

ETHNIC CONSIDERATIONS IN PERSIAN PERIOD EGYPT

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It is a pleasure for me to dedicate these comments¹ as a small token of esteem and appreciation to a man who as teacher, colleague, and friend has set the highest standards of scholarship, inspired interest in the widest variety of topics concerning ancient Egypt, and always generously shared his thoughts and his incomparable files.

Modern scholars, faced with a world full of "ethnic" identifications and distinctions frequently used for less than humanitarian purposes, wonder whether and how people in earlier times made such distinctions. Many ancient peoples distinguished between themselves and "others" in terms corresponding to the Greek "people" versus "barbarians." But how much can we learn about ancient societies, and the individuals of which they were composed, by focusing on the question of ethnicity? That the evidence preserved from a given ancient culture helps direct and define the discussion remains obvious; what we must do is try to avoid applying inappropriate modern distinctions to the ancient situation.²

We must start by distinguishing between ethnicity as a definition of self vis-à-vis other(s), that is, a social distinction which is made and accepted by people themselves, and the formal official use of ethnicity as a category by which to make distinctions among "citizens" or "subjects." The former may have slippery boundaries because the differences that are considered important may change through time or when an individual or group deals with more than one "other"; the latter must have a carefully defined, somewhat inflexible list of "character traits" by which to make or impose distinctions. Some governments made formal use of ethnicity as a category; some did not. Some used ethnicity to identify individuals; others used ethnicity as one basis for granting privileges.³ Therefore, one question that needs to be asked, but one to which a definitive answer can not be given here, is whether or not the Achaemenid administration of Egypt made *formal* use of ethnicity (for judicial, political, or other purposes).

But first we must consider the informal or social concept of ethnicity. Goudriaan (1988, p. 10), discussing ethnicity in Ptolemaic Egypt, argues:

Ethnicity can be defined as a type of social organization based on self-ascription and ascription by others; this categorical ascription "is (quoting Fr. Barth) an ethnic ascription when it classifies a person in terms of his basic, most general identification, presumptively determined by his origin and background. To the extent that actors use ethnic identities to categorize themselves and others for purposes of interaction, they form ethnic groups in this organizational sense."

Such ethnicity does not involve objective, innate qualities; rather, it consists of categories applied in social interaction by actors wishing to divide participants in the interaction into an "in-group" and an "out-group" (for

1. An earlier version of this paper was presented during my participation in a panel discussion on "Ethnicity and Community in the Persian Period" at the SBL meetings held in Chicago during November 1994. I would like to thank the organizers of that panel, Tamara C. Eskenazi and Kenneth G. Hoglund, for prompting me to look at this question, and my fellow panelists, Matthew W. Stolper, Pamela Gordon, Ben C. Ollenburger, and Harold C. Washington, and Charles E. Jones, for stimulating discussions of the ethnic situation in other parts of the Achaemenid world. I would also like to

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2. For a useful discussion of the influence of the contemporary on historical perceptions and questions, see Samuel 1989.
3. For example, Ptolemaic versus Roman Egypt. The use of ethnic designations in Ptolemaic Egypt has been summa-

purposes of the cohesiveness of the in-group or divisiveness against the out-group). It is not identical with class (an economic category), "nationality" or "citizens' rights" (a juridical category), or religion, although it more closely converges with religion than other categories. It is frequently bound up with place of origin and (native) language.

For a group to maintain an ethnic identity, its members must continually use and validate "inclusion" rules. Here, cultural features play a part, but there is no simple, rigid one-to-one relationship between ethnic units and cultural similarities and differences. Features taken into account are not the sum of "objective" differences but only those which the actors themselves regard as significant. Traits used to define a given "ethnic" might also differ depending on to which (of two or more contemporary) "others" the group or individual is relating: What made an Aramaean different from a Jew in Persian-period Egypt might not be identical with what made an Aramaean different from an Egyptian or a Persian.

But ethnicity, and the maintenance of ethnic groups, proceeds not so much by cultural content as by social boundaries within which the groups are enclosed (and social boundaries may or may not coincide with geographical boundaries). Since not all cultural traits are relevant, those traits which are, and how significant a given trait is, may also change with time. Thus, the cultural characteristics of members of an ethnic group could change through time, but if some sort of ethnic boundaries were maintained throughout, the group could retain ethnic identity. As long as ethnic boundaries exist, there is a tendency for new forms of behavior to be dichotomized, reinforcing the separateness of groups. If ethnic boundaries are lost — through the reduction of important social differences, the congruence of codes and values, etc. — ethnic identity is lost.

In order to look at the role of ethnicity in an ancient situation, several questions need to be asked: In which circumstances did inhabitants of, say, Egypt, label themselves? What labels were used? What criteria determined the use of the label? Are there indications of ethnic mobility (synchronic or diachronic)? Did the government or administrative body use these (or other) ethnic identifications to categorize (or extend privileges to) individuals or groups?

