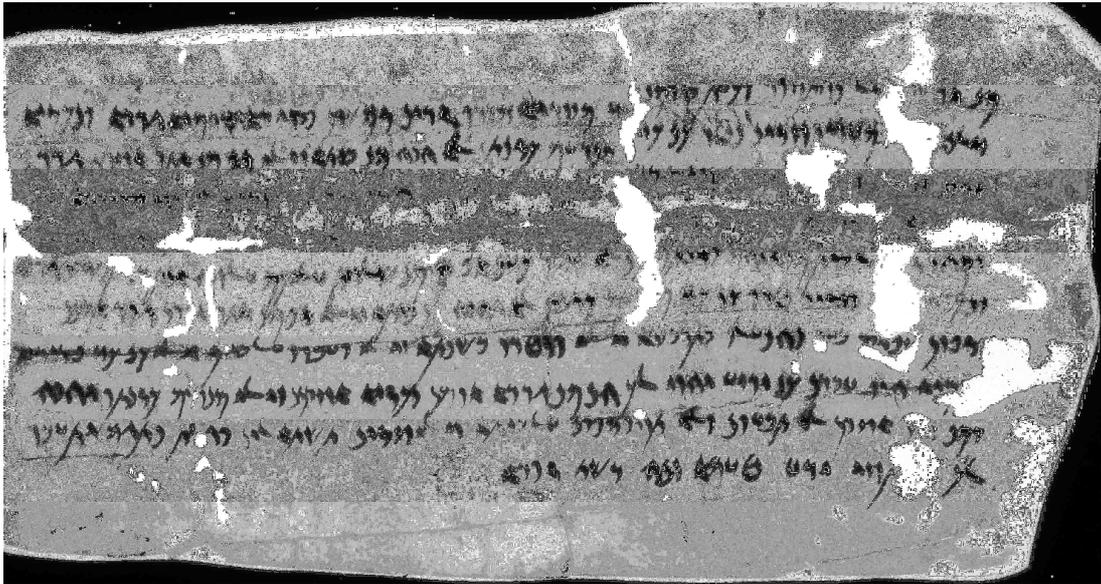


THE ARSHAMA LETTERS FROM THE BODLEIAN LIBRARY



Volume 1

INTRODUCTION

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Christopher Tuplin
Lindsay Allen

December 2013

The Arshama Letters from the Bodleian Letters

Vol. 1 Introduction

Vol. 2 Text, translation and glossary

Vol. 3 Commentary

Vol. 4. Abbreviations and Bibliography

Available for download at <http://arshama.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/publications/>

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INTRODUCTION

John Ma

The Bodleian Library now possesses a remarkable body of material from the Persian Empire: a set of letters on parchment, written in 'Imperial Aramaic', the administrative language and *lingua franca* in the empire, a set of clay sealings (7 from the same seal), and the fragments of two leather bags in which this assemblage is supposed to have been stored. This material appeared in Berlin in the 1930s, and was acquired during the Second World War by the Bodleian:¹ the circumstances, and the nature of the assemblage, are discussed here by L. Allen, and much remains unclear about this cache. What is clear, from the text of the letters, is that they concern the affairs of a figure named Arshama, who can securely be identified with the fifth-century satrap of Egypt in the days of the Persian king Darius II. What we do know (and what we cannot say with certainty) about this man, Arshama, 'son of the house' (to use the periphrase designating princes of the Achaemenid royal dynasty), is explored below by C.J.Tuplin. These substantial introductory essays, in addition to presenting original sources on the objects and their history, or on the complicated, multi-lingual evidence relating to Arshama, are meant to help the reader to contextualise the letters themselves. The text of the letters is presented with a literal translation, by David Taylor, in volume 2 of *The Arshama Letters from the Bodleian Library*; furthermore, the letters receive extensive commentary by C.J.Tuplin in volume 3.

This multi-volume e-publication is an initial output, experimental in form and content, of an ongoing interdisciplinary and inter-institutional research project (which started with an AHRC-funded Research Network based in Oxford in 2010-11)² on these documents relating to Arshama, Achaemenid prince, in his world. The ultimate aim of this research project is the full scholarly presentation, in the form of a multi-authored volume (*Arshama and Egypt: The World of an Achaemenid Prince*) of all the documents and materials relating to Arshama (parchment, papyri and clay documents in Aramaic, Demotic and Akkadian, and the Bodleian artifacts); as in the present work, this material will be studied and contextualized by a series of essays on historical context, administrative practice, the languages of empire, Achaemenid art, Achaemenid Egypt, and generally the Achaemenid world of which Arshama was a privileged member, known through a small, yet extraordinarily informative and evocative body of evidence.

The full diversity of this material—the textual and documentary evidence involves four different languages (including the Greek of literary sources)—is a reflexion of the richness and diversity of Achaemenid studies. Such diversity explains why interdisciplinary networks have been a favourite way of approaching Achaemenid history. This field explores the history of an imperial state that ruled for some two centuries over diverse communities (from the Aegean to Central Asia), from the rapid creation of a new Near-eastern imperial order, to its destruction and transformation by Macedonian aggression in the decade 336-323; this empire existed by combining attention to local conditions with a strong central apparatus of control and extraction. The study of the Achaemenid world involves archaeology, art

¹ The material is presented photographically on a dedicated Bodleian website, jointly set up at the initiative of J. Stökl: <http://arshama.bodleian.ox.ac.uk>.

² The aims and activities of this network are listed at <http://arshama.classics.ox.ac.uk>; this website also includes supporting materials, such as versions of papers delivered at the various workshops, or D. Taylor's teaching materials for Achaemenid Aramaic (from the 'turbo-Aramaic' language classes, and the extended programme of reading classes, which combined to form one of the mainstays of the 'Arshama project').

history, epigraphy, papyrology, philology and literary interpretation, political and narrative historiography, and hence crosses major disciplinary boundaries, notably between ‘Classical’ ancient history and the history of the ancient Near East. The development of Achaemenid studies is arguably one of the most exciting and fertile innovations of the last few decades in the study of the ancient world.

How do the letters preserved in the Bodleian contribute ? They constitute a small archive, made up of for the main part of letters from Arshama, addressed from Babylonia to people in Egypt— a fellow Persian high-official, an Achaemenid military commander, and, especially, the Egyptians Psamšek and Nakhtḥor, Arshama's *pqydyn* or managers in Egypt. It is likely that the Bodleian cache of letters comes from Nakhtḥor's personal 'papers', since it also contains a few letters from other Persians to the *pqyd*. The cache does not constitute a full archive, and does not allow for detailed micro-history, or historical biography, or even, at the simplest level, a coherent and well-situated narrative of some events in the Achaemenid satrapy of Egypt. What the small body of ‘Arshama letters’ (or perhaps better ‘Nakhtḥor letters’) does is to offer a vivid snapshot of social, economic, cultural, organisational and political aspects of the empire as lived by a member of the Achaemenid elite and his entourage. *En vrac*, these aspects include accountancy-culture, land tenure, satrapal remuneration, corvée labour, cross-regional ethnic movement, storage and disbursement of resources for state use, military systems, long-distance travel, the employment of skilled craftsmen, religious language and belief. The Bodleian Aramaic letters thus resemble, in the richness of their contribution, the recently published letters from Bactria (Shaked and Naveh 2012), which come from another Achaemenid province, some eighty years later (around the time when Alexander’s expedition put an end to the Achaemenid order, by military conquest and by the appropriation and turning of the various elements of the imperial apparatus). The exploration of the topics outlined above, in the light of the comparable data from other well-defined documentary ensembles such as the Bactrian letters, illuminates the content, manner and limits of provincial government in the Achaemenid empire. Though the Arshama letters have often been referred to in Achaemenid studies, they have never received sustained historical analysis.

‘From Arshama to Nakhtḥor: and now...’— not micro-history, but a series of illuminating and precise insights into the workings and the nature of a vast, multi-ethnic empire. Some interconnected, recurring themes are particularly rich and thought-provoking for scholars of the Achaemenid world, but also for historians of empire more generally. The first theme is, most obviously, ‘bureaucracy’, or rather the role of written communication in maintaining control and in constructing a space and a community of knowledge that is the concrete, practical form taken by imperial power.³ The modalities of communication, the significance of variation, the different geographical locales involved (Babylon, Susa, Egypt), the presence of different officials at both ends of the communicative transaction (‘scribes’, ‘accountants’, or simply Nakhtḥor’s ‘colleagues’, *knwth*), all these issues repay close study, and are explored in the commentary to the Bodleian letters. Such lines of communication also involved matters of imperial administration, as shown by the papyrus letters relating to the Jewish garrison at Elephantine, not included here, but to be studied in the forthcoming full publication of Arshama-related material.

Communication in Aramaic unites, across the space of empire, a number of agents of different ethnicities, from the Persian Arshama to the Egyptian *pkydyn* or mysterious Cilician ‘pressers’ (thirteen slaves of Arshama, with their diverse onomastics: A6.7). This diversity

³ Bertrand 1990, 2006, are examples of the analysis of the circulation of the written word as constitute of imperial power in the case of the Hellenistic kingdoms. Similar analyses will be proposed in Ma & Tuplin (forthcoming) by J. Hilder and J. Ma.

reflects the situation of the Achaemenid empire, which was structured by the relations between an empire-wide dominant ‘ethno-class’ (P.Briant) of Iranian extraction, and local populations, and the movement of individuals and groups within the empire. Hence the Cilician workers; but the phenomenon is known everywhere, especially in the Persian heartland around Persepolis,⁴ or at Elephantine, where a Jewish garrison had difficult relations with the local priestly group of the temple of the ram-god Khnum (Arshama appears in the material from Elephantine, in some vivid documents, notably A4.5, 7, 10). The father-son succession of Egyptians in Arshama’s service (A6.4), combined with the background of generalized revolt by Egypt (A6.7, A6.10) raises the question of different choices and relations (collaboration, resistance, and what else ?) between the ‘natives’ and the masters. Arshama’s seal, whose image is preserved on the clay *bullae* in the Bodleian cache, shows ethnicity and power in another guise: the victory of a figure, visually marked as Iranian, over several foes whose costume shows them to be steppe nomads.⁵ Found in Egypt, at one end of the Achaemenid space, in the archive of an Egyptian subject state and dependent of a Persian prince, the sealings showed Achaemenid victory and dominance over non-Persians at the other, eastern end of the empire.

