mentioned deity, *yhw*, is likely to be identified with *yhwh* as he is known from Hebrew epigraphic material from the Levant (e.g., Arad 16:3; 18:2, 9; 21:2-5; 22:6; 40:3; Kuntillet Ağrud 9:1; 14:2; 18:1; 19:5-6; 20:1-2; Lachish 2:2, 5; 3:3, 9; 4:1; 5:1, 7; 6:1, 12; 8:1; 9:1; 12:3 and elsewhere) as well as biblical texts and material from Qumran. Satet (*sty*) by whom Mibtaḥiah swears an oath at court, and Khnum (*ḫnwb* / *ḫnwb*), by whom Gaddel blesses Micaiah (D7.21) are important Egyptian deities with local temples. Other deities—whether understood by local intellectuals and others as lending deities, hypostases or more organically, as independent deities—evoke and combine deities that are otherwise attested in the Levant, such as Eshem-Bethel, Ḥerem-Bethel, Anat-Bethel and Anat-Yahu.

Recent discussions of the religion of Elephantine Judaism

A number of contributions on the religion and identity of Elephantine Jews have been published in the recent past.[26] On the one hand, there has

25 Becking, *Identity in Persian Egypt*, 42-43. The precise nature of the Marzeaḥ remains unknown to us. There are two biblical references to this term, and it is also known at Ugarit, in Phoenician texts, in Nabatean, in Akkadian and Palmyrene. It is generally agreed that it involves the consumption of alcoholic beverages, possibly in memory of deceased ancestors, but there is no guarantee that the term always refers to the identical cultural practice in the attested texts. For a recent overview see Jesse DeGrado, "An Infelicitous Feast: Ritualized Consumption and Divine Rejection in Amos 6.1–7," *Journal of the Study of the Old Testament* 45 (2020): 178-197, especially pages 182-184.

26 See, e.g., Barnea and Kratz, *Yahwism Under the Achaemenid Empire*; Gard Granerød, "Canon and Archive: Yahwism in Elephantine and Āl-Yāḥūdu as a Challenge to the Canonical History of Judean Religion in the Persian Period," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 138 (2019): 354-364; Granerød, *Dimensions of Yahwism*; Becking, *Identity in Persian Egypt*; Moore, *Aramaic Papyri*; Margaretha Folmer, ed., *Elephantine Revisited: New Insights Into the Judean Community and Its Neighbors* (University Park: Eisenbrauns, 2022); Reinhard G. Kratz and Bernd U. Schipper, eds., *Elephantine in Context: Studies on the History, Religion and Literature of the Judeans in Persian Period Egypt* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2022); Gard Granerød, "Yhw the God of Heaven: *An Interpretatio Persica*

been Karel van der Toorn's great creative narrative of a complex migration history of the Elephantine Jews on their way to Elephantine via Palmyra, on the other hand scholars like Reinhard Kratz and Bob Becking continue to grapple with the conceptual frameworks, while yet others focus on the epigraphy and language as is exemplified by Margaretha Folmer and James Moore.

Karel van der Toorn combined his own reading and translation of Papyrus Amherst 63 with his reading of the evidence from Elephantine to produce a highly creative reconstruction of the path that the ancestors of the Elephantine Jews took from Israel via the cultural and religious melting pot of Palmyra until they reached Elephantine.[27] It is this very journey in which, according to Van der Toorn, they pick up elements of religious life from their Aramaic speaking neighbours, which allows them to become diaspora Jews. It should be noted that Van der Toorn no longer insists that it must have been specifically Palmyra rather than any other location in Southwestern Syria. The difficulty with Van der Toorn's theory is that it relies on his own—disputed—reading of Amherst 63, rather scant evidence from individual Phoenician cities, later evidence from Palmyra as well as the reconstructions of the religious history of the Northern Kingdom as it is represented in Judah's Bible.[28]