By the Persian period, Egypt, and urban Egyptians, had a long history of exposure to individual foreigners living in Egypt,⁴ a fair amount of exposure to groups of foreigners in Egypt,⁵ but little previous exposure to incorporation in a foreign empire and the imposition of a foreign administrative scheme on Egypt and Egyptian bureaucrats. Egyptians distinguished themselves from people living to their north, south, east, and west; people with whom the Egyptians had a military conflict were frequently referred to derogatorily.⁶ Descriptions and depictions of non-Egyptians were often quite detailed, indicating differences in hair, skin color, facial features, dress, accoutrements, etc. The Egyptians could, when appropriate, also distinguish themselves as Upper versus Lower Egyptians. But the important distinctions depended heavily on language.⁷ Several New Kingdom ostraca credit the god Thoth with having *wp* "divided" the languages of different countries.⁸ Non-Egyptians *i'ꜥw* "babbled," the same word used of the braying of a donkey, and communicated through interpreters who learned to babble.⁹

rized by Csaba La'da as follows (personal communication; see also his forthcoming Ph.D. dissertation): "Ethnic designations did serve official purposes in Ptolemaic Egypt but these purposes did not include ethnic discrimination. These purposes were individual identification (real ethnic designations) and (fiscal/social) status differentiation on the basis of occupation (fictitious ethnic designations)." As summarized by La'da, "The Romans introduced an entirely new system of social privilege which was based on a mixture of interrelated ethnic-cultural and legal criteria." See also La'da 1994.

4. For example, Asiatic and Nubian prisoners of war. Some Egyptian names reflect foreign origin (e.g., *Pꜣ-Nḥsy* "the Nubian" and *Pꜣ-Hꜥrw* "the Syrian," both of which are attested in hieroglyphs and Demotic), but it is not clear that all the people who had such names were foreign born (or even second- or third-generation foreign born). Some foreign born slaves (prisoners of war?) kept their original names (which Egyptian scribes tried to write in Egyptian), others took or were given Egyptian names which might or might not indicate their foreign birth.

5. For example, the Greek- and Semitic-speaking traders and mercenaries who had been residing in the Delta and Memphis for several generations.

6. For a good discussion and summary of ethnicity, and especially of Egyptian representations of Libyans from late predynastic times until the middle of the first millennium, see Baines 1996, especially pp. 360–84.


7. As did the Upper versus Lower Egyptian distinction, as shown, for example, by the oft-quoted jibe from the New Kingdom scribe Hori to his fellow scribe Amenemope: "Your discourses are collected on my tongue and remain fixed on my lips, for they are so confused when heard that no interpreter can unravel them. They are like a Delta man's conversation with a man of Elephantine" (P. Anastasi I, translated by Wente 1990, p. 109).

8. For *wp*, see Černý 1948, p. 120; another New Kingdom text used *stnw* (< *stni*) "to distinguish."

9. For *i'ꜥw*, see Bell 1976.

The Egyptian norm seems to have been for the foreigner to learn Egyptian,¹⁰ not vice versa, and there are numerous examples of non-Egyptians living in Egypt who Egyptianized, adopting Egyptian customs and sometimes Egyptian names. Examples from the Persian period include a group of foreigners settled in the Memphite area who left grave stelae reflecting greater or lesser degrees of Egyptianization. Stelae carved on behalf of Carians range from Egyptian(izing), although with both Carian and Egyptian hieroglyphic inscriptions, to purely East Greek (but with a winged sun disk across the top), where many incorporate both Egyptian and East Greek iconography (Martin and Nicholls 1978; Gallo and Masson 1993, p. 271, n. 19).¹¹ One recently published example has, in the upper register, a slightly Egyptianized Greek mourning scene with a Greek inscription and, in the lower register, a scene of offering before Osiris (Gallo and Masson 1993). Other examples combining mourning scenes with typically Egyptian offering scenes have inscriptions in Aramaic;¹² a frequently studied example is the Carpentras Stela, which has a hymn to Osiris written in Aramaic at the bottom of the stela (Fitzmyer and Kaufman 1992, B.3.f.18, p. 141). There are also a number of typically Egyptian funerary stelae¹³ or sarcophagi¹⁴ to which a personal name has been added in Aramaic. Aramaic prayers were also added, as graffiti, to Egyptian religious scenes.¹⁵

A well-known example of Persian officials living in Egypt who adopted an Egyptian name and began to honor Egyptian deities involves two brothers who served in the area of Coptos and left graffiti in the quarries in the Wadi Hammamat. Of these graffiti, Posener (1936, p. 178) says,

Les graffiti de ces deux Perses s'échelonnent sur 37 ans et permettent de suivre l'influence croissante du pays conquis sur les étrangers. Les premières inscriptions d'Atiyawahi [fils d'Artamès et de la dame Qandjou] ne contiennent que la date et les noms propres. Le titre¹⁶ du fonctionnaire est transcrit de l'araméen. En l'an 10 de Xerxès Atiyawahi ajoute l'image de Min, en l'an 12 on lit une brève invocation au même dieu. Les textes d'Ariyawrata, plus récents, sont toujours accompagnés de la représentation d'un dieu. Ariyawrata traduit son titre en égyptien et adopte le surnom égyptien , *Djého*. Il invoque Min: Min, Horus et Isis; et Amonrasonter.

It has recently been suggested by Lemaire (1991, pp. 199–201) that the temple at Aswan built by the Persian chief of the garrison there was dedicated to an Egyptian deity (Osiris the strong).¹⁷ Both this dedication, if Lemaire's re-reading and reinterpretation are correct, and the invocations of Egyptian deities by Ariyawrata/Djeho need not be interpreted as Persians converting and accepting Egyptian deities but rather as examples of the well-attested Persian respect for local deities and local culture.¹⁸