The multi-ethnic empire is thus run to the profit of a particular group, and the Arshama letters throw precise light on the mechanisms of control and repression— and the limits of such mechanisms. Achaemenid Egypt is held by armed forces (*hyl*), which can be occasionally be seen (A6.7, 8); in a context of revolt, a fortress (or more precisely ‘the fortress’, *byrt*’, not named in the body of A6.7, but perhaps named Mizpeh) appears, thus giving a sense of how troops and garrisons might be articulated on the ground in times of crisis.⁶

One particular form that empire took on the ground was economic exploitation. A number of actors— Egyptians as well as Persians— held land grants from the king (and from Arshama), in return for the payment of dues (A6.4, 11, 13). Most striking, though unsurprising in light of the nature of the dossier, is the importance of Arshama’s private interests as holder of a ‘house’ (the doings and welfare of ‘my house’, *byt’ zyly*, or ‘my domains’, *bg’y zyly* in Upper and Lower Egypt’ are the *leitmotiv* of the Bodleian letters). Arshama’s ‘house’ produces surplus in kind, which Arshama disburses out to dependents (this may be the case for his *pqyd* on travels, A6.9, and is explicitly seen to be happening for the artist who receives, along with his household, rations ‘as the other personnel’, A6.12). The house itself, apart from being an economic entity, is also a set of relations between the lord and his personnel, whose members Arshama often refers to as ‘my slave’, literally ‘my boy’ (*wlym’ zyly*), to express their dependency and inferiority. If the estates produce rations in kind, they also must produce rent in silver (A6.13, 14, *mndt*)— which Arshama, and others of his class, get transported overland to them in Babylonia (for what purpose ? Conspicuous expenditure, or involvement in the economy of lending in Babylonia ?). The artist on rations produces artworks, sent to Arshama (in Mesopotamia or Iran): the enjoyment of leisure goods, matched by the very high standard of craftsmanship of the leather bags, the parchment letters, the fine big clay sealings in the Bodleian assemblage, helps us understand the lifestyle of an Achaemenid prince, one of the members of the absolute top of the social pyramid of empire. Another letter (A6.10) makes starkly clear the economic basis of this lifestyle: Arshama expects his estate never to suffer losses, and his managers to guard his estate zealously, and indeed to increase it by seeking ‘personnel of artisans of every kind and

⁴ Hallock 1969; Briant, Henkelman and Stolper 2008; Henkelman forthcoming.

⁵ On the iconography see Tuplin (forthcoming [f]).

⁶ On the role of fortresses in controlling empire, and the interest as well as the difficulty in using narratives of crisis to try to understand the mechanisms of control, Tuplin 1987.

sufficient goods', to be brought to his courtyard and branded; this is also normal behaviour for the managers of other Persian 'lords' in Egypt (as Arshama notes peevishly, when remonstrating with his own man, Nakhtḥor, for dereliction). The relationship between social position, access to political power, extraction, and violence is shown to lie at the heart of the Achaemenid world.

That the Achaemenid order is institutionalised so openly to the profit of a class of Persian lords raises the question of the nature of the Achaemenid empire, a question which the Bodleian letters problematise. The word *pqyd* is used for men who are undoubtedly Arshama's private managers; but it also turns up in the crucial document enabling Nakhtḥor and his entourage to draw rations as they travel from Babylon to Egypt, which implies that the various *pqydn* have their own provinces (*mdntkm*), a terminology which might imply that the officials are imperial officials of the Achaemenid state. 'Public' and private: the terminology, however inadequate, corresponds to our understanding of the distinction between the affairs of the state (administered by Arshama the satrap, a power-holder), and private patrimonial business (managed by Arshama the lord). But the letters constantly show transactions which seem to straddle the divide. Artavanta, obviously an important Persian (A6.3, A6.4), intervenes both in the affairs of Arshama's house and in matters of land-tenure after a grant from Arshama and the king, which should belong to the 'public' or imperial sphere. The commander of a military troop is ordered to help Psamšek, Arshama's *pqyd*, 'in the affair of my estate', thus using state means for a private affair (A6.8)— though it is clear that the commander at first refused to acknowledge instructions from the *pqyd*, and the transaction needed direct intervention by Arshama, backed up by threats. This shows that the distinction between state and private is not entirely our own categorization: the distinction existed, but was porous or open to abuse, a state of affairs which is very instructive as to the workings of empire.

Again: not micro-history, but a strong sense of the texture of the Achaemenid world, and lots of interesting questions raised. The present work, in addition to its role as a forerunner to the final publication and sustained exploration of the Arshama dossier, is also meant as an invitation to read your way into these questions, within the framework of a particular test-case. The Arshama letters have long played the role of introducing ancient historians to Aramaic, and the present edition, with its presentation of the texts, translations, and glossary, complemented by teaching materials on the companion website, is meant to further this role. But the Arshama letters have also played the role of introduction to reading the Achaemenid empire, in detail: the historical commentary is there to contextualize the letters in their world. These letters, moving between Babylonia and Egypt, the master and his man, are also full of stories of movement— the artist Hinzani between Susa and Egypt, his works travelling to Mesopotamia, the Persian lords' rent being conveyed to them from the Nile valley to the Euphrates plain, Nakhtḥor riding from Babylon to Egypt, and the thirteen Cilician 'pressers', wandering around in time of revolt, before being picked up by the rebel leader, and later having to justify themselves before Artavanta and Arshama. The present work is also an invitation to follow these movements, for nothing can better make one feel what the Achaemenid empire was like.⁷

⁷ This expression is imitated from L. Robert's analysis of the discovery of identical copies of administrative documents in Asia Minor and in Iran, "rien ne peut mieux faire sentir ce qu'était l'empire séleucide" (Robert 1949, 8). I fear I already used the expression when analysing ethnicity and domination in Achaemenid art (Ma 2008).

ARSHAMA: PRINCE AND SATRAP

Christopher Tuplin

1. DEFINING THE DOSSIER

The contents of the dossier

At the heart of the Arshama project is a set of documents conserved in the Bodleian Library. But they are part of the larger set of texts that constitutes the Arshama dossier – that is, the totality of texts that certainly or possibly refer to the man. This dossier comprises 54 items drawn from three distinct contexts:

- Egypt: 38 items in three different languages
 - 35 in Aramaic: 26 form a single set from an unknown Egyptian site and 9 are from Elephantine
 - 2 in Demotic Egyptian: one is from Saqqara (Memphis), the other of unknown origin
 - 1 in Old Persian from an unknown site
- Babylonia: 13 items in Akkadian, 12 from Nippur, the other from an uncertain location.
- Greek literary tradition: three items, only one of which is of certain direct relevance.

I shall first list these items in slightly more detail, and then comment at greater length on the problems surrounding some items that are of problematic status.

EGYPT

Aramaic

Letters to or from Arshama¹

- TADE A6.3-6.16, D6.3-6.14. This is the Bodleian material and comprises 14 mostly well-preserved items and 12 extremely fragmentary ones. Subject: various - see below. Date: undated.
 - A6.3: Arshama orders the punishment of eight slaves belonging to the father of his *pqyd* Psamshek
 - A6.4: Arshama orders the transfer of a land-grant to Psamshek
 - A6.5: Arshama issues an order about Kosakan (fragmentary)
 - A6.6: Arshama issues an order of obscure content (fragmentary)
 - A6.7: Arshama orders the release of thirteen Cilician slaves
 - A6.8: Arshama orders Armapiya to obey the bailiff Psamshek
 - A6.9: Arshama authorizes daily travel rations for Nakhtḥor and thirteen others
 - A6.10: Arshama instructs his *pqyd* Nakhtḥor to preserve and enhance his estate during a time of disturbance
 - A6.11: Arshama authorizes assignment of a domain to Petosiri
 - A6.12: Arshama authorizes rations for the sculptor Hinzani and his household personnel
 - A6.13: Arshama tells his *pqyd* Nakhtḥor and other officials to ensure that Varuvahya's *pqyd* sends rent-income to Babylon

¹ In fact A6.14-16 are neither to nor from Arshama; but it seems senseless to separate them from the rest of the Bodleian set.

- A6.14: Varuvahya writes to Nakhtḥor and other officials on the issue dealt with in A6.13
- A6.15: Virafsha orders Nakhtḥor to hand over five Cilicians (in accordance with Arshama's instructions) and return misappropriated goods
- A6.16: Artahaya complains that Nakhtḥor has sent unwanted goods
- D6.3-6.14: these items are too fragmentary to yield continuous sense, though D6.7 is clearly related to A6.15.
- TADE A6.1. Subject: the sending of a "share" (*mnt*). Date: 6 November 427.
- TADE A6.2. Subject: boat repair. Date: 12 January 411.
- TADE A5.2. Subject: petition to anonymous "lord" (possibly but not certainly Arshama) about injustice. Date: after 416.

Documents referring to Arshama

- TADE A4.1. Subject: Passover regulations. Date: 419
- TADE A4.2. Subject: Report of conflict (of uncertain nature) and request for assistance. Date: undated.
- TADE A4.5. Subject: Petition to unknown addressee about temple-reconstruction. Date: not before July 410.
- TADE A4.7 & 8. Subject: Petition to Bagavahya about temple-reconstruction. Date: 25 November 407.
- TADE A4.9. Subject: Memorandum of authorization of temple-reconstruction Date: after November 407.
- TADE A4.10. Subject: Offer of payment in connection with temple-reconstruction, addressed to an anonymous "lord", possibly but not certainly Arshama. Date: after November 407.

Demotic Egyptian

Documents referring to Arshama

- Saqqara S.H5-DP 434 [2355]. Published in Smith & Martin 2010, 31-39. Subject: Report of official or judicial proceedings of uncertain nature. Date: 24 January 435.
- P.Mainz 17. Unpublished: see Vittmann 2010, 103-104. Subject: uncertain. Date: 429.

Old Persian

Document referring to Arshama

- Inscribed perfume-holder lid. Published in Michaelides 1943, 96-97. The inscription reads *Ariyāršā Aršāmhya puça* (Ariyārša, son of Aršama). See below under *Problematic items*.