Deities such as Eshem-Bethel, Ḥerem-Bethel and Anat-Bethel form the core focus for Van der Toorn's complex and highly specific reconstruction of a migration history going well beyond that which the available evidence allows. The fact that in the fifth century BCE the name Anat is only attested in Phoenician texts does not indicate that the deity was otherwise unknown in the Levant or, indeed, further afield. Indeed, the way the plethora of deities is mentioned in the text broadly points toward a community that understands itself as a part of the broader

et Aegyptiaca of Yhw in Elephantine," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 52 (2021): 1-26; Karel van der Toorn, *Becoming Diaspora Jews: Behind the Story of Elephantine* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019); Kratz, "Fossile Überreste des unreformierten Judentums in fernem Lande? Das Judentum in den Archiven von Elephantine und Al-Yaḥudu"; Angela Rohrmoser, *Götter, Tempel und Kult der Judäo-Aramäer von Elephantine: Archäologische und schriftliche Zeugnisse aus dem perserzeitlichen Ägypten* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2014); Anke Joisten-Pruschke, *Das Religiöse Leben der Juden von Elephantine in der Achämenidenzeit* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2008).

27 See Van der Toorn, *Becoming Diaspora Jews*; Karel van der Toorn, *Papyrus Amherst 63* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2018). On possible connections between a specifically Israelite identity and Elephantine Judaism see already Rohrmoser, *Götter*, 150-152.

28 See the reviews of *Becoming Diaspora Jews* by, e.g., Collin Cornell in the *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 51 (2020): 285-288; Tawny L. Holm in *AJS Review* 45 (2021): 179-182; and Lisbeth S. Fried in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 142 (2022): 990-992.

society consisting of the multi-ethnic groups present at Syene and Elephantine; yes, there are differences as we find attestations of *yhw* only rarely in texts for outsiders; additionally, the high frequency of Yahwistic names is restricted to the Jewish corpus. The fact that the Yahu-temple severely damaged / virtually destroyed does not itself indicate any sort of exceptionalism, although it would be compatible with such an historical reading. However, vying for position, political competition and expansionist architectural plans by the Khnum priesthood explain the situation just as well. It is likely, in my view, that a temple to Anat would have suffered the same fate as the Yahu temple had it been erected at the site of the Yahu-temple.

Indeed, the famous donation list C3.15 indicates that also in the Yahu-temple community we see behaviour entirely at home anywhere in any Aramaic writing community in the Persian Empire: regard for multiple deities with a certain preponderance of one among them. We do not need to assume as does Knauf, that the money collected, went to the making of cult statues for Yahu, Eshem-Bethel and Anat-Bethel, as his idea that the cult is self-funding seems unlikely to hold true at a sanctuary such as the Yahu-temple on Elephantine.[29] In either case, however, it is clear that while primacy is allotted to Yahu, the other two deities have an honoured place in the list of donations and therefore probably also in the religious life of the community.

Bob Becking has recently argued that the deities Bēl, Nabû, Šamaš and Nergal in D7.30 or Khnum and Yahu in D7.21 should be understood less as references to the specific deities mentioned, but as 'a reference to the divine in general' or 'lending deities'.[30] He refers to other attestations of various assortments of these deities in other Achaemenid period inscriptions where the diad Bēl and Nabû can be read as indicating the totality of deities. He cites a number of texts to demonstrate that Bēl and Nabû could stand for the totality of gods, taken from across various ancient Middle Eastern cultures.[31]

29 Ernst Axel Knauf, "Elephantine und das vor-biblische Judentum," in *Religion und Religionskontakte im Zeitalter der Achämeniden*, ed. Reinhard Gregor Kratz, VWGT 22 (Gütersloh: Kaiser, Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2002), 179-188.

30 Becking, "Exchange, Replacement, Or Acceptance?" 38; Becking is followed in this by Cornell, "Forgotten Female Figurines."