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10. The Instruction of Any, a New Kingdom didactic text, includes a passage (10/6) that states, "One teaches the Nubian Egyptian (*mdt rmt n Kmt*), and the Syrian and all foreigners likewise." There certainly are examples of Egyptians, especially Egyptian scribes stationed in or sent to western Asia, who learned foreign languages (e.g., the scribe who wrote the Amarna Letters of Abimilki, prince of Tyre, if Albright [1937, pp. 196–203] is correct), although they didn't always learn it very well (see the sarcastic comments by Hori directed at Amenemope in P. Anastasi I [translated by Wente 1990, especially pp. 106–09]). For an analysis of Semitic vocabulary that occurs in New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period Egyptian texts, see Hoch 1994.
11. One stela shows the traditional Greek scene of the deceased on a bier with mourners around, but the deceased is portrayed by beard and costume as Persian (Stela Berlin 23721; see Martin and Nicholls 1978, p. 66, #C1). One should also note the earlier, Saite, bronze statue base for a statue of the goddess Neith found in Susa. The statue was made in Egypt by a man named Padineith, who added a marginal inscription in Carian to the traditional Egyptian hieroglyphic inscription (for the reference, see Yoyotte and Masson 1988, p. 177).
12. For example, Stela Vatican 287 (Fitzmyer and Kaufman 1992, B.3.f.28, p. 144); Stela Wadi el-Saba Rigala (Fitzmyer

- and Kaufman 1992, B.3.e.22, pp. 129–30, from the Memphite area).
13. For example, Stela Ptah (Fitzmyer and Kaufman 1992, B.3.e.9, p. 127, from Saqqara).
14. For example, Fitzmyer and Kaufman 1992, B.3.f.4, p. 137, from Aswan; B.3.e.27, p. 135, from Saqqara.
15. For example, Graffito Wadi el-Hudi, added to a cippus of Horus (Fitzmyer and Kaufman 1992, B.3.f.20), and G. Abydos, added to the temple of Osiris (Fitzmyer and Kaufman 1992, B.3.f.23, p. 142).
16. For a discussion of the meaning of this title (*saris*), see Briant 1996b, p. 288.
17. If Stela Aswan (Fitzmyer and Kaufman 1992, B.3.f.3, p. 136) dates from year 7 of Artaxerxes II (as Lemaire 1991), rather than Artaxerxes I, then this stela belongs to the small group of Aramaic documents from Aswan recording dates in the reign of Artaxerxes II several years after the successful revolt by Amyrtaeus in the Delta. If this dating is correct, then the Persian chief of the garrison could even be seen as playing to Aswan's incorporation into the newly independent Egypt (Briant 1996b, p. 1008).
18. See Briant 1988, pp. 166–67, who also notes (pp. 160–61) other possible examples of Persians who adopted a second, Egyptian, name.

A recently discovered and published stela from Saqqara can “be considered as constituting the first certain evidence of a union between a Persian and an Egyptian” (Mathieson et al. 1995). The top register of this funerary stela shows the traditional Egyptian scene of the mummified deceased on a lion-bier being attended by Isis, Nephthys, and Anubis, with the four canopic jars under the bier. Inscriptions in both hieroglyphic and Demotic Egyptian invoke Osiris on behalf of a man named DjedHorBes, whose mother’s name was Tanofreher (both Egyptian names) but whose father had the Persian name Artames (*ꜥrtm*). The lower register shows an offering scene, but the recipient of the offerings is not a deity, such as Osiris, but a “seated, bearded official whose throne and dress proclaim him as a Persian dignitary of very high rank” (Mathieson et al. 1995, p. 29). This dignitary wears a circlet with rosettes around his head¹⁹ and holds a cup to his mouth in one hand and a flower in the other.²⁰ Before the official stand two offering tables (one typically Egyptian, one perhaps more Achaemenid) and two people in typical Late Period Egyptian costume making offerings. The exact identity of the recipient of the offerings and of the offering bearers is uncertain (perhaps the principal offerer is DjedHorBes, the recipient his father Artames) and the absence of titles for either father or son has been the point of some discussion (Mathieson et al. 1995, p. 38).

There is a good deal of evidence of foreigners living in Egypt during the Saite and Persian periods, especially mercenaries²¹ and merchants, located in the Delta in the Memphite/Saqqara area and at Elephantine.²² Among the people attested in written records found at Saqqara are people with names that can be classified as Carian, Aramaean (non-Jewish), Babylonian, Sidonian, Moabite, Ionian, Cretan(?), Hyrcanian, Lydian, and Arab (Segal 1983). The presence of Greeks is attested archaeologically as well as textually.²³ Nesuhor,²⁴ the Overseer of Doors of/to Southern Foreign Lands, i.e., the chief of the garrison at Elephantine, under the Saite King Apries, refers in a hieroglyphic inscription to *s.t qsn.t m-ꜥ pdtyw ꜥmw hꜥw-nbw sttyw kyw* “difficulty from soldiers (literally, bowmen), ꜥmw-Asiatics, Greeks, sttyw-Asiatics, and others.” Presumably he is referring to a rebellion by the garrison stationed at Elephantine. In any case, this inscription seems to imply that the soldiers in this garrison included people from two different Asiatic groups.²⁵

This same distinction between two Asiatic groups of mercenaries is found in a Demotic document from Elephantine dated to year 41 of the following Saite ruler Amasis (529 B.C.).²⁶ This text lists individuals participating in an expedition to Nubia under Amasis. These individuals are divided into groupings defined by the term *rmꜥ* “man (of).”²⁷ The groups mentioned include *rmꜥ H(ꜥ)rw* “man of Khor/Syria,” using an old term for Syria, and *rmꜥ ꜥꜥswr* using the new term frequently translated “Assyria.” The basis for differentiation could have been geographical place of origin, as suggested by Erichsen (1941, p. 59, n. v), who identifies the two groups as Palestinians and Syrians. However, since in Demotic *shꜥ ꜥꜥswr* means Aramaic writing,²⁸ it seems possible that *rmꜥ*

19. This is the earliest attestation of this circlet or ringlet; see Briant 1996c, p. 20.

20. Briant (1996c, p. 20) finds a parallel for the man raising the cup to his mouth and holding the flower in a sealing from the Murashu archive from Babylonia (Legrain 1925, pl. 59, sealing #984).

