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Das religiöse Leben der Juden von Elephantine in der Achämenidenzeit

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In this modestly revised dissertation, Anke Joisten-Pruschke offers what amounts to a series of more or less discrete studies of topics and materials related to the religious life of the Jews of Elephantine in the Persian period. But before coming to the synthetic studies in chapters 1–4, Joisten-Pruschke offers what is surely the most useful contribution of the book, a collation of the papyri and ostraca from Persian period Elephantine relevant to the Judean community and their diverse publication venues. Researchers have long been plagued by the rather tortured history of the publication, republication, and reworking of the relevant primary evidence, and Joisten-Pruschke provides in her extended introduction an aid to overcoming that obstacle. Each of the tables loosely corresponds to an excavation, find, or purchase of papyri or ostraca completed since the late nineteenth century. Thus tables 1 and 2 list the various publications of the papyrus and ostraca finds and purchases made before the first full-scale excavation at Elephantine in 1906. Table 3 lists separately the many publication locations of the papyri discovered in 1904 but first published some years later by A. H. Sayce and A. E. Cowley. Tables 4 and 6 cover most of the papyri and ostraca from the German excavations of 1906–8 as published by Eduard Sachau in 1911 and subsequently republished by several other editors. Table 5 lists additional fragmentary papyri from the Sachau edition that have since been joined with other fragments by other editors (chiefly Porten-Yardeni). Table 7 covers ostraca from the Charles Clermont-Ganneau collection accumulated from French excavations from

1907 to 1911, providing again the corresponding listing in Porten-Yardeni. Table 8 lists the Kraeling papyri (first purchased in 1893 but published only in 1953) and the corresponding publications in later collections. Table 9 covers additional fragments discovered in the German excavations left unidentified but since published in Porten-Yardeni. Table 10 lists further fragments from the German excavations uncovered by R. Degen and B. Porten and also reports on joins made between these fragments and others discovered earlier. Table 11 lists three papyri from the Museo Civico di Padova with corresponding publication information in Porten-Yardeni and Porten. Table 12 lists seven papyri from Hermopolis-West and their publication information in more recent collections. Tables 13 and 14 list papyrus and ostraca finds from a German and Swiss excavation during the 1980s. Lastly, table 15 lists documents Porten has reconstructed from scattered fragments (along with the original location of the fragments and the publication loci of the newly assembled documents). The chapter closes with a critique of the widely used Porten-Yardeni edition. Joisten-Pruschke complains that the editors did not signify carefully the coloring and physical character of the fragments, distinguish sufficiently among certain and uncertain letters, and denote adequately the paratextual markings.

Chapter 1 addresses the experience of the Jews of Elephantine in tension with the Persian imperial government. The author begins with a review of the well-known contradictions regarding Cambyses' rule between the accounts of Herodotus, Diodorus, and Strabo, on the one hand, and those of the Egyptian sources, on the other. The former treat it as a case of imperial misrule and abuse of the subjugated and the cause of later uprisings, while the latter make clear that his rule was not all that objectionable. Joisten-Pruschke suggests that the different perspectives have to do with the relative impacts of Cambyses' decree that reduced local temple income. Relying on this, the author examines the way the empire related to local custom and religious practice, concluding along the lines laid down by Dandamayev that local customs, religious practices, and social structures were allowed to remain untouched, while Persian military and administrative authority existed only to ensure the empire its fiscal prerogatives. Direct intervention—imperial authorization of the religious, cultural, and social—was required only if tensions threatening the imperial income developed. This observation serves as backdrop for Joisten-Pruschke's examination of the evidence for imperial intervention in several such matters, including the desire for authorization to rebuild the temple in Elephantine after its destruction in the troubles of 411–408 B.C.E. She argues that in most such matters the evidence does not support the popular theory associated with Peter Frei regarding the necessity of imperial authorization. Rather, Joisten-Pruschke argues that it was only in moments when imperial prerogatives were threatened that authorization was necessary.

In a wide-ranging second chapter on the religious life of the Jews of Elephantine, the author summarizes the textual and archaeological evidence for the highly integrated living conditions of the various ethnicities assigned to the Persian military outpost situated there. From her overview of the evidence, Joisten-Pruschke makes the (relatively common) observation that the Jews of Elephantine lived cheek-to-jowl with people of many different ethnicities. This leads her to ask a series of questions: How did the religion of these Jews develop in such close contact with others? Can one see evidence of acculturation, and if so, how did it run its course, and where did it show up most clearly? To answer her questions, she consults the family archives of Mibtahiah and Ananiah and the archive of the temple official Jedaniah. Focusing largely on the mixed Jewish and Egyptian onomastics, Joisten-Pruschke draws the following conclusions: (1) acculturation must have begun well before the time when we see the first mixed names; (2) there are two types of texts from an onomastic perspective: those in which the mixture is in name only, and the subject's Jewish identity remained intact, and those where genuine acculturation is evident; and (3) she finds none of the latter sort of texts in Jedaniah's temple archive but plenty of them in the private archives.

The third chapter addresses the evidence of marriage documents. After critiquing the reconstruction efforts of Porten-Yardeni, Joisten-Pruschke summarizes her own findings. She indicates that the Judean contracts were like Egyptian contracts in terms of the material used to record them (papyrus) and their structure and content. They were also different in a number of aspects, most especially in that they were legally validated not just by the testimony of witnesses but by the appearance of a seal as well, a factor Joisten-Pruschke links to possible Babylonian influence.

In a lengthy closing chapter Joisten-Pruschke offers transcriptions of twenty selected texts with commentary and translation. Listed according to their Porten-Yardeni numbers, these include A4.5, B2.6, B2.8, A4.1, B6.2, A4.2., A4.3, B6.3, B7.3, B2.5, B3.3, B3.8, B6.1, D2.17, D2.20, D3.16, D7.6, D7.24, D7.21. In addition, she treats a text not included in Porten-Yardeni, Cowley 18.

Joisten-Pruschke concludes the book with a bibliography of the publications of papyri and ostraca and of secondary literature dealing with the language of the papyri and with individual documents, with four appendices that include a copy of a letter from Stephen Pisano of the Pontifical Biblical Institute regarding the location of the papyri excavated by the PBI (Cairo), and with photos of three fragments left unidentified on the pages where they appear.

In all, the volume's most useful feature is the extensive catalog of fragments and publication locations summarized above. While it is true that the main chapters of the

book do not break any particularly new ground, and the section on the significance of onomastics in the papyri is problematic in its assumptions, Joisten-Pruschke does offer some useful insights and interesting arguments. Particularly noteworthy is her discussion of the much-discussed Sachau-Papyrus 18, a temple tax list that is read by some as indicating Judean worship of various gods. Joisten-Pruschke takes the view that the purported deity names could just as well be personal names, rendering this supposed evidence for acculturation more or less moot.