BABYLONIA

Documents referring to Arshama

- Twelve texts from the Murashu archive (Nippur)
 - (a) PBS 2/1 144-148, BE 10.130-1, (b) BE 10.132, (c) BE 9.1. Subject: leases of Arshama's livestock issued by his bailiff Enlil-suppē-muḥur. Date: (a) various

dates in 22 September--9 October 413 (8-25.6.11 Darius), (b) 24 June 411 (29.3.13 Darius), (c) 1 November 404 (28.7.1 Artaxerxes).²

- EE 11 = Stolper 1985, 235-6. Subject: Lease of grain-fields, including land from Arshama's estate. Date: 10 June 425 (10.3.40 Darius)
- IMT 9 = Donbaz & Stolper 1997, 85. Subject: Lease of property by Murashu. Date: 2 March 429 (15.12.35 Artaxerxes)
- IMT 105 = Donbaz & Stolper 1997, 152-4. Subject: record of settlement of complaint brought by a servant of Arshama against the Murashu. Date: 20 March 423 (9.12. Acc. Darius)
- One non-Murashu text (also from Nippur)
 - TCL 13.203 = Moore 1935, 203. Subject: Division of land (Arshama is mentioned in a field border-definition). Date: 26 August 403 -- 23 September 403 (x.6.2 Artaxerxes)

GREEK LITERARY TRADITION

Texts referring to Arshama

- Ctesias 688 F14(38). After the suppression of Inaros' revolt in Egypt, Megabyzus appointed (*kathistêsi*) Sarsamas as satrap of Egypt. See below under *Problematic items*.
- Ctesias 688 F15(50). "Eventually Ochus got a large army and was likely to be king (*epidoxos ên basileuein*). Then Arbarius (Sogdianus' *hippeôn arkhôn*) defected to Ochus; then Arxanes, the satrap of Egypt; then Artoxares the eunuch came from Armenia to Ochus". See below under *Problematic items*.
- Polyaeus 7.28.1. Arsames captures the city of Barca treacherously after a siege. See below under *Problematic items*.

Problematic Items

Apart from TADE 4.10 and 5.2, where an anonymous "lord" might or might not be Arshama, the items of problematic status are the Old Persian inscription from Egypt and, one way or another, *all* of the Greek literary texts.³

Ariyāršā Aršāmhya puça

Michaelides wrongly read "Ariyarta, son of Artam", citing the "Ariyawrata, son of Artames" in Posener 1936: nos. 27, 31, 33, 34. (The patronymic is actually *Rtamiça- [Tavernier 2007, 298] – i.e. Artamithres, not Artames.) One may suspect that Michaelides read what he wanted to see. There is certainly no doubt that the correct reading is *Ariyāršā Aršāmhya puça*, as Mayrhofer 1964, 87 noted (cf. Mayrhofer 1978, 33 §9.6).

For Mayrhofer, the item was plainly a valid piece of evidence about Persian onomastics, and he went on to wonder whether Ariyarša might be the son of *the* Arshama – an idea that Schmitt 2006, 80 was also happy to envisage. There certainly do not appear to be

² Driver 1965, 89 is wrong to say that PBS 2/1 144 comes from 423 BC (1 Darius). Van Driel 1993, 247 n.66 reports that BE 10.132 may actually date from 29.2.13 Darius II, i.e. May, rather than June, 411. BE 9. was published as of Artaxerxes I, and so regarded in Driver 1965, 41; but the transaction is exactly like those in texts from Darius II reign, and clearly BE 9.1 must be Artaxerxes II. This view is assumed by Stolper 1985, 64.

³ For completeness' sake I note that there is no reason to think that the undated but putatively pre-Ctesian "Arsames the Persian" who was born with teeth (Ctes.688 F72) has anything to do with our Arshama. (The fragment is only doubtfully from Ctesias anyway.)

any independent dating criteria that might refute (or for that matter validate) the identification.⁴

Are there reasons to doubt the item's authenticity? It is always a possibility with unprovenanced items; and the authenticity of a Darius alabastron published by Michaelides in the same article is questioned by Westenholz & Stolper 2002, 8 (n.10), on the grounds that the name of Darius has a superfluous word divider after it, suggesting that the inscription was created from a longer text by someone (a modern forger?) whose command of the writing system was imperfect – or who was just careless. By those standards, however, the Ariyarša inscription scores well, being composed in correct Old Persian and inscribed without obvious writing errors – worth noting, given that the name Ariyarša does not exist in, and so could not be copied from, the surviving corpus of OP documents. (“Son” and “of Aršama”, by contrast, could be lifted from e.g. the opening of DB.)⁵

More troubling is whether we should expect an Old Persian text of this sort. The discovery of an Old Persian text in the Persepolis Fortification archive (Stolper & Tavernier 2007) means it is not strictly true that written Old Persian is confined to royal contexts. But that document may still be *exceptio quae probat regulam*: whatever motivated its scribe to try out Old Persian script on an administrative text, doing it in the special and in a way private environment of a government office, may tell us little about behaviour elsewhere. The suggestion has been made that the perfume jar was a votive offering. Was that an appropriate reason for someone who *might* have been the son of an Achaemenid prince to find a suitably skilled scribe to make his Old Persian mark for him? Perhaps he was even making a point in *not* having it labelled in hieroglyphic Egyptian. Or is this all a little out of proportion for a humble perfume jar?

The fact remains that inauthenticity cannot be proved. Nor can the identity of this Aršama with the Egyptian satrap. But one must say it is still a possibility.

Sarsamas and Arxanes, satraps of Egypt

We have two statements, both from Ctesias (as summarized by Photius).

- After suppressing the revolt of Inaros, Megabyzos made Sarsamas satrap of Egypt
- During the disorders after the death of Artaxerxes I, the satrap of Egypt, Arxanes, sided with the eventual victor, Darius II

The second item belongs in 424-423, squarely in the period for which Arshama's link with Egypt is attested, and it seems plain that Arxanes must be Arshama – even though the Greek form is entirely unexpected and is one for which Schmitt 2006, 78 cannot supply an explanation.

The first item takes us, on conventional chronology, to 454 and, on the recent non-conventional view of Kahn 2008, to 458/7, and it gives us a Greek form that is recognisably

⁴ By contrast Tavernier 2007 does not register Michaelides' perfume-holder lid: it does not appear s.v. Aršāma- (pp. 13,44) or s.v. *Aryāvratā- (p.117) or s.v. *R̥tama- (p.297), and the name Ariyarša is not listed at all. But this is a consequence of the way in which Tavernier's lexicon works (see 2007, 5-6). He is only interested in OP words/names for which a rendering survives in some language(s) other than Old Persian or Greek. That is not true of Ariyarša; and, although it *is* true of Aršāma-, the authentic OP form of that name is supplied by a royal inscription, rendering any evidence from Michaelides' item superfluous. (In effect royal inscriptions are treated as the sole valid source for authentic OP names and words. This arises because the corpus of potentially authentic OP texts is almost exactly coterminous with that of royal inscriptions.) Dr Tavernier has kindly confirmed his agreement with Mayrhofer's etymological interpretation of the name Ariyarša.

⁵ Another inscribed item in Michaelides 1943, a bull with the (Akkadian) name Mi-it-ri-AD-u-a = *Miṯrabua-, was thought a forgery by Zadok 2004, 116, but is defended by Tavernier 2007, 472.

close to what would be predicted for Arshama.⁶ But there are problems. One is that one of MSS of Photius (the source for the relevant Ctesias fragment) gives the name as *Sartaman*, suggesting the satrap was really called Artames.⁷ Another is that, if we read *Sarsaman* and identify the man with Arshama, the latter was Egyptian satrap for at least 47 years (454-407).⁸ A third is that, whether we read *Sarsaman* or *Sartaman*, the fact that the name is not *Arxanên* might suggest that Ctesias did not think the two individuals were the same; since *Arxanên* must be Arshama, *Sarsaman/Sartaman* must be someone else.⁹

The choice between *Sartaman* and *Sarsaman* is probably an open one: although editors have tended to take the view that, *ceteris paribus*, A is the better manuscript, it is not obvious that, where A and M offer equally good (or bad) readings, there should be any particular prejudice in favour of one or other reading. In theory we have a free choice between Artames and Arsames, and the issue has to be resolved by other means.

Any argument from dissimilarity between “Arxanes” and either Artames or Arsames probably gets us no further forward with the choice between the latter. If “Arxanes” is Arshama and the earlier satrap has to be someone different (since otherwise Ctesias would have called him Arxanes as well), that earlier satrap’s name could still just as well have been (in Ctesias’ view) Arsames as Artames. But does the earlier satrap have to be someone different?

The question is affected by the fact that *Arxanês* cannot be explained as a legitimate, if unusual, rendering of OP *Aršāma-* and (apparently) admits of no explanation as the legitimate rendering of any Persian name.¹⁰ If Ctesias offered two distinct real Persian names there would be no problem in the first place. Instead his MSS offer two putatively Persian names, one certainly textually corrupt (and of uncertain restoration), the other partly or wholly aberrant. It may be no less likely that the two passages offer different failed attempts at the *same* name as failed attempts at different names – and the fact that the two attempts produce broadly rather similar results inevitably (if, some might say, illogically) tempts one to the former conclusion.

But, even if we decided that Ctesias’ original text referred to Arsamas/Artamas and Arxanes (the latter actually representing OP *Aršāma-*), should we assume they are actually different people? We might concede that Ctesias *thought* they were different people (or to put it less positively) did not think that they were the same person -- the point being that the names arguably came to him by different source-routes (one source about the 450s, the other about the 420s) and that he thought no further about the possibility that a single individual might be involved.¹¹ In other words, we should not be concerned with what Ctesias thought but simply find the best interpretation we can of separate bits of data for which he is merely the channel.

If so, the only remaining issue that has a bearing on the choice between *Sarsaman* and *Sartaman* is that to choose the first invites the conclusion that a single Arsames/Arshama was

⁶ Schmitt 2006, 78 attributes the aberrant initial “s” to “Lautzuwachs [infolge falsche Worttrennung]”. Or perhaps it is straightforward textual error: a copyist’s eye momentarily strayed to the start of the previous word, *satrapên*, before returning to *Arsaman*.

⁷ This is the reading in M. *Sarsaman* is found in A.

⁸ Bigwood 1976, 9 n.30 found this improbable; in her view “Sarsamas” was Arshama, but it was not true that he became satrap as early as the 450s. (Bichler 2006, 456 n.3 entertains a similar view.) The implication is that Ctesias has falsely backdated the tenure of the individual whom he knew as satrap of Egypt at the time of his direct experience of the Persian court – which arguably is odd if he really thought the name of the latter was Arxanes.

⁹ Lewis 1958 was hesitant about Sarsamas being Arsames, feeling that even Ctesias ought to have stuck to one name-form, but in the end left the matter open. (For the purpose of an argument focused on events in the 410s, of course, it did not matter.)

¹⁰ I am inferring this from the silence of Schmitt 2006, 78, and the point does require further investigation.