21. Thus, the graffiti left by troops of Psammetichus II at Abu Simbel during the war of Psammetichus with the Ethiopians show the Egyptian forces to have included Carians, Ionians, Rhodians, and Phoenicians. Leaders of the troops, Psammetichus, the son of Theokles, and Ebedptah, the son of Jagureshmun, have been suggested to be, respectively, a Greek and a Phoenician born in Egypt (so Porten 1968, p. 9, with references in footnotes 29–30). Recently a small Egyptian cube statue dedicated in Greek by a man named Pedon, the son of Amphinneus, who served as a mercenary under King Psammetichus, was found near Priene, Turkey (Şahin 1987). The statue itself can be dated stylistically to the time of Psammetichus I (Ampolo and Bresciani 1988; Yoyotte and Masson 1988); Yoyotte argues that the inscription is contemporary and Pedon served Psammetichus I; Bresciani leaves open the possibility that the inscription is secondary and that the king served by Pedon was Psammetichus II.

22. For example, the Egyptianizing stela, sarcophagi, and graffiti mentioned above as well as the extensive Aramaic docu-

mentation of both Jewish and non-Jewish “detachments,” especially those located in the Aswan area (discussed, e.g., in Porten 1968).

23. See, for example, Boardman 1980; Coulson and Leonard 1981; and the list of Greek names, with city-ethnic designations, dating from the middle of the fourth century (SB V 8306).

24. Otto 1954, p. 163, #25a, and bibliography mentioned by Porten 1968, p. 15, n. 55.

25. Porten (1968, p. 15) assumes the reference to refer to Jews and Aramaeans.

26. P. Berlin 13615, originally published by Erichsen (1941); more fragments are discussed by Zauzich (1992).

27. A term regularly used in descriptions of military men where “man of” may indicate, among other things, the place of origin of foreign mercenaries or the place where native Egyptian soldiers were stationed. One of the terms for Egyptian soldiers rather frequently attested during the Saite and Persian periods is *rmꜥ d(ꜥ)m* “man of the generation (eligible for conscription),” which seems to have been the source for Herodotus’s much-discussed Ἑρμοτύβιτες (Thissen 1994, pp. 89–91).

28. See, for example, the record of Darius’s call for the compilation of the laws of Egypt, of which copies were to be made

'Išwr indicates not so much a man from *'Išwr* "Assyria" as a speaker of Aramaic. If this is so, such a categorization would fit with the Egyptian use of language as a major criterion of ethnics.²⁹ In any case, it is clear that there were recognized groups of foreigners, with what may be ethnic identifications, in place in Egypt at the time of the Persian invasion. Whatever modifications the Persians made, they made them within an ongoing system.

Egyptians writing documents in Egyptian, both Demotic and hieroglyphic, continued to identify themselves by their name, patronymic (and occasionally matronymic), and less consistently, profession. Even in documents dealing with Persian officials, Egyptians normally identified themselves by their name only or by their name and title, although they might indicate the foreign origin of the Persian official by including at the end of his name the determinative that indicated a foreign name.³⁰ Examples of ethnics in Egyptian documents of the Persian period are quite rare. In the Demotic record there is one reference to a Blemmye, one to a *mty* "Mede," one broken reference to Medes, one reference to a Libyan, one to an Ethiopian, two to Assyrian/Aramaeans, one possible reference to a Greek, and a likely ethnic that is broken and uncertain.³¹ An execration text from Saqqara (dated palaeographically to the early Ptolemaic period, although the contents may, perhaps, date earlier) mentions both Egyptian and foreign rulers, including *p: wr n p: t: Hr* "the ruler of the country of Khor/Syria" and *p: ts n n: Yhytw* "the (military) commander of the Jews" (Ray 1978, p. 29). Other Egyptian documents from Saqqara mention both Medes (i.e., Persians) and Greeks (including the Quarter of the Greeks) as well as people with Persian names (Smith 1992). A fragmentary literary text³² found at Saqqara contains two references to *Hry* "Syria/Syrians."

The use of possible ethnics was more common in some Aramaic documents, both private documents (Elephantine) and administrative records such as the Aramaic document from Saqqara, probably from the dockyards, mentioning Greeks and Carians (Segal 1983, pp. 41–43).³³ Similarly, the customs account from 475 B.C.

in *sh išr sh š't* "Aramaic and Demotic (Egyptian) (literally, document-writing)" (P. Bibliothèque Nationale 215 verso, c/14, published in Spiegelberg 1914); for a recent discussion of the term, see Steiner 1993.