31 Isa 46:1; the Cyrus Cylinder, lines 20-22 and 33-35; BM 27797; KAI 318; SBH 8; and unspecified Mandaic Magic bowls. For the Cyrus Cylinder, see Irving L. Finkel, ed., *The Cyrus Cylinder: The King of Persia's Proclamation From Ancient Babylon* (London: I. B. Tauris, in association with the Iran Heritage Foundation, 2013), 129-136.; For BM 27797, see Ran Zadok, "The Geography of the Borsippa Region," in *Essays on Ancient Israel in Its Near Eastern Context: A Tribute to Nadav Na'aman*, ed. Yaira Amit*, et al.* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 407; For KAI 318, see the

Unless positive evidence can be presented that these texts were written to invoke a general 'fuzzy' divine, and that such a reading is not merely coherent with it, I would hesitate to understand specific divine names as references to such a divine in general.

Brent Strawn and Collin Cornell have suggested to use language contact as a helpful metaphor when trying to understand Elephantine Judaism.[32] While using terminology from a relatively well-studied phenomenon, language contact and in particular the creation of so-called "pidgin" languages, there are also aspects that make intense language contact an unhelpful comparison: Pidgins—or more broadly, creoles—are a language formation that underlie certain regularities that do not as readily appear to be operating for the broader sphere of human culture, namely where at least two sets of languages meet in the specific situation of one being spoken by a politically and militarily significantly stronger culture, usually in a setting in which the other language is spoken by members of an oppressed culture. Also problematic is, of course, that we do not know what religious ideas Elephantine Jews would have inherited from their ancestors who came from the territories of the former kingdoms of Judah and Israel.

Reinhard Kratz has suggested that a look back in time to Julius Wellhausen could be productive. In his appreciation of Wellhausen's rewritten chapter 14 for the seventh and last edition of his *Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte*, Kratz emphasises Wellhausen's ability to see in the evidence from Elephantine a form of Judaism that is pre-biblical.[33] From Wellhausen's position, influenced by his anti-clericalism, Kratz fashions an argument for a non-biblical Judaism. But his argumentation relies on the assumption that religious life in ancient Israel and Judah was similar to Elephantine Judaism. This may have been the case, but the available data from the Levant is not sufficient to determine this.

editio princeps by André Dupont-Sommer, "Une inscription araméenne inédite d'époque Perse trouvée à Daskyléion (Turquie)," *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 110 (1966); Herbert Donner, and Wolfgang Röllig, *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften*, vol. 1. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002), 78; For the calendrical text SBH 8, see George Andrew Reissner, *Sumerisch-Babylonische Hymnen nach Thontafeln Griechischer Zeit* (Berlin: Spemann, 1896); Eiko Matsushima, "Le rituel hiérogamique de Nabû," *Acta Sumerologica* 9 (1987): 158-161; Galip Cağirnan, "The Babylonian Festivals," PhD diss., (University of Birmingham, 1976), 168-182. According to Matthew Morgenstern, "Mandaic Bowls in the Moussaieff Collection: A Preliminary Survey," in *New Inscriptions and Seals Relating to the Biblical World*, ed. Meir Lubetski, and Edith Lubetski (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 167, the Mandaic formula appears in bowls M24:13 and M45:12.

32 Cornell and Strawn, "Is Judean Religion at Elephantine a Pidgin?"

33 Kratz, "Fossile Überreste". Barnea, "Justice at the House" is broadly in agreement here.

Conclusions

Historically, scholarship on Elephantine has operated on the basis of the comparison of biblical Judaism and Elephantine Judaism. This has most often been expressed by describing Jewish religion on Elephantine and Syene as syncretistic and at least implying degeneration from an assumed biblical ideal and a thus "less pure" form of Judaism. Even recent approaches such as that of Strawn and Cornell do not manage to escape the almost gravitational pull of the biblical text in this regard. Others, such as Wellhausen have gone the inverse way and interpreted Elephantine Judaism as a purer form of Judaism than that preserved in the biblical corpus. In this, Wellhausen and others succumb to the same gravitational pull only in the form of a "gravitational push." The centre of analysis is still the biblical text around which Elephantine is arranged. Van der Toorn chooses his own reconstruction of Papyrus Amherst 63 as a centre and his understanding of Israelite religion relies on Judah's Bible.[34] Barnea uses the relatively scant evidence for contemporary Achaemenid religion as comparanda, and attempts to replace all comparisons with the biblical corpus with non-biblical corpora.