¹¹ This is in effect the reverse of Bigwood’s position (cf. n.8).

satrap for 47 years or more.¹² Is there any compelling reason to rule this out? Arshama is a “son of the house” (*bar bayta*) – conventionally glossed to mean royal prince (see further below, pp.21-25) -- and bears the name of (a) Darius’ grandfather¹³ and (b) Darius’ son by his favourite wife Artystone (Herodotus 7.69,70), a figure known independently from the Fortification archive,¹⁴ and probably the earlier owner of the magnificent cylinder seal used by our Arshama.¹⁵ Another royal prince (Cyrus, son of Darius II) was appointed to a politically complex provincial position in his mid teens. Admittedly he was the actual son of the king; but perhaps Arshama was sufficiently well-connected to the core Achaemenid family to be sent to Egypt at an age which makes his survival in post until the century’s final decade not too disturbing, especially as some members of the Achaemenid family did live to a ripe old age.¹⁶ The satrap of Egypt immediately before the revolt (and since the 480s) had been Xerxes’ brother Achaemenes. Continuation of a close (if not *quite* so close) royal link with the post might be perfectly natural in the circumstances.¹⁷

I think, therefore, that we *can* in good conscience opt for *Sarsaman*, emend it to *Arsaman* and identify the individual with *our* Arshama. But if a dated document from the 440s were to turn up in which the Egyptian satrap was called Artames, we could not claim to be surprised.

Arsames and Barca

In Polyaeus’ story Arsames is conducting a siege of Barca. He then makes a deal with Barcaean ambassadors (sending his *dexia* as a token of trustworthiness) and lifts the siege. Barcaean *arkhontes* come to discuss an alliance (and are lavishly entertained), while the general Barcaean populace leaves the city to buy food from a specially created *agora*. A signal is then given and Arsames’ troops seize the gates and loot the city, killing any who resist.

There are at least three possible views of the date of the story and the identity of “Arsames”.

(1) In Herodotus 4.167,200-202 a Persian army (under Amasis and Badres) captured Barca towards the end of the 510s through a trick centring around a meeting at which oaths are

¹² It does not, of course, compel the conclusion, since there *could* be more than one Egyptian satrap called Arsames/Arshama, whether immediately consecutively or not. But if one were going to believe that one might as well believe that the satrap appointed in the 450s was called Artames.

¹³ This Arsames is often identified with the father of Parnakka/*Farnaka- (PFS 16* = Garrison & Root 2001, 92-94 [no.22]), making the latter Darius’ uncle.

¹⁴ PF 733, 734, 2035; also PF 309 and PFNN-0958. (The eponym of the “*degel* of Arshama” apparently mentioned in an Aramaic superscription to PF 2050 is presumably a different person.) Aelian fr.46 (cf. Suda s.v. *theoklutêsantes*) rather oddly postulates a *daughter* of Darius called Arsames. (The story concerns the resistance of Cyzicene virgins to being sent to her as *xeinia*.) – Much later the name was borne by a son and a nephew of Artaxerxes II (Plut.*Artox*.30; Diod.17.5, Syncell.392,486, John of Antioch 38, 39, Euseb. ap.Jerome ann.1652, exc.Lat.Barb.32a: the latter was also the father of Darius III), the governor of Cilicia killed at Issus (Arr.1.12, 2.4,11), a son of Artabazus (Arr.3.23). A Lycian called Aršama turns up in FdX 9.191 – a nice coincidence (presumably nothing more), given the apparent Lycians in A6.8 (Armapiya) and perhaps A6.11-14 (Kenzasirma). Another nice coincidence is that Xenophon (*Cyr*.6.3.21, 7.1.3,8) has an Arsames on the left wing at Thymbrara, where he would have been fighting against Egyptians.

¹⁵ Garrison (forthcoming [a]). The discovery that the Bodleian’s Arshama *bullae* came from a seal already in use in the 490s was made by Mark Garrison in summer 2012.

¹⁶ Darius, Artaxerxes I and II. Note also that Darius’ grandfather was alive when Darius became king.

¹⁷ Ctesias is represented by Photius as saying that Megabyzus put in place (*kathistêsi*) Arsames (Sarsamas) as satrap. That is surely shorthand for establishing in post someone who had, of course, been selected by the King, but tells us nothing further about Arsames’ age or status at the time.

sworn by Persians and Barcaeans. All the details are very different,¹⁸ but Persian treachery is a common feature between this and Polyaeus' story. Perhaps for this reason, Briant (1996b, 498 = 2002, 482) takes it that Polyaeus' story is an alternative version of Herodotus' and that his Arsames is identical with Herodotus' Amasis. Since Herodotus calls Amasis a Maraphian – meaning that he is apparently an Iranian – Briant takes it that we have a case of double nomination, Arsames having taken the Egyptian name Amasis, in the same way that e.g. Ariyavrata took the name Djedhor = Tachos (Posener 1936, no.33).¹⁹

(2) The prospective alliance involves *basilei koinonêsai tês epi tèn Hellada strateias kai pempein autôi tèn tôn harmatôn boêtheian*. The natural immediate reaction is to take this as a reference to Xerxes' expedition. One can then see trouble in Cyrenaica as a side-effect of the revolt in Egypt which was suppressed early in Xerxes' reign, and put the Barca incident in the later 480s.²⁰ Since Achaemenes became satrap straight after the Egyptian revolt, Arsames would be operating as his subordinate commander (as Amasis and Badres were the subordinates of Aryandes in Herodotus IV). An alternative version of the same general approach would be to identify the prospective campaign as the one that Darius was planning at the end of his reign. On that view trouble in Cyrenaica was the background to, rather than a side-effect, of the Egyptian revolt, and Arsames could theoretically be satrap (since Pherendates is not attested in that role after 492) – though there would still be no necessity to suppose that that was so.

(3) Others have located the story in the period after “Sarsamas” = Arshama became satrap of Egypt: on this view, which goes back to Wachsmuth 1879, the prospective campaign against Greece is explained by reference to Persian forces with which Cimon came into conflict in the Levant in the early 440s (Diodorus 12.3): the idea is presumably that Cimon's final campaign was a pre-emptive operation against Persian preparations for a new attempt to re-enter the Aegean and undo the effects of Xerxes' defeat. Meanwhile, trouble in Cyrenaica will be (as on Chamoux's view) part of the aftermath of an Egyptian rebellion – an aftermath that in this case also included troublesome behaviour from Amyrtaeus, an Egyptian prince holed up somewhere in the Delta (or so it is normally supposed).

The advantage for the first explanation is that it ties the event to a known event involving Persians and Barcaeans and avoids the multiplication of entities. One would not, of course, worry so much about that multiplication except for the highly generic but still real link between the Polyaeus and Herodotus stories. Two stories about Persians capturing Barca might not be a problem. Two stories about a capture that turn on treacherous oath-swearing are somewhat more worrying. The inclination to think that this is the historiographical tradition playing with alternative versions of the same event is quite strong.

The *prima facie* disadvantage of the first explanation is the link to a putative forthcoming royal expedition against Greece, since it is not immediately obvious that such an expedition is available at the relevant juncture. A similar disadvantage affects the third explanation, since it is at the very least a matter of interpretation to turn the data in Diodorus 12.3 into *hê epi tèn Hellada strateia*. By contrast, this is the great advantage for the second explanation. The planned royal expedition against Greece (which is the only element in the story that might fix its relation to anything outside Barca) can be linked to known examples of the phenomenon involving Darius or Xerxes. Since planned royal campaigns against Greece are not something that we should not duplicate recklessly, this is a strong argument in favour of locating the story in the 480s.²¹ Is it a decisive argument?

¹⁸ Wachsmuth 1879, 157: “nichts weniger als alles verschieden ist”.

¹⁹ Driver 1965, 96 prefers to postulate a simple confusion of “Amasis” and “Arsames”.

²⁰ Chamoux 1953, 164-165, opting specifically for 483. Chamoux claims that this coheres with numismatic evidence. I do not know whether this has any real independent force.

²¹ An additional consideration pointing in the same direction might be that Polyaeus speaks specifically of the Barcaeans providing chariots for the royal campaign. That is, frankly, historically

In the case of the third explanation we do at least have evidence for a major troop agglomeration. Can we rule out the possibility that some strand in the Greek historical tradition about the situation between Persia and Greece around 450 BC (a tradition now represented for us by very selective narratives in Thucydides, Diodorus and Plutarch) originally included a clear belief that Persian forces were being mobilized for a Greek campaign? One part of the historical tradition did believe that (at a somewhat earlier date) the exiled Themistocles was supposed to have been promoting preparations for a new attack; and some modern historians have believed the battle at the Eurymedon pre-empted an expedition that was already under way.

In the case of the first explanation we should need to envisage that Polyaeus drew (ultimately) on a source that believed Darius was planning a more or less immediate continuation of the advance into European Greece begun by Megabyzus' Thracian campaign; and, since that campaign was contemporary with the operations of Amasis and Badres in Cyrenaica, one might even say that it is rather neat that there should be talk of what the Barcaeans could do to help with the next stage of Greek operations. The problem, of course, is that the next stage of operations against Greece did not come until the Naxian campaign over a decade later. So the question is whether it is legitimate to postulate a (non-Herodotean) tradition that Darius originally planned an invasion of central/southern Greece to happen perhaps as early as 510 simply on the basis of Polyaeus 7.28.1. One view would be that the historical location of the Polyaeus passage is too uncertain for it to underpin what might look like a rather significant adjustment of historical understanding. Another view would be that our direct knowledge of non-Herodotean traditions about the later sixth century is too poor for us to rule anything out, that it is worrying that what Herodotus says about Persian interest in peninsular Greece at this stage breaks off with a highly suspect story about relations with Macedonia, and that, if there *was* a break in the continuity of imperial expansion (especially in the west) after c.512, the fact that it turned out to have lasted a good decade does not have to mean that it was planned from the outset to last that long. These considerations are perhaps powerful enough to keep the first explanation of Polyaeus 7.28.1 in play.

For the present purposes it is, of course, the status of the third explanation that matters most: if we accept it, we stand to get another piece of information about Arshama. The only additional and distinctive claim it has to acceptance is that – just as the first explanation has the advantage of linking Polyaeus with an already known event in Barca – so this third explanation has the potential advantage of linking it to an appropriately named individual already known in an Egyptian context as the holder of a position of power. But it is debatable whether the individually debatable cases of Ctesias' Sarsamas/Sartamas and Polyaeus' Arsames can be used to support one another. And it has to be noted that the association between the name Arsames and the occupation of a position of power in Egypt is not actually a unique characteristic of the Arshama in whom we are interested.