29. A third ethnic term in P. Berlin 13615 is not *rmṯ T: Nḥsy*, an otherwise unattested circumlocution for *Nḥsy* "Nubian," but *rmṯ Stm-mnt*, perhaps to be understood as "man of 'Asia'" combining two very old terms, *Stt* and *Mntyw* (as Zauzich 1992). If so, this term could correspond to *sttyw*-Asiatics in Nesuhor's inscription, leaving his *'mw*-Asiatics to correspond to *rmṯ H(:)rw*, the new term *rmṯ 'Išwr*, or the two together.
30. For example, in P. Loeb 1, dated to year 36 of Darius I (as Hughes 1984, pp. 76–77). In this text a person with a Persian name had overridden an instruction given to a person with an Egyptian name by another person with an Egyptian name; the Egyptian to whom the instruction had been given originally is complaining to the local Persian official before whom the original instruction had been given. In the text, Egyptian names are written normally, without any ethnic identification since the assumption was that they were Egyptians, but the Persian names consistently include the foreigner determinative.
31. P. Rylands 9 (Griffith 1909) is a long petition to a high official with an unreadable title (perhaps to be read *t:ty* "vizier" or *sd:w.ty / htm.ty* "sealbearer"; for discussion, see Tait 1977, pp. 30–32, n. m) from the reign of Darius I by a priest of Amun of (GN) Teudjoy. The priest recounts how his ancestor's prebend in the temple of Amun of Teudjoy had been stolen by other priests and asks for its return. At one point, the high Persian official told a man with an Egyptian name and priestly title to go with the complainant to investigate. This man stalled for some time and finally told another man to go and investigate, which he did. The second man is identified as *W:h-ib-R'-mry-R'* (?) (a perfectly good Egyptian name, based on the royal name *W:h-ib-R'* "Apries"), the Blemmye

(*p: Blhm*); for the reading, see Černý 1958, pp. 203–04. Blemmyes are also noted in Ptolemaic documents (especially the so-called Hauswaldt papyri from the Edfu area). The same P. Rylands 9 also seems to contain the last reference to the old Libyan military title Chief of the Me(shwesh); see Ritner 1990. The supposed Greek mentioned in a loan of year 16 of Nectanebo II (i.e., just before the re-incorporation of Egypt into the Persian Empire) has a good Egyptian name and patronymic, and the reading *wy[nn]* "Gr[reek]" has been questioned (Vleeming 1984, p. 354). A badly broken contract dated to year 3 of Achoris (Twenty-ninth Dynasty; P. Cairo 50099, line 1) seems to have been made by a *mty* "Mede" whose name began *Ps* (since the name was written alphabetically, it was probably foreign and could easily have been Persian). Two unpublished letters from Elephantine now in Berlin are said to contain references to an Ethiopian (P. Berlin 23639) and an Assyrian (*rmṯ 'Išwr?*; P. Berlin 15808). A document from Saqqara dated (palaeographically) to the Persian period includes the statement by a man named *Hr-hb: hwn-n:w inḳ p: b:k w' Pyt* "I was the servant of a Libyan" (P. Cairo 50072, line 6). Another document from Saqqara mentions *rmṯ.rm.* (with foreigner determinative) *Dd-hr (s:) Gre*, but how the broken word should be restored is unclear (Smith 1992, p. 396).

32. P. Saqqara 27, lines 1, 21 (Smith and Tait 1983, pp. 199–200, with n. d).
33. However, as remarked by Bezalel Porten (personal communication, December 1995), the ethnic designations in Aramaic documents are limited to foreigners: "The two true Egyptians who appear are civilians. They are not called 'Egyptian,' as the Jews and Aramaeans and Khwarezmians, etc., are called by their ethnics, but simply 'architect of Syene' or 'architect of the king' (TAD B2.6:2, 2.8:2)." A native is a native and doesn't have to be so designated. Although it is far beyond the reach or concern of

(Porten and Yardeni 1993; Yardeni 1994), recording customs duties levied on incoming or outgoing ships, regularly provided an ethnic identification of all captains.³⁴ Since customs rates were 1/10 on the smaller “Phoenician” ships but 1/5 on Greek ships, I wonder whether this reflects an attempt by the Persians to redirect Egyptian trade away from Greece and back within the Persian Empire, as suggested by Harrison (n.d.) on the basis of published archaeological materials in Egypt.

Both Demotic and Aramaic materials from Saqqara show mixed names (Semitic/Egyptian, Iranian/Egyptian) and people with different types of names interacting in the same document. Smith (1992, p. 299) summarizes:

... the well-known fact that the population of Memphis in the 5th–4th centuries was of very mixed [racial] origin, and that it was a truly cosmopolitan city. Aside from the onomastic interest of the names, what is impressive is how foreigners and people of foreign parentage appear in almost every class of Egyptian document, however ephemeral, mixed with pure Egyptians, taking part in Egyptian religious practices, Egyptian legal cases, Egyptian official, social, and domestic life. The value of finds like the Saqqara papyri, containing many very fragmentary documents, almost worthless in themselves, is that they tend to illustrate this sort of inter-communal penetration more fully than smaller collections of documents of much greater individual worth.

One extremely interesting small document found at Saqqara was a question directed to an oracle that asks whether *Gyg*, the Syrian or Aramaean (*'Išwr*), the wife of *Brq* (*Baraq*), will go to the land of *Hr* in a certain month. It is uncertain to which deity the question was directed; what is most interesting is that an Aramaean woman asking a deity whether she should travel to Aram posed the question not in Aramaic but in Demotic (Smith 1992, p. 298).³⁵

There is an “us (Jews) against them (Egyptians)” feeling found repeatedly in documents from the Jewish garrison at Elephantine. For example, when they were petitioning for permission to rebuild their Temple in Elephantine, they claimed special (or at least fair) treatment because they, the Jews, had not rebelled when Egyptian detachments did (Porten 1968, p. 279).³⁶ When describing the destruction of their Temple, the Jews state that Nefayan, the son of Vidranga, “led out Egyptians with other forces,” but they blame the destruction totally on the priests of the god Khnum and the corruptness of Vidranga, whom they claim must have been bribed by them.³⁷ No parallel anti-Jewish attitude is found in Egyptian documents. There is nothing in Egyptian documents to substantiate Porten’s (1968) repeated suggestion that the Egyptians, who after all had been defeated by Persians, perceived the Jews who were working in their employ as members of a hated ruling class. One must conclude with Briant (1996a, p. 130) “La destruction du temple de Yahweh n’est pas d’abord le résultat ou la manifestation exacerbée d’une haine ethnique et religieuse relayée par de hauts administrateurs perses tout acquis à la foi de Khnum (‘égyptophilie’) et/ou désireux de calmer la ‘flambée nationaliste,’ y compris en portant gravement tort à des garnisaires fidèles à la cause impériale.”