In their stead, I would like to suggest a slightly different enterprise: interpreting Elephantine Judaism in light of itself and other data from Elephantine and Syene, instead of comparisons with data from elsewhere in the Achaemenid empire. Indeed, Elephantine is by far the largest corpus of Jewish textual and material culture from the Achaemenid period. Naturally, many biblical texts had already been written in this period or were in the process of being written at the time, but we do not have any primary evidence from the period itself.[35]

Thus, as indicated above, while we can see awareness of and correspondence with the temple at Jerusalem as well as the "secular" (for want of a better word) authorities in Samerina, these appear to be initiated at

34 Adopting the term "Judah's Bible" from Daniel E. Fleming's *The Legacy of Israel in Judah's Bible: History, Politics, and the Reinscribing of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). The central idea in this book is that all information on ancient Israel—as opposed to ancient Judah—that is contained in the Hebrew Bible / Old Testament is funnelled and thus coloured and influenced by ideas and views in ancient Judah.

35 See, e.g., Gabriel Barkay, "The Priestly Benediction on Silver Plaques From Ketef Hinnom in Jerusalem," *Tel Aviv* 19 (1992): 139-192. It is important in this context to insist that the famous amulets from Ketef Hinnom have text similar to the Aaronic Blessing from Numbers 6, but not text identical to it. There is no reason to assume that the scribes of the amulets were citing from Numbers, but rather that the scribes of the Amulets and the authors of Numbers 6 were both drawing on a broader tradition of blessings.

a time when the community at Elephantine needed all the support that they could get in order to get their temple rebuilt. We have no indication anywhere that such communication between Yehud and Samerina on the one hand and the Elephantine community occurred outside these very specific circumstances.

The Elephantine evidence can be read simply to reconstruct a form of Judaism as it was practiced and lived in Elephantine, where it appears to have involved the worship of at least Eshem-Bethel and Anat-Bethel as part of the temple worship as implied by C3.15. Further, acknowledging the power and presence of Egyptian deities such as Khnum and Satet appears to have been a simple fact of life for Jews at Elephantine. There is no indication that the individuals in question were under any duress. One could construct such a situation of legal distress when Mibtaḥiah swears her oath by Satet in court (B2.18), no such situation is apparent in Gaddel's blessing of Micaiah by Khnum and Yahu in D7.21. Indeed, from what the ostracon communicates to the modern reader, Micaiah and Gaddel share their perspective on these two deities as significant and worthy of being appealed to for protection.

It is likely that in this regard, the Elephantine Jewish community was no different from other communities attested at Elephantine. What made them different was their regard, expressed so eloquently in the naming of their children, of the deity Yahu. The one text in which someone without a Yahwistic name, appeals to Yahu is of course the famous B2.2, in which Dargamana swears an oath by Yahu at court. To the best of my knowledge, no such case is preserved in the Demotic documentation.

The terms Pesach and Shabbat occur in the documentation and it seems clear that days designated by either are different from other—more regular—days. What these days signify to individuals, whether, indeed, all members of the Elephantine Jewish community even ascribed the same significance to them is unclear. The data as it presents itself seems to suggest that for some Elephantine Jews Shabbat was a special day with its own name, but that one could do one's regular work on it.

Thus, we encounter a community living their Judaism in a form that suits them in the evidence, whatever relationship it may have had to other forms of Judaism—or, indeed, other forms of Yahwistic religion(s). That must remain in the realm of speculation as we have no comparable contemporary epigraphic corpus, until such a corpus were to be unearthed.