In Aeschylus *Persians* we hear of an *arkhôn* of Memphis called Arsames who was in Xerxes' invasion force (37) and learn that he was one of those who died at Salamis (308). It is tempting to compare this with the fact that Darius' son Arsames (Xerxes' half-brother) appears in the Herodotean army list as commander of the Arabians and the (African) Ethiopians ("the Ethiopians above Egypt") – not an Egyptian commander, indeed, but at least one associated with Africa.²² Links between the named Persian commanders of the *Persae*

implausible in any context, but, as chariots are a feature of the Libyan contribution to Xerxes' army in Hdt.7.84,186, one might slightly suspect that Polyaeus' ultimate source thought he was dealing with that historical context.

²² Aeschylus' Arsames is regularly identified with Darius' son: see Balcer 1993, 107, 174, Broadhead 1960, 43, 318; Garvie 2009, 60-61

and Herodotus are generally fairly slim.²³ We might, of course, regard this one as mere coincidence. But we might alternatively take it seriously as an indication that in the 470s Athenians had reason specifically to link the name of Arsames with the Egyptian sector of the empire; and, if we did that, we might say that Aeschylus provided some indirect support to the second explanation of the Polyaeus story, which puts a prominent Arsames in Egypt in the 480s. This is not a particularly strong argument, but its existence does do a bit to undermine the second explanation. One may add that, even leaving Aeschylus aside, we might identify an Arsames in Cyrenaica in the 480s with Darius' son, especially on Chamoux's version of the second explanation: the idea that two sons of Darius and brothers of the new king (Achaemenes and Arsames) were co-operating in the ongoing task of restoring order to the empire's North African possessions has a certain charm, especially when one recalls that the King himself (yet another son of Darius) had personally participated in the original campaign of recovery.

In sum: I do not think we can exclude the possibility that the young Arshama conducted a campaign in Cyrenaica -- and demonstrated himself to be a worthy successor to Amasis and Badres and predecessor of Tissaphernes. But there are plainly other possibilities that also cannot be wholly excluded.²⁴

2. THE EGYPTIAN DOSSIER

The documents from Egypt form the largest sub-section of the Arshama dossier and deserve further introductory contextualising comment.

(1) They represent, of course, a tiny proportion of the material from Egypt in Aramaic and Demotic Egyptian (not to mention material in hieroglyphic Egyptian and in other non-Egyptian languages – Greek, Carian, Phoenician).

The set of Aramaic texts consists of over 617 items in the *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt*,²⁵ 166 in Segal 1983 that are not in *TADE*,²⁶ 324 new items from the Clermont-Ganneau ostraca collection in Lozachmeur 2006,²⁷ and a few other scattered pieces, e.g. six fragments from Saqqara published in Lemaire & Chauveau 2008 (which include references to judges, provincial scribes and a storehouse described with a Persian loanword), a graffito (also from Saqqara) naming Bagadata son of Hori/Houri (Lozachmeur 1999), a list of names supposedly found in Jordan but thought by some to

²³ Relatively few Aeschylean names recur in Herodotus anyway. Others that recur in the army list display no geographical links: thus Ariomardus, also associated with Egypt in Aeschylus, is the name of men commanding troops from Anatolia or Iran in Herodotus.

²⁴ For the sake of completeness I note that the Arsames of Polyaeus 7.28.2, a rebel against the king active in Phrygia, cannot – despite what Polyaeus may have thought – reasonably be thought to have anything to do with Arshama. Driver 1965, 96 (followed by Porten 1968, 279) assigned the story to the context of Darius II's succession, but there really is no ground to think that those events spilled over into central Anatolia. The story is much more likely to belong to the "Satraps' Revolt" era (and Wachsmuth 1879 suggested, in effect, that it was a doublet of a story about Datames).

²⁵ A few of these are of these are pre- or post-Achaemenid in date. (For these purposes the Achaemenid era embraces 525-332, i.e. includes the fourth century period of Egyptian autonomy.)

²⁶ Saqqara 11-15, 17-18, 22-27, 31-34, 36-43, 46, 49-52, 54-56, 58-60, 62-86, 88-105, 107-202, XXII. There is no guarantee that all the contents of Segal 1983 are of Achaemenid date – nor any proof that they are not.

²⁷ CG 16, 44, 70, 125, 152, 169, 186, 228, 277 correspond (respectively) to D7.7, D7.10, D7.21, D7.44, D7.16, D7.2, D7.35, D7.5, D7.30.

originate from Elephantine (AO 25431: Lemaire 1975),²⁸ sundry mummy-case labels (Petrie 1910, pl.34), the Aramaic texts written in demotic script in P.Amherst 63²⁹ and a number of other unpublished texts in the lists on *www.trismegistos.org*. This material is by no means entirely epistolary or documentary, as it includes e.g. the remnants of the Aramaic version of the Behistun text (C2.1), a version of the Words of Ahiqar (C1.1), a fragment from an Egyptian story (C1.2) and material from a variety of contexts/genres in *TADE IV*.

The context of other Demotic material is less easy to quantify and assess. The listing in *www.trismegistos.org* suggests that over 450 items may date to the Achaemenid era, but much of this has never been published and there is no convenient even-partial *corpus* to correspond to *TADE*. As with Aramaic texts, the material is mixed in character: alongside purely private business documents (including, among more recent discoveries, the numerous ostraca from Ain Manawir illustrating the agricultural exploitation of an oasis area in the Western Desert³⁰) there are official letters, a mixed bag of tantalising remnants from a possible administrative archive in Saqqara (this is the immediate context of the document that refers to Arshama),³¹ the immense petition of Peteesis in P.Rylands 9 (about allegedly sinister goings-on in Teuzoi stretching back from Darius' reign deep into the Saite era)³² and some celebrated items directly linked with Achaemenid rulers – Cambyses' decree about temple-revenues or Darius' order for the compilation of an Egyptian law book.³³

(2) The Egyptian dossier material is not homogeneous and can be subdivided in various ways, some fairly straightforward – provenance (Elephantine, Saqqara, unknown) or relation to Arshama (author or recipient of letters; referent within texts of other origin) – some deserving a little more by way of preliminary comment.

Date Nine documents from Egypt carry dates, with an outer range of 435-407.³⁴ (The upper *terminus* has only recently been definitively pushed back to 435 by publication of S.H5–DP 434 = Smith & Martin 2010, 31-39.) By contrast, none of the Bodleian documents contains any explicit dates at all. (In this respect they are dissimilar to the Akhvamazda letters from Bactria. See further below.)

The prevailing view locates them in the later fifth century,³⁵ because (a) they are generally thought to have been written outside Egypt (on this see below pp.26-30) and Arshama is known to have been outside Egypt in 410-407, (b) a story can be told that links references to disorder or rebellion with a date horizon of 412/411, and (c) the palaeography of the texts is held to be consonant with such a date (*TADAE I*, 93). These may be good arguments, though there is no reason to assume Arshama was only outside Egypt once during his period of office, the association with 412/411 is necessarily speculative (see below pp.40-

²⁸ The text is very reminiscent of the Elephantine environment. It may beg questions to assume that such an environment might not occur elsewhere (much depends on how many homonymous “Caspians” one might expect to find in different parts of the empire); but Lozachmeur 2006, 409 reports that the ostrakon on which AO 25431 is written is of Egyptian origin, and she finds it palaeographically very close to CG 275. CG 267 and D9.11 are other Elephantine ostraca with lists of names of similar type to AO 25431.

²⁹ Not fully and definitively published. See e.g. Steiner & Nims 1983, 1984, 1985, Steiner & Moshavi 1995, Vleeming & Wesselius 1985-1990, Steiner 2000.

³⁰ See Chauveau 1996, Chauveau 2008.

³¹ See Smith & Martin 2010.

³² See Vittmann 1998.

³³ Spiegelberg 1914. For more recent re-editions / treatments of the texts cf. e.g. Agut-Labordère 2009-10, Quack 2011, 233-6 (Darius), Devauchelle 1995, Bresciani 1996, Agut-Labordère 2005a and 2005b (Cambyses).

³⁴ The date range of Babylonian documents associated with Arshama is 429-403.

³⁵ Contrast e.g. Dandamaev 1989, 242-3. Holm 2007, 212 also considers the possibility of an early date for at least some of the Bodleian letters: cf. below, p.41.

44), and palaeography is not an entirely exact science. Naveh (1970, 24) found that the “formal cursive” script of Arshama’s scribes (he refers specifically to A6.2 and to the Bodleian letters³⁶) had some features appropriate to the beginning of the fifth century. Since A6.2 was certainly written in 411, this archaism does not, of course, prove that the Driver letters are earlier than is usually assumed. But the possibility theoretically remains open, especially since the semi-formal cursive script of some Elephantine professional scribes (specifically Nathan son of ‘Anani) active in the second to third quarters of the century also display archaizing tendencies – i.e. the phenomenon is not itself a marker of its last ten to fifteen years. Another piece of material evidence (the seal used by Arshama) was already in use before 494, so that certainly cannot establish a relatively late *terminus post quem*.

Whatever the absolute date, one’s initial inclination might be to respond to the (alleged) discovery of the Bodleian letters as a single *cache* by assigning them a relatively small time-frame. But they seem to embrace both the start and end of Psamshek’s tenure as Arshama’s *pqyd*,³⁷ so – unless he only lasted an unexpectedly short time -- the rationale of the collection is likely to be subject-matter, not date. Certainly, whatever precise order they are printed in, the documents seem to tell a story about a number – even a succession -- of *pqydyn* (Ankhoḥapi: mentioned in A6.4; Psamshek: A6.3-8 and also mentioned in A6.15; Nakhtḥor A6.9-16) and – perhaps – the contrast between them.³⁸ Arguably they represent an extract from the archives of the office of *pqyd*,³⁹ but who made the extract and why can only be a matter of speculation.⁴⁰ If the documents by reason of selection have themselves become a sub-archive, one might more justifiably call it Nakhtḥor’s archive than Arshama’s.⁴¹

Type of content. There is, in principle, a division between what might be called public and private spheres.

³⁶ Note incidentally that Naveh assumes the Bodleian letters were written outside Egypt (unlike A6.2) and sees no salient difference between scribes writing for Arshama and for other addressors (Varuvahya, Virafsha and Artahaya). By contrast, A6.1, an official letter *to* Arshama, is in a “semi-formal” script (Naveh 1970, 33).

³⁷ Start: 6.4. In 6.3 he is not called *pqyd* but simply “servant”, and Artavanta’s authorisation is required for the punishment of slaves ordered by Psamshek to be carried out. End: certainly implied in 6.10.