There are several comments, hardly conclusions, that one can note with regard to the questions asked and the material surveyed here. Individuals could have two or more ethnic identities (either within one phase of their life or during the course of their life) depending on the “others” to whom they were relating, and on what

this paper, it is worth noting (as did Porten) that in Biblical material “natives” do sometimes get labeled (e.g., in the story of Joseph in Egypt, with its Egyptian setting, Potiphar, identified as a high official of the king of Egypt, is still labeled an “Egyptian”) and in many of the Biblical passages where Jews are labeled they are in a foreign context (Moses and the Jews in exile in Egypt, Joseph in service to Potiphar, Mordecai serving the Persian king).

34. Of those for which the information is preserved, larger ships, carrying Ionian wine, among other things, all had Ionian captains; smaller ships carried Sidonian wine, among other things, leading the editors to suggest that the captains were Phoenicians.
35. There is no way to ascertain from this small text whether the deity being questioned was an Egyptian deity or whether Demotic was used because there was no scribe or priest available to write or present the question in Aramaic. It should be noted that Demotic script was used to write Aramaic by the scribe of P. Amherst 63 (see the bibliography in

Fitzmyer and Kaufman 1992, B.3.f.27, pp. 143–44, to which can be added Steiner 1995; Steiner and Moshavi 1995).

36. This passage contains the only reference to *diglin* of Egyptians (Cowley 1923, #27, lines 1 ff.; Porten and Yardeni 1986, A4.5).
37. For the plausible reconstruction that Vidranga’s decision in favor of the Egyptian temple of Khnum was a legal decision (not a social, cultural, religious, or ethnic decision) based on the application of local Egyptian law and the possible inability of the Jews to document ownership rights to the property on which the Jewish temple stood, see Briant 1996a, especially pp. 122–28. There he also notes (p. 123) that it was common in the Persian Empire for a son to serve under and follow his father in office and so it would have been quite natural that Vidranga, when he was promoted from chief of the garrison to governor, would appoint his son chief of the garrison in his place. It was in his role as chief of the garrison, not as son of a compromised Vidranga, that Nefayan was carrying out the judicial order of the governor.

terms. A Carian soldier living in Memphis might see himself and be seen as Carian vis-à-vis his Egyptian neighbors and see himself and be seen as Egyptian vis-à-vis Carians back home. Similarly, the man with a Babylonian name who was head of a detachment in Elephantine might have thought of himself and been thought of as a Babylonian by himself and by the Persians for and with whom he worked, but at least in some situations he might have been thought of as a Persian by members of his detachment and various Egyptians, Jews, and Aramaeans with whom he came in contact.

One situation where we have people who are clearly identified by two different ethnics are individuals mentioned in the Aramaic documents from Elephantine, sometimes called “Jew of Elephantine,” other times “Aramaean” and/or “of Syene” in others.³⁸ Based on secondary sources, I wonder whether Aramaean as used in Persian-period documents from Egypt is a general ethnic term, perhaps even recognized by the Persian government to categorize or describe all (Jewish and pagan) Aramaic-speaking people. The term Jew would be an informal or social “self-ascriptive” ethnic used by and about Jews to distinguish Jewish Aramaeans from “other” Aramaeans. Jews always had the option to use the generic Aramaic; perhaps they made a point of using the term “Jew” rather than “Aramaean” when making contracts with non-Jews or when writing a letter to Jewish officials of the Persian administration,³⁹ where use of the “in-group” term might help bring about the desired response. One might also consider whether different scribes (Jewish and non-Jewish) were more likely to use the more specific and less formal ethnic “Jew” rather than the more general “Aramaean.”⁴⁰ Similarly, since the main administration for Aswan was at Syene, all stationed in Aswan could be called “of Syene,” but those on Elephantine could also be classified more specifically as “of Elephantine.” Such a theory would explain why Jews and Aramaeans served in the same detachment (*dgl*) — administratively and officially they were all the same ethnic; the subdivision was social, not formal or official.⁴¹

The hypothesis that the term “Jew” was a more specific social ethnic differentiating Jews from other Aramaeans would not, however, explain why a man with an Egyptian name and patronymic Pa-Khnum (the man belonging to the god Khnum), son of Besa, was called an Aramaean of Syene (Kraeling 1953, #11). In non-Elephantine Aramaic documents from Egypt, there is frequent intermixing of Egyptian and Aramaean names among father, son, and grandson.⁴² In the Saqqara documents, one of four people labeled Aramaean has an Egyptian name; there are father-son and sibling pairs with mixed Egyptian/Semitic names.⁴³ In the Elephantine Demotic papyrus with lists of people participating in the expedition to Nubia under the Saite King Amasis, lists of Assyrians (who are suggested here to be Aramaic speakers) include people whose name and patronymic are both Semitic, whose name is Egyptian but patronymic is Semitic, and whose name and patronymic are both Egyptian. The easiest explanation involves the tendency of (some) immigrant mercenaries to give their children Egyptian names as they began to assimilate or at least began identifying themselves with or as Egyptians.⁴⁴ Following such a scenario, Pa-Khnum could easily be a third (or later) generation Aramaean born in Egypt and given an Egyptian name. The ethnic term Aramaean might or might not say much about such a man’s “culture,” religious affiliation, or mother tongue, but it continued to serve the useful administrative function of identifying his place in the Elephantine bureaucracy.