Bibliography

Albertz, Rainer and Bob Becking, eds. *Yahwism After the Exile: Perspectives on Israelite Religion in the Persian Era: Papers Read at the First Meeting of the European Association for Biblical Studies, Utrecht, 6-9 August 2000.* Assen: Van Gorcum, 2003.

Anneler, Hedwig. *Zur Geschichte der Juden von Elephantine*. Bern: Drechsel, 1912.

Balzac, Charles-Louis, François-Charles Cécile, and Gilbert-Joseph-Gaspard de Chabrol de Volvic. *Description de l'Egypt ou recueil des observations et des recherches qui ont été faites en Égypte pendant l'expédition de l'armée Française*. Paris: L'Imprimerie Royale, 1809.

Barkay, Gabriel. "The Priestly Benediction on Silver Plaques From Ketef Hinnom in Jerusalem." *Tel Aviv* 19 (1992): 139-192.

Barnea, Gad. "Justice At the House of *Yhw*(*h*): An Early Yahwistic *Defixio in Furem*." *Religions* 14, no. 10 (2023). https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14101324.

———. "P. Berlin 13464, Yahwism and Achaemenid Zoroastrianism At Elephantine." In *Yahwism Under the Achaemenid Empire: Professor Shaul Shaked in Memoriam*, edited by Gad Barnea and Reinhard G. Kratz, 1-34. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2024.

Barnea, Gad and Reinhard G. Kratz, eds. *Yahwism Under the Achaemenid Empire: Professor Shaul Shaked in Memoriam*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2024.

Becking, Bob. "Exchange, Replacement, or Acceptance? Two Examples of Lending Deities Among Ethnic Groups in Elephantine." In *Jewish Cultural Encounters in the Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern World*, edited by Mladen Popović, Myles Schoonover, and Marijn Vandenberghe, 30-43. Leiden: Brill, 2017.

———. *Identity in Persian Egypt: The Fate of the Yehudite Community of Elephantine*. University Park: Eisenbrauns, 2020.

Bresciani, Edda. "Papiri aramaici egiziani di epoca persiana presso il Museu Civico di Padova." *Rivista degli studi orientali* 35 (1960): 11-24, tavola I.

Cağirnan, Galip. "The Babylonian Festivals." PhD diss. University of Birmingham, 1976.

Cornell, Collin. "The Forgotten Female Figurines of Elephantine." *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 18 (2018): 111-132.

———. Review of *Becoming Diaspora Jews: Behind the Story of Elephantine*, by Karel van der Toorn. *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 51 (2020): 285-288.

Cornell, Collin, and Brent A. Strawn. "Is Judean Religion at Elephantine a Pidgin? Reassessing Its Relationship to Its Antecedents and Congeners." In *Elephantine in Context: Studies on the History, Religion and Literature of the Judeans in Persian Period Egypt*, edited by Reinhard G. Kratz and Bernd U. Schipper, 153-182. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2022.

Cowley, A. E. "Some Egyptian Aramaic Documents." *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology* 33 (1903): 202-208; 259-266; 311-314.

DeGrado, Jessie. "An Infelicitous Feast: Ritualized Consumption and Divine Rejection in Amos 6.1–7." *Journal of the Study of the Old Testament* 45 (2020): 178-197.

Donner, Herbert and Wolfgang Röllig. *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften*. Vol. 1. 5th ed. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002.

Dupont-Sommer, André. "Une inscription araméenne inédite d'époque perse trouvée à Daskyléion (Turquie)." *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 110 (1966): 44-57.

Edelman, Diana V., ed. *The Triumph of Elohim: From Yahwisms to Judaisms*. Kampen: Pharos, 1995.

Euting, Julius. "Notice sur un papyrus Égypto-Araméen de la Bibliothèque impériale de Strasbourg." *Mémoires présentés par divers savants à l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres de l'Institut de France* 11 (1904): 297-312.

Finkel, Irving L., ed. *The Cyrus Cylinder: The King of Persia's Proclamation from Ancient Babylon*. London: I. B. Tauris, in association with the Iran Heritage Foundation, 2013.