³⁸ Psamshek certainly succeeds ‘Ankhoḥapi (A6.4:3); and Nakhtḥor is *pqyd* at a time at which Psamshek is not (A6.10:1). But, strictly speaking, we do not know that Nakhtḥor is his successor: the opening part of A6.15 is certainly too unclear for this to be anything like a guaranteed inference. There is no ground for speculating that Kosakan (A6.5) was ever a *pqyd* (A6.5:2 n.).

³⁹ Whitehead 1974, 27. Note the implication in A6.15:4 that Nakhtḥor had access to a letter to Psamshek. The fact that some of the letters were reportedly discovered folded up does not mean they had not been read; letters can be opened and closed again (as has happened in modern times to ADAB C4).

⁴⁰ Driver’s order was 6.5, 6.4, 6.3, 6.8, 6.7, 6.9-16 – i.e. he had the Nakhtḥor letters just as Porten-Yardeni do but treated the Psamshek ones differently. Putting 6.5 first is presumably connected with Driver’s idea that Kosakan was Psamshek’s predecessor. 6.3 and 6.4 both refer to both Psamshek and Psamshek’s father; it is perhaps an arbitrary matter which to put first. (6.6 was fragment 5 in Driver and therefore out of sequence. We now know that it relates to Nakhtḥor, not Psamshek: cf. TADAE IV at pp. 135, 150.) Porten-Yardeni’s order for A6.3-5 was already argued by Whitehead 1974, 20. Porten-Yardeni presumably put 6.7 before 6.8 because its addressee is Artavanta (like 6.3-6.6), whereas 6.8 is addressed to Armapiya. Driver presumably puts 6.8 before 6.7 because 6.8 names Psamshek and 6.7 does not. Lindenberger (who omits A6.5 and A6.6) prints the letters in another order again. This affects both the Nakhtḥor letters (with A6.10 and A6.11 in reverse order, and A6.12 placed between A6.13-14 and A6.15-16) and the Psamshek letters (in the order A6.4, A6.3, A6.8).

⁴¹ The presence of A6.14, A6.16, relatively personal letters to Nakhtḥor lacking external summary and not intended for formal filing (cf. A6.4:6 n.), points in this direction.

In the first category are the items from Elephantine and Saqqara: the Passover letter (A4.1), the letters about the destruction and rebuilding of the Elephantine Jewish Temple (A4.5, A4.7//A4.8, A4.9-10)⁴² and other items of miscellaneous and not always very clear import (A4.2, A6.1-2; S.H5-DP 434) – among which the letter authorizing repairs to a boat (A6.2) is perhaps the most immediately arresting. These are the texts that give a glimpse of a satrap’s duties; it is also here that we find references to other types of official in the local levels of the imperial system (A6.1, A6.2, A4.5, A5.5, S.H5-DP 434) – including some outside the Egyptian satrapy (Bagavahya and Sanballat, the governors of respectively Judah and Samaria in A4.7//A4.8). One official in A6.1 has a title, *azdakara* (herald), that is not otherwise encountered until a Hellenistic era document from Babylonia – a situation one might almost call characteristic of the whimsical survival of data about the Achaemenid imperial system.⁴³

In the other category are the Bodleian documents in which the common thread is provided by Arshama’s Egyptian estates and the activities of his bailiffs ‘Ankhoḥapi (A6.3-4), Psamshek (A6.3-8) and Nakthor (A6.9-16).⁴⁴ The extremely scrappy bits-and-pieces in D6.3-14 – whose contents in general terms fit nicely with those of the well-preserved items⁴⁵ -- also include fragments of a letter from someone to his sister, one disjoined part of which contains the words “from Arshama” (D6.13). The sister’s name, Eswere (’*Swry*), is not Iranian but Egyptian (*3s.t+wr.t*, “Isis (the) great” or “Great Isis”).⁴⁶ The initial excited thought that this might be evidence for a female member of a Persian family with a Egyptian name (and thus a direct or indirect sign of inter-marriage or acculturation) should probably be resisted. Certainly one might equally well imagine that the archive of documents included a letter from one of the Egyptian *pqydn* to his sister – which would be almost equally interesting.

But the public/private divide is not entirely hermetic. In A6.8 Arshama instructs Armapiya and his *hyl* (military force) to obey instructions from the *pqyd* Psamshek. Assuming (a) that *hyl* has to designate a body of *military* men (A6.8:1 n.) and (b) that soldiers always count as part of the public sphere, this letter illuminates a cross-over between the public and private sphere – and perhaps, indeed, reveals that some individuals in the former were resistant to such cross-over. There are also in other letters some allusions to disturbance or revolt which may take into the public sphere, even if the letters in question are in the first instance about the implications of public matters for the affairs of a private estate. (These allusions are discussed below, pp.39-44.) In general terms, of course, when the “private” estate-holder is also the satrap, then (irrespective of whether he has the estate *because* he is satrap) the distinction between public and private is liable to be blurred. Something similar is observable in the correspondence of Akhvamazda in Bactria.

Material features The non-Greek items in the dossier come on various carriers. The clay tablets, papyrus, a perfume-holder lid and parchment. Of these the first and second are normal and unremarkable in their respective Babylonian and Egyptian environments, the third more remarkable but essentially random (we cannot say anything useful about why this particular name should appear on this particular object), but the fourth deserves further comment.

⁴² See Appendix 2.

⁴³ *Az dakara*: Stolper 1993, A2-7:5, Stolper 2006, 235, 243. A detailed survey of sub-satrapal officials in Greek and Aramaic sources appears in Tuplin (forthcoming [b]).

⁴⁴ The Babylonian documentary material falls into a similar category.

⁴⁵ Some of the same names recur (Psamshek, Nakthor, Rashta, Virafsha; D6.7 is plainly related to the same issue as A6.15; and D6.8 deals with “household personnel” as does A6.11.

⁴⁶ DN 76-77, Porten 2002, 311. The name also occurs in A2.7 and B5.5, and perhaps in D6.1 (miswritten as ’*Wsyry*).

The distinctive material features of Bodleian *cache* are in fact three in number. Not only were they written on parchment. They were also reportedly found together with two leather bags and eight *bullae*, and (suspicious though one may be about the activities of sellers of unprovenanced goods in 1930s Egypt) there seems no good reason to doubt that report.⁴⁷

The size of the bags involved (judging from the well preserved specimen) was nicely calculated to fit the dimensions of a letter when folded. Whether the bags would have comfortably contained *all* the letters at once is another question. Borchardt seems to have contemplated the possibility that the bag-space exceeded what would be necessary for the surviving letters – thus implicitly suggesting that there had once been more of them.⁴⁸ Since he speaks as though there were only one bag, he may in his own terms actually have been underestimating the supposed mismatch. On the other hand, it is also not clear whether he was taking into account the implications of the many very fragmentary bits of parchment that are a feature of the Bodleian collection.⁴⁹ Porten & Yardeni (TADAE D6.3-14) sort those fragments palaeographically into as many as twelve sets,⁵⁰ so, even on existing evidence, the well or relatively well preserved letters published in TADAE I may represent only slightly more than half the original *cache*. My suspicion is that they would have fitted neatly (but with little spare space) into the two bags. In any event, we are surely dealing with bags that were purpose-made for the conveyance and/or storage of letters – in fact, with objects that are themselves in some sense part of the administrative process.⁵¹

The eight *bullae* derive from two different seal-stones, one represented seven times, the other once. The former is a fine seal showing a combat scene and inscribed with the name of Arshama and the title *bar bayta*, the latter a somewhat humbler object carrying a geometric design that evokes some of the Babylonian worship scenes familiar at Persepolis as well as in

⁴⁷ The history of the discovery, acquisition and conservation of the *cache* is discussed in Allen (forthcoming [a]).

⁴⁸ “Ob dieser Sack für das Vorhandene nicht zu gross war, weiss ich nicht. Der Fund könnte also geteilt worden sein” (Borchardt 1933, 47).

⁴⁹ One of these (fragment XIII = D6.14) was unrepresented in Driver 1954, though the items in question seem to have been mounted under glass at the same time as the rest of the collection. Driver (1954,1,10; 1965, 1,21) also suggests that among what are now fragments may be the remnants of a letter that reached the Bodleian still folded but was essentially destroyed (“became a total loss”) by the attempts to open it. Fragment XIII, though neglected in Driver 1954, is no more a “total loss” than the other fragmentary material that Driver *did* present in his first edition, so is presumably nothing to do with this episode. On the other hand, it is stored with a very large number of tiny unmounted fragments which might, I suppose, be relevant. On the face of it the “total loss” item is distinct from a still unopened document that Whitehead (8,9,14) reports as being in the Bodleian in 1974, although in referring to the latter Whitehead also alludes to Driver’s account of the former. It is not entirely clear from Whitehead’s written description whether he actually saw it nor (he kindly tells me) can he now remember. Lindsay Allen (below p.51) reports Porten as saying that the unopened document was opened at the time of the preparation of TADAE I; but TADAE I contains no material that is not already in Driver.

⁵⁰ Even so, it appears that not all the known fragments have been placed in either A6.3-16 or D6.3-14. There are thirteen sets of fragments (numbered I-XIII), each of which consists of a large number of actual (small) fragments. If one collates the information provided by Porten & Yardeni about which fragments are included in which numbered items in TADAE I and IV, it emerges that many are unaccounted for.

⁵¹ For more detailed discussion of the bags see Henkelman & Allen (forthcoming). Llewellyn 1993, 47 n.13 notes, but rejects, an old suggestion that there was a Ptolemaic tax called *bursês* that paid for leather bags to store letters and other documents.