38. Porten (1968) suggests that references to Jews as Aramaeans probably were based on language.

39. For example, Jedaniah and his colleagues to Bagohi, the governor of Judah, asking permission to rebuild the Temple.

40. See the notes and discussion in Porten 1996.

41. I now turn from speculation to wild speculation. In a fifth-century deed of gift or exchange between a woman named Mibtahiah and Asori, the two women are called sisters, daughters of Gemariah (Cowley 1923, #43; Porten and Yardeni 1986, B5.5, a “mutual quitclaim”; Fitzmyer and Kaufman 1992, B.3.c.10). Mibtahiah is described, following Porten’s (1989, pp. 174–76) reconstruction, as “[a Jewess] of Elephantine the fortress (and) an Aramean according to her detachment (*dgl*)” and Asori is described as “a Jewess of the same [detachment].” Since both sisters are members of the same detachment, and since both Jews and Aramaeans could serve in the same detachment, the meaning of the phrase “Aramaean according to her detachment” is far from clear.

Porten notes that the reconstructed double designation “[Jew(ess)] of Elephantine, Aramean according to detachment” is unique to Mibtahiah and that Asori’s name appears to be Egyptian. If my hypothesis is correct that all Jews could be called Aramaeans, then stressing the “Aramaeaness” of Mibtahiah in contrast to Asori might have indicated that Mibtahiah had abandoned her Jewish faith and reverted to being only an Aramaean. Indeed, Cowley suggested that Mibtahiah’s identification as an Aramaean may have resulted from marriage or something similar.

42. See especially the so-called Hermopolis papyri (Fitzmyer and Kaufman 1992, B.3.b.1, pp. 55–56).

43. In the Aramaic texts from Saqqara, 46% of the personal names are Egyptian, 12% are Iranian, and 30% are Semitic (Segal 1983, pp. 8–9).

44. There would be no need to assume any intermarriage with Egyptians: the tendency to name a child after a grandparent would lead to some “unexpected” Egyptian fathers with Semitic sons.

Especially at Elephantine, we see a foreign group, Jews, working as a community (e.g., the Jewish leaders write on behalf of the Jewish community when trying to get permission to rebuild their Temple). At Saqqara, too, evidence can be interpreted (without forcing it) to see foreign groups acting in concert as communities. But clearly these communities were not a geographical term.⁴⁵ Rather, from an Egyptological point of view, these terms seem to reflect an organizational scheme imposed by the Persians (or their predecessors?), providing an administrative structure within which they could structure and control a (large) group of “out-of-place” people in a way benefiting the Persian officials (i.e., it gives the Persian officials a chain of command for dealing with foreigners in Persian service).⁴⁶ It was secondarily useful, or made useful, by foreign communities as well.

But these formal organizational structures were not needed in Egypt of the Persian period. Egypt already had a well-organized, long-tested formal chain of command. Egyptians had interest groups (based especially on profession, family, and religious affiliation) that took care of them. Some Egyptians, and especially high Egyptian officials who owed their position, power, and wealth to the Saite dynasty, must have resented the Persian takeover and the appointment of Persian officials at the top levels of the existing administrative (not the social or religious) structure in Memphis and the provinces. But it is precisely for the early years of Persian rule in Egypt that there exists the strongest evidence for high-level Egyptian participation in the administration. Statues of such high Egyptian officials occasionally show them wearing lion torques or other “Persian” items, honoring their Persian masters, and/or showing off the rewards they received from the king.⁴⁷ Most of what had been identified as Persian innovation⁴⁸ has now been shown actually to develop during the Saite period and thus has no political or ethnic overtones at all (Johnson 1994, pp. 158–59, n. 43). In addition, these so-called collaborators⁴⁹ can be understood as working not merely for their own gain (as always with Egyptian bureaucrats) but to preserve Egyptian culture and enhance Egyptian input into the foreign administration (Holm-Rasmussen 1988; see also Briant 1988, pp. 158–59; Briant 1996b, p. 499).

Demotic documents provide examples of incompetent Persian officials, unwilling or unable to adjust to the peculiarities of the Egyptian situation. That seems to be the situation in P. Loeb 1, dated to year 36 of Darius I, in which a Persian countermanded the orders of an Egyptian concerning the storage of grain. The writer of the text, an Egyptian, complains to the Persian official in whose presence the original order had been given that the revised orders left the grain unprotected from local brigands. As Hughes (1984, pp. 85–86) notes, “The Egyptian knew this but the Persian official did not and would not listen. . . . The letter thus deals with a purely local situation, which was no doubt a very normal one, without implications beyond an Egyptian’s impatience and frustration with the ignorance of local conditions and intractability on the part of a Persian functionary whom he could not dissuade except by resorting to a superior Persian official.” However, ethnicity was not a significant factor⁵⁰ in Egypt’s anti-Persian rebellions — led by descendants of the Libyans who had ruled in and from the Delta, an area from which we have few records. The Persians seem to have given special attention to the Memphite and Theban areas, and there is no evidence of popular support in those areas for the Delta chieftains.⁵¹ Rather, the rebellions in the Delta reflect a power struggle between the “ins” and “outs,” just as, during the rest of pharaonic history, if an “outgroup” was strong enough, had good-enough leaders, and enough money, they might fight the current regime, and they might win.