Fleming, Daniel E. *The Legacy of Israel in Judah's Bible: History, Politics, and the Reinscribing of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Folmer, Margaretha, ed. *Elephantine Revisited: New Insights into the Judean Community and Its Neighbors*. University Park: Eisenbrauns, 2022.

Fried, Lisbeth S. Review of *Becoming Diaspora Jews: Behind the Story of Elephantine*, by Karel van der Toorn. *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 142 (2022): 990-992.

Furstenberg, Yair. "Contesting Identities: The Splitting Channels from Israelite to Jew." In *A Companion to Late Ancient Judaism: Third Century BCE to Seventh Century CE*, edited by Naomi Koltun-Fromm and Gwynn Kessler, 183-199. Hoboken: Wiley Blackwell, 2020.

Gaudenzio, Luigi. *Giovan Battista Belzoni alla luce di nuovi documenti*. Padua: Libreria Draghi di G.B. Randi, 1936.

Golub, Mitka R. "A Donation List from Elephantine: Judaean and Non-Judaean Onomastic Characteristics from the Persian Period in Egypt." *Journal of Semitic Studies* 69 (2023): 135-160.

Grabbe, Lester. "Elephantine and the Torah." In *In the Shadow of Bezalel: Aramaic, Biblical, and Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honor of Bezalel Porten*, edited by Alejandro F. Botta, 125-135. Leiden: Brill, 2013.

Granerød, Gard. *Dimensions of Yahwism in the Persian Period: Studies in the Religion and Society of the Judaean Community at Elephantine*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016.

———. "Canon and Archive: Yahwism in Elephantine and Āl-Yāḥūdu as a Challenge to the Canonical History of Judean Religion in the Persian Period." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 138 (2019): 345-364.

———. "Yhw the God of Heaven: An *Interpretatio Persica et Aegyptiaca* of Yhw in Elephantine." *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 52 (2021): 1-26.

Holm, Tawny L. Review of *Becoming Diaspora Jews: Behind the Story of Elephantine*, by Karel van der Toorn. *AJS Review* 45 (2021): 179-182.

Joisten-Pruschke, Anke. *Das religiöse Leben der Juden von Elephantine in der Achämenidenzeit*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2008.

Klawans, Jonathan. "Judaism Was a Civilization: Toward a Reconstruction of Ancient Jewish Peoplehood." *Religion Compass* 12 (2018): https://doi.org/10.1111/rec3.12286.

Knauf, Ernst Axel. "Elephantine und das vor-biblische Judentum." In *Religion und Religionskontakte im Zeitalter der Achämeniden*, edited by Reinhard Gregor Kratz, 179-188. Gütersloh: Kaiser, Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2002.

Körting, Corinna. "Sabbat." *WibiLex: Das wissenschaftliche Bibellexikon im Internet* (2018): https://bibelwissenschaft.de/stichwort/25732/.

Kratz, Reinhard G. "Fossile Überreste des unreformierten Judentums in fernem Lande? Das Judentum in den Archiven von Elephantine und Al-Yaḥudu." *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 132 (2020): 23-39.

Kratz, Reinhard G. and Bernd U. Schipper, eds. *Elephantine in Context: Studies on the History, Religion and Literature of the Judeans in Persian Period Egypt*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2022.

Krutzsch, Myriam. "Papyrusmaterial aus Elephantine und seine signifikanten Merkmale." *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 147 (2020): 47-56.

Law, Timothy Michael and Halton, Charles, eds. "Jew and Judean: A Marginalia Forum on Politics and Historiography in the Translation of Ancient Texts." (2014): http://marginalia.lareviewofbooks.org/tag/ioudaios/.