Babylonia.⁵² These will be discussed in detail elsewhere,⁵³ and I say no more here, save to note again that the Arshama seal is now known to have been in use since the 490s.⁵⁴ The seals entered the Bodleian collection separated from the letters to which they would once have been attached (though still preserving embedded in them some of the string that once encircled the folded letter), but individual seals may perhaps sometimes be re-associated with particular letters.⁵⁵

The letters were written on leather. One (A6.15) is on a piece of leather created by stitching together two bits (one large, one small). It is an exceptionally neat piece of work, when viewed from the upper side at least, but interestingly was used for Virafsha's letter to Nakhtor: Arshama perhaps insisted on more perfect materials. The use of leather, until comparatively recently a unique survival at this date for this kind of material,⁵⁶ is now paralleled in the Aramaic letters and other documents from Bactria,⁵⁷ though in the case of the letters we seem to be dealing with rough copies, not (as with the Bodleian material) the final drafts actually despatched to their addressees: use of leather was thus not kept for best in later fourth century Bactria, though, inasmuch as some of the letter-drafts are palimpsests, we are perhaps in the presence of some careful husbanding of resources.⁵⁸ (Palimpsest writing certainly arises in the case of a scrap of a leather document from Elephantine in D6.1-2 in which a largely unintelligible, indeed some say linguistically unidentifiable, text was written over an erased list of female names.⁵⁹) Darius spoke of disseminating the Behistun text on clay and parchment (DB §70), Ctesias believed in royal (quasi-historiographical) *diphtherai* (688 F5 [32.4]), and most impressively – so far as a Persian administrative environment is concerned -- there is a lot of (indirect) evidence for writing on leather in the Persepolis Fortification archive in the shape of references to leather documents and those who write them.⁶⁰ I single out particularly an

⁵² No worshipper is present, but what we see recalls the other paraphernalia of such scenes. In this respect, as Deniz Kaptan has observed, it resembles one of the Dascylium seals (DS 1: see Kaptan 2002, 1.106-107, 2.3).

⁵³ Garrison & Kaptan (forthcoming), Garrison (forthcoming [a]) and Kaptan (forthcoming).

⁵⁴ See above, p.10. For the image on the Arshama seal in the context of other combat iconography see Tuplin (forthcoming [f]).

⁵⁵ See Allen 2013, 27. This paper contains many important observations about the letters as objects. See also Allen (forthcoming [b]). In the Bactrian material seal and document were still attached to one another in the case of C2. One of the Bodleian *bullae* shows no sign of ever having been attached to a document; one of the Bodleian documents (A6.9, the travel-ration authorization) never had a seal attached to it, although a seal would presumably have been needed to make the document work. Perhaps it is over-venturesome to connect these two facts.

⁵⁶ There are a few second millennium Egyptian items of different character.

⁵⁷ One of the Bactrian items, B10, belongs to the early fifth century and is thus earlier than the Bodleian material.

⁵⁸ In one case (A2) the scribe Daizaka wrote the draft over the erased remnants of something that had been addressed to him. Papyrus was used in Bactria in Hellenistic times, as we know from finds at Ai Khanum. What the situation would have been before Alexander's arrival we cannot know.

⁵⁹ But the language is identified as Egyptian by Vittmann 2003, 118-119. The text remains obscure, though contains some divine names.

⁶⁰ Documents: PF 323, 1986. Writers: 1808, 1810, 1947, PFa 27 (on which cf. Henkelman 2010, 694), PFNN 0061, PFNN 1040, PFNN 1255, PFNN 1369, PFNN 1511, PFNN 1752, PFNN 1775, PFNN 2394, PFNN 2486, PFNN 2493, PFNN 2529. In PFNN 2493 Dada, the writer-on-leather, is said in one entry to have "counted the workers (*kurtas*)". He is travelling with one Mananda, a "lanceman", who is also attested both in another entry in this document and in PFNN 1747 as counting workers (in the latter case royal workers). So here we see a parchment-scribe associated with a particular administrative task. Most of the parchment-writers in other texts are "assigned" by Parnakka or Ziššawiš, i.e. are part of the extended staff of the men right at top of the administrative

Aramaic epigraph on an unpublished cuneiform tablet (2178-101), reading *nsh 'l mšk l* = “copied (literally “removed”) onto a leather document”. An abbreviation of this, just the word *nsh* = “removed”, occurs on nearly 100 other documents, mostly journal and account texts. (I owe this information to Annalisa Azzoni and Matthew Stolper.⁶¹) We see here evidence of systematic use of leather in parallel to (? in replacement of) clay. By comparison with Arshama’s letters these would be relatively utilitarian documents, as would much else that is reflected in the sources cited in n.60; the use of leather in these contexts as well is striking, and recalls the non-epistolary part of the Bactrian *cache*. It is, in any event, certain that the carrying material of the Bodleian letters bespeaks a Persian rather than an Egyptian documentary environment.⁶² Whether it actually demonstrates that they were written outside Egypt is another matter.

Formal features and issues of style in letters Various features of the way in which content is incorporated or expressed in the epistolary documents deserve comment.

The Bodleian letters have written text on both the internal and external face of the parchment. The internal text consists of some or all of: an address formula naming addressor and addressee (all letters⁶³), a formal greeting (A6.3-A6.7), the body of the message (all letters), a subscript (A6.9-A6.13). The external text consists of some or all of: an address naming (and often providing other information about) addressor and addressee (all letters except A6.9; additional information appears in A6.3, A6.4, A6.7, A6.10-A6.13, A6.15), a content-summary (A6.4, A6.5, A6.7, A6.8, A6.10-A6.13,⁶⁴ A6.15), a Demotic annotation (A6.11-A6.13⁶⁵). For further discussion of the non-universal features see A6.3:1 n. on formal greetings, Appendix 1 on subscripts, A6.3:9 n. on additional information in external addresses, A6.4:6 n. on content summaries, and A6.11:8 n. on Demotic annotations. As will be apparent from those further discussions, all of features involved (except Demotic annotations) have more or less close analogies in the Bactrian letters.

Among other letters in the wider Arshama dossier, A6.2 lacks a formal greeting, but has a subscript, an apparent content summary, a Demotic annotation and an external address (with additional information). Even so, it does not quite conform to the Bodleian letters model. (1) The body of the text continues onto the *verso* for eight lines, whereas none of the Bodleian letters is long enough for that to happen, and in A6.15 some words are written along the right hand margin of the *recto* to avoid such an eventuality⁶⁶. (2) The (apparent) content

structure reflected in the Fortification archive. – The quite numerous texts referring to animal hides (characteristically going to a treasury) may reflect the arrival of the raw material for parchments.

⁶¹ Published examples include PF 1955, 2005, 2075, 2084. The unpublished text is apparently a somewhat unusual C4 document.

⁶² Herodotus’ statement that barbarians still use *diphtherai* (5.58) presumably has Persians in mind, though in Euripides Delphic oracles are imagined as written on leather (fr. 627 Kannicht). Given the amalgam of Assyrian and Persian colour in the Inaros Epic, the use of a leather scroll in a piece cited by Ryholt 2004, 493 may reflect Persian-era recension. There are also some signs of parchment use in Achaemenid era Babylonia: a *ḥatru* of parchment makers (**magallatakara*) in BE 10.93, PBS 2/1 136, the appearance of ^{KUŠ}*magallatu* in legal (IMT 27:8) and administrative (VS 6.313, 6.317, 6.319) contexts, and the use of the KUŠ (leather) determinative for *šipirtu* (document) in Persian period texts (CAD s.v. *šipirtu*). There is a remote possibility that A6.16:3 refers to leather for writing purposes (see note ad loc.)

⁶³ In A6.9 the internal address includes extra information about addressees (viz. their geographical location) of a sort not found in other internal addresses but at home in an external address. Being an open letter, A6.9 has, of course, no external address.

⁶⁴ In A6.11 the summary is in Demotic, not Aramaic

⁶⁵ In A6.11 the annotation consists of a content-summary.

⁶⁶ For this phenomenon cf. ADAB B3, B4. – That some Bodleian letters *did* originally stretch on to the *verso* is a possible conclusion from D6.7 fr.(c)*verso* and D6.10 fr.(g)*verso*, on which see A6.4:6 n.

summary and the Demotic annotation follow directly after the completion of the body of the letter. (3) The external address is followed by a line naming a scribe (Nabu-‘aqab) and providing a calendar date. On the other hand, the external address and subsequent line *are* separated from the rest of what is written on the *verso* and appear in a position (relative to the disposition of the *recto* side) that is broadly comparable with that of external addresses on Bodleian letters. A6.1 closely resembles A6.2 in having at (what would be) the end of the *verso* an external address with additional information followed by a line containing a name plus title⁶⁷ and a calendar date. Much of the papyrus is lost, so we cannot be sure whether or not part of the letter’s main body extended onto the *verso*. But this certainly happened in one of the Bactrian letters (ADAB A1), and its inclusion of a calendar date (something also encountered in some of the others) is another parallel with A6.1 and A6.2. (On the other hand, other features of this part of the external text of the Bactrian letters diverge both from the Bodleian model and the one in A6.1/A6.2.) The dissimilarity between A6.1/A6.2 and the Bodleian letters may reflect a distinction between satrapy- and estate-related items and/or (on the common view of the original provenance of the Bodleian letters) a distinction between things written inside and outside Egypt.⁶⁸

Seven of the letters have formal subscripts. In A6.2 we have “Anani the scribe is *b’l t’m*, Nabu‘aqab wrote (sc. the document)”. In A6.8-13 we have a subscript in the form “PN¹ knows this order; PN² is the scribe”. Both of these have some resemblance not only to one another but also to subscripts in Aramaic letters from Bactria, a demotic Egyptian letter from Elephantine and the Elamite letters in the Fortification archive. For a full discussion of this phenomenon see Appendix 1. Here I simply draw attention to the fact that the presence of such subscripts in both an official letter about boat-repair (A6.2) and a series of letters from the estate-related Bodleian archive represents another blurring of the private/public distinction. The process for validating instructions and giving them the written form of a letter-order (in a given language) was in some degree the same whatever the sphere to which the instructions related. The question does, of course, then arise why such subscripts are absent when Arshama writes to Artavanta (6.3-7) and Varuvahya, Virafsha and Artahaya write to Nakhtor (A6.14-16). Is it precluded by the facts that (a) Artavanta is of relatively high status (if this is a fact: see below pp.21-22, 29-30; and A6.3:1 n.) and (b) the other authors are not writing to Nakhtor as his line-manager but merely as external interested parties (albeit higher status ones)?

The structural articulation of the main body of letter-texts depends to some extent on the nature of the issue under discussion. One broad distinction is between letters in which the

⁶⁷ This time “[PN] servant of Sinnerish the herald, their colleague” rather than “Nabu-‘aqab the scribe”. But perhaps PN was a scribe.