45. Wherever we have sufficient information from Persian-period Egypt to be able to identify (or guess) the ethnic identity of people living in proximity, neighborhoods are clearly not exclusive; using only names as the criterion, both Saqqara and Elephantine show a mix of Egyptians, Semites (Jews, Aramaeans, Babylonians), Greeks, Persians, and others (including Caspians, Khorazmians). This is true not just on a general level but, clearly at Elephantine, on a house-by-house level.

46. Bezael Porten (personal communication, 1995), too, suggests that the continued use of the ethnic terminology might be the result of community: “It’s the immigrant who requires special designation and as long as immigrants remain in organized communities their descendants will continue to bear the original designation.”

47. For the king to reward dutiful officials and valorous military service with golden jewelry and other tokens or emblems of extraordinary service was typical of both Egyptian and Per-

sian kings (Yoyotte and Masson 1988, p. 177; Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1988; Briant 1996b, p. 499).

48. It was never clear whether such items were supposed to have been formally introduced by the Persians or were just co-terminus with their appearance and used by Egyptians and Persians to define themselves as Egyptians serving a good, albeit Persian, king.

49. The use of this term in the Egyptian context was influenced by Egyptologists who lived and wrote during the Second World War (e.g., Klasens 1946).

50. For a recent discussion of the causes of Egyptian rebellions against the Persians, see, for example, Briant 1988.

51. The Egyptian documents cited as containing references to rebellion do not contain such references; see, for example, Hughes 1984, pp. 85–86, on P. Loeb 1. The clear anti-Persian (literally, anti-Mede) statements in the so-called Demotic Chronicle (P. Bibliothèque Nationale 215) are framed within a statement outlining proper kingship. The

The Persians may well have undertaken some systematizing or organizing;⁵² for example, Darius had the Egyptian laws translated, presumably so Persian officials could know what they were and apply them generally and broadly. Similarly, the convergence in form (whether the underlying system was identical or not) of such Demotic and Aramaic economic documents as loans, sales, and transfers of property (Porten 1968, Appendix 6; Porten 1992) perhaps reflects the need for all these to be registered with one central administration.⁵³ But it is hard to see ethnicity as a factor in changes that the Persians made in order to integrate Egypt into the empire, changes such as the establishment of Aramaic as the official administrative language, the replacement of the old Egyptian (grain) measure with the Persian *artaba* (*LÄ* 3 “Masse und Gewichte,” col. 1210),⁵⁴ or the introduction of a Persian, or royal, silver standard.⁵⁵ The imposition of the *artaba* remained in use into the Coptic period, but even though Aramaic was the official language, correspondence between Egyptians and Persians, even the highest ranking Persians, could be carried out in Demotic.⁵⁶ Here it is important to note that Demotic and Aramaic social documents (e.g., marriage contracts; see Porten 1968, pp. 340–43), unlike economic documents, reflect major distinctions between the two groups. These distinctions presumably result from the lack of interest, and lack of interference, on the part of the Persian administration in the social and cultural concerns of the population, i.e., those concerns that could serve as the basis for social ethnics as discussed above.⁵⁷

Thus, from the Egyptian point of view, study of ethnicity in Persian-period Egypt is the study of foreigners, especially foreign communities, and their relations with one another and with the administration.

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- name calling may reflect the real attitude of (some) high-level Egyptians; however, since the text we have was written during the early Ptolemaic period, the anti-Persian sentiments of the Greeks may have influenced the Egyptian text (Johnson 1983, 1984).
52. Various documents reflect the hierarchic nature of the Egyptian bureaucracy under the Persians (e.g., P. Rylands 9) and the detailed records and accounting that were required, but there is nothing “un-Egyptian” or inherently Persian in either the nature or mechanics of this bureaucracy. For example, one of the Aramaic Arsames letters records correspondence between the satrap and high-ranking Persian and Egyptian officials in Elephantine concerning the repairs to a boat belonging to the government and used by Egyptian boatmen employed by the government. But, as noted by Briant (1996b, p. 464), the concern that the old wooden planks removed from the boat during repairs be returned to the government is a very Egyptian concern, reflecting the scarcity of wood there.
53. Egyptian land-transfer documents were, from at least the Middle Kingdom on, registered with the central administration; frequently it is stated that they are registered in the office of the vizier. See Johnson 1996, p. 215, n. 22.
54. The Persians also introduced the *artaba* in Babylonia; see Briant (1996b, p. 426) for a discussion of possible implications of the introduction of this new measure.
55. The Persian silver standard appears in Aramaic documents although Demotic documents continued to use the Egyptian silver standards of Ptah or Amun.
56. For example, P. Loeb 1 and the correspondence between the priests of Khnum, of Elephantine, and the satrap Pharendates concerning the appointment of the new *lesonis* for the temple. P. Berlin 13539, from the priests to Pharendates, is written in “strictly idiomatic Demotic”; P. Berlin 13540, from Pharendates to the priests, “contains the unmistakable marks of a literal translation from an Aramaic original draft” (Hughes 1984, pp. 84, 77). The Demotic documents include occasional Persian technical or administrative terms, usually bureaucratic titles, but the extent to which these and Persian titles and orders of hierarchy found in Aramaic documents reflect significant changes in the administration is not altogether clear.
57. I have argued elsewhere that one of the major contributions of the Persians to the development of Egyptian culture during this period was the Persians’ *laissez-faire* attitude, allowing the continuing development of local culture without imposition from the Persians (Johnson 1994, especially p. 159).

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