Lidzbarski, Mark. *Ephemeris für semitische Epigraphik: Zweiter Band: 1903-1907*. Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1908.

von Lieven, Alexandra. "Spätägyptische Religion in und um Elephantine." In *Elephantine in Context: Studies on the History, Religion and Literature of the Judeans in Persian Period Egypt*, edited by Reinhard G. Kratz and Bernd U. Schipper, 131-151. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2022.

Lozachmeur, Hélène. *La collection Clermont-Ganneau: Ostraca, épigraphes sur jarre, étiquettes de bois*. Paris: de Boccard, 2006.

Mason, Steve. "Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism: Problems of Categorization in Ancient History." *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 38 (2007): 457-512.

Matsushima, Eiko. "Le rituel hiérogamique de Nabû." *Acta Sumerologica* 9 (1987): 131-175.

Moore, James D. *New Aramaic Papyri from Elephantine in Berlin*. Leiden: Brill, 2022.

Morgenstern, Matthew. "Mandaic Bowls in the Moussaieff Collection: A Preliminary Survey." In *New Inscriptions and Seals Relating to the Biblical World*, edited by

Meir Lubetski, and Edith Lubetski, 157-169. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012.

Müller, Matthias. "Among the Priests of Elephantine Island: Elephantine Island Seen from Egyptian Sources." *Welt des Orient* 46 (2016): 213-243.

Niehr, Herbert. *Der höchste Gott: Alttestamentlicher JHWH-Glaube im Kontext syrisch-kanaanäischer Religion des 1. Jahrtausends v. Chr.* BZAW 190. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1990.

von Pilgrim, Cornelius. "Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine: 25./26./27. Grabungsbericht: XII. Der Temple des Jahwe." *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts in Kairo* 55 (1999): 142-145.

———. "Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine: 28./29./30. Grabungsbericht: VI. Das aramäische Quartier im Stadtgebiet der 27. Dynastie." *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts in Kairo* 58 (2002): 192-197.

———. "Tempel des Jahu und "Straße des Königs": Ein Konflikt in der späten Perserzeit auf Elephantine." In *Egypt, Temple of the Whole World / Ägypten, Tempel Der Gesammten Welt: Studies in Honour of Jan Assmann*, edited by Sibylle Meyer, 303-317. Leiden: Brill, 2003.

Porten, Bezalel, and Ada Yardeni. *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt*. 4 vols. Jerusalem: Hebrew University Press, 1986.

Reinhartz, Adele. "The Vanishing Jews of Antiquity," in *Jew and Judean: A MARGINALIA Forum on Politics and Historiography in the Translation of Ancient Texts* (2014). http://marginalia.lareviewofbooks.org/tag/ioudaios/.

Reissner, George Andrew. *Sumerisch-Babylonische Hymnen nach Thontafeln Griechischer Zeit*. Berlin: Spemann, 1896.

Rohrmoser, Angela. *Götter, Tempel Und Kult der Judäo-Aramäer von Elephantine: Archäologische und schriftliche Zeugnisse aus dem perserzeitlichen Ägypten*. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2014.

Sachau, Eduard. *Aramäische Papyrus und Ostraka aus einer jüdischen Militär-Kolonie zu Elephantine: Altorientalische Sprachdenkmäler des 5. Jahrhunderts v. Chrs.* Leipzig: Hinrich, 1911.

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

Silverman, Michael H. *Religious Values in the Jewish Proper Names at Elephantine*. Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1985.

van der Toorn, Karel. "Anat-Yahu, Some Other Deities, and the Jews of Elephantine." *Numen* 39 (1992): 80-101.

———. *Papyrus Amherst 63*. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2018.

———. *Becoming Diaspora Jews: Behind the Story of Elephantine*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019.

Wellhausen, Julius. *Israelitische und Jüdische Geschichte*. Berlin: Reimer, 1914.

Zadok, Ran. "The Geography of the Borsippa Region." In *Essays on Ancient Israel in Its Near Eastern Context: A Tribute to Nadav Na'aman*, edited by Yaira Amit, Ehud Ben-Zvi, Israel Finkelstein, and Oded Lipschits, 389-453. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006.