⁶⁸ A calendar date is found at the very end of A4.7//A4.8, but without an associated external address. But these *are* draft texts. The letters actually sent to Bagavahya and to Delaiah and Shelemiah must have had a *verso* address line, so it is possible they resembled A6.1 and A6.2 more closely – though there is no necessity to assume there was anything analogous to the “scribal” names found in those documents. In the wider corpus of Egyptian Aramaic letters the pattern in which the entire text of the letter is on the *recto* and there is an address line on the *verso* recurs in A2.2, A2.7, A3.4, A3.6, A3.9, A4.4. It is more common for the letter to run over onto the *verso* with an external address line following, normally after a gap: A2.1, A2.3-6, A3.3, A3.5, A3.8, A3.10, A3.11, A4.1-3. (The situation is unclear in the case of A3.7 and A5.3.) None of these has a content-summary, Demotic annotation or calendar date. (A calendar date occurs at the end of the main letter-text in A3.3, A3.8 and A3.9.) Those from the Hermopolis cache (A2.1-7) add an instruction to deliver the letter to Syene or to Luxor, which might be said to constitute additional information, as certainly do the extra filiation details that occur in many cases both at Hermopolis and elsewhere. The basic *praxis* of writing and addressing a letter is in fact common across a range of settings.

author is responding to reported information and/or a request for action and those in which (at least as the document is formulated) he is not. For further comments on this see A6.7:6-8 n.

The varying differences of status between addressors and addressees may also in principle have what are broadly speaking structural or stylistic implications. It is, for example, easily observed that the “greetings of peace and strength” which Arshama extends to Artavanta are absent in his letters to Nakht̥or, Armapiya and the various officials in A6.9, absent when Varuvahya and Virafsha write to Nakht̥or – but present when Artahaya writes to him.⁶⁹ If Artahaya is the same man who figures as the one who “knows this order” in A6.10-13 he is certainly of a lower status than Arshama, Varuvahya and Virafsha and may feel the need or propriety of being polite to Arshama’s *pqyd* more keenly than others. (The case is particularly interesting since, on Porten’s restoration of the text, Artahaya is complaining about Nakht̥or’s conduct.⁷⁰)

Those who have noted the “*severité étonnante*” (Shaked 2003) with which the presumed Bactrian satrap Akhvamazda writes to Bagavant, *pht* of the city of Khulm, may wish to compare and contrast the cases of Arshama, who threatens Nakht̥or with a “severe sentence” in A6.10,⁷¹ but otherwise adopts a measured tone,⁷² or Virafsha who seems to have much to complain of in Nakht̥or’s behaviour but stylistically speaking keeps his cool (A6.15). Driver 1965, 12 remarked that the style of A6.2 (the boat-repair text) was “closely similar” to that of Bodleian items of which Arshama is the author (A6.3-13), though I do not know he elaborated on this anywhere and the observation is primarily adduced as an argument for identifying the two Arshamas. A6.2 is a very much more structurally complex and technically detailed document than anything we encounter in the Bodleian set, which makes comparison a little difficult, but (that said) most will probably agree that it does not inhabit an entirely different world. As things stand now, of course, the comparison with the Bactrian letters is a more natural one to make.⁷³

3. ARSHAMA: FRAGMENTS OF BIOGRAPHY

What primarily characterizes Arshama is that he was a royal prince, satrap of Egypt, and an estate-holder in both Egypt and Babylonia. (It is actually this last characteristic that generates the bulk of the items that constitute the dossier -- 39 from the total of 54.)

Arshama the “prince”

The Aramaic term rendered a “prince” is *bar bayta*, literally “son of the house”. The designation is applied to Arshama in the external address line of three letters of which he is the addressor (A6.3 A6.4, A6.7) and in the inscription on his seal (D14.6). Use of the title in documentary contexts is not standard: Arshama’s name normally appears unadorned by this or any title (unless the respectful use of “lord” counts as a title, which is arguable).⁷⁴ Its confinement to the address line (not in the body of the text) of three letters sent to Artavanta struck Driver as a mark of the relatively *high* status of the recipient. The nature of Artavanta’s

⁶⁹ On greetings formulae cf. A6.3:1 n.

⁷⁰ In Driver’s version he was thanking Nakht̥or for doing things right.

⁷¹ The same happens to Armapiya in A6.8. For full discussion of the phrase see A6.8:3-4 n.

⁷² He rarely falls into what might seem a peremptorily staccato style, as in A6.11 (cf. A6.11: 3 n.), and that is not in a context of irritation.

⁷³ For some general remarks cf. Naveh & Shaked 2012, 39-51 (not as substantial a treatment as it may look, since 40-50 are occupied by double-spread photographs of Bodleian items), Shaked (forthcoming). There is a case for inferring the existence of scribal schools working to standardized guidelines.

⁷⁴ See A6.3:3 n.

position (and therefore status) is an issue in its own right but, unlike other addressees of Arshama's letters to individuals, he was at least a fellow-Iranian.⁷⁵ What is implied is a slightly paradoxical etiquette (or should one call it rhetoric?) in which the title expressive of Arshama's special status is *not* used when addressing foreigners of necessarily inferior standing – it is as though no justification or mitigation of alien power is deemed necessary when dealing with such people, whereas certain niceties apply within the Iranian community.

Arshama is not the only *bar bayta* encountered in dossier: Arshama describes Varuvahya (another estate-holder in Egypt) as *bar bayta* in A6.13,⁷⁶ and D6.7 (as restored) gives the title to Virafsha (the author of A6.15). Nor do these Aramaic texts exhaust the record of “sons of the house” in Achaemenid historical sources.

Elsewhere in Egyptian documentation an Old Persian term of exactly similar meaning, **vis(a)puhra*, survives in Egyptian demotic form in an undated document containing the phrase “house of the prince”.⁷⁷ This must, we are told, refer literally to a house (i.e. a building) and not, as one might be tempted to think, a prince's “estate”.⁷⁸ The fact that the document also refers to the “tax of Ptah”, “Aḥmose the administrator of Hardai” (i.e. Cynopolis) and the “house of Pharaoh” (i.e. the royal treasury) as well as to scribes and judges associated with a nome only makes the situation more tantalising. But, of course, there is no particular reason to think that it has anything to do with Arshama.

Elsewhere in the empire the exact Akkadian equivalent of *bar bayta* (DUMU.É = *mār bīti*) is used of Arshama himself in BE 9.1. It is also applied to at least ten other individuals in the Murashu archive (Zadok 1977: 109-111),⁷⁹ and perhaps to an eleventh (Bammuš = OP *Bāmuš in IMT 105). Moreover, the fact that Arshama receives the title in only one of the thirteen documents that name him (nine of which, moreover, are of identical transactional character) is a warning that there are probably more “sons of the house” in the Babylonian documentation than we can now recognize.⁸⁰ Some of the individuals to whom the title *is* given can, like Arshama himself, be recognised from other sources as men of satrapal or comparable status: we seem to be dealing with the imperial elite.

Moving on to the imperial heartland, the Persepolis Fortification archive provides an anonymous groups of “sons of the house” (*mispušāšpe*, an Elamite version of OP *vis(a)puhra*) in PF 1793 (“the horses and mules of the King and of the princes at Karakušan”), as well as use of the word as a proper name (PF 1197; PFNN 0669). But named individuals whom we can recognize as members of the royal family characteristically appear without any title expressive

⁷⁵ Other letters from Arshama to Artavanta in which the title does not appear are letters in which no external address line is preserved.

⁷⁶ Not necessarily inconsistent with the suggestion that Varuvahya was a son or other relative of Arshama (Driver 1965, 14).

⁷⁷ CG 31174, with Vittmann 1991/2 and 2004, 131,168.

⁷⁸ Vittmann 1991/2. The demotic word for “house” used here cannot apparently double for “estate” in the way that Aramaic *byt* or Greek *oikos* might. Further information about the document's contents comes from a translation presented by Günter Vittmann at the third Arshama Workshop in 2011

⁷⁹ Aḥ'banuš (*Haxibanuš), Artahšar (*Rtaxšara-; Artoxares), Arbareme / Armareme (*Arbarēva; Arbarios), Arrišitu (*Ršita-; Arsites), Artareme (*Rtarēva-), Dadaršu (*Dādaršis), Ipradatu (*Fradāta-), Manuštanu (*Manuštana-; Menostanes), Neba'mardu (*Nēbavarda-), Siṭunu (*Stūnā-). I have excluded Dundana' (*Davantāna-) from the list drawn up by Zadok, since he was actually simply the *mār bīti* of Tattannu (this is clear in BE 10.89, though in BE 10.82 “of Tattannu” seems to be omitted). At least once we find *mār bīt šarri* (“son of the royal house”: BE 9.84 = TuM 2/3 202, of *Manuštana). Dandamaev 1992, 158 describes one Amisri as a princess, but the presumed identification with Amestris is doubtful (Stolper 1985, 66; Tavernier 2007, 104) and she is never given any title that establishes her royal status. The anonymous “woman of the palace” whose property is mentioned in BE 9.28,50 perhaps did have that status.

⁸⁰ A similar phenomenon applies to those of the other eleven who are mentioned more than once.

of that relationship – at least if they are male. Royal women are occasionally designated as *dukšiš* = OP **duxčiš* or “king’s daughter”⁸¹

“Son of the house” is, therefore, a well-established term of art for certain very high status Persians, attested in a range of different places and in Old Persian, Elamite, Akkadian, Aramaic and Demotic Egyptian forms. It stands to reason that the “house” in question is the royal one, and this is actually explicit in at least one Babylonian text, in which Manuštanu (Menostanes) is described as *mār bīt šarri*, “son of the King’s house” (BE 9.84 = TuM 2/3 202). It is a natural, and perhaps correct, assumption that “sons of the (royal) house” are members of the royal family. But there is a little more to be said before we affirm that conclusion – and then start debating how *close* a relative of the King one had to be to be a “son of the house”.

For the fact is that the Aramaic and Akkadian forms of the term also have a wider application. In the witness lists in four Elephantine documents (B3.11-13, B4.6) we find *bar bayta* used of a man called Nahum. He is plainly nothing to do with the Achaemenid royal family, though there is no contextual evidence to establish his precise status.⁸² More helpfully the Murashu archive contains many allusions to at least thirteen different men who are labelled as the *mār bīti* of another named individual. The bearers of the title (who may have either Iranian or Babylonian names) clearly function as important agents of the individuals whose *mār bīti* they are said to be – individuals who themselves may have Iranian or Babylonian names and who sometimes have significant titles of their own (*mašennu*; *ustabaru*). There are also documents which imply that important individuals (one of the Murashu in three cases;⁸³ Persians in two others⁸⁴) characteristically have an entourage of *mār bītis*, servants and commissioned agents – people who can be accused of the violent misappropriation of other people’s property. In this body of material, then, *mār bīti* designates individuals of privileged status in the environment of men who wield significant economic and social power but are certainly not kings and do not even have to be Iranians.

The *mār bīti* as putative “prince” thus simply represents a special case of the phenomenon, one in which the household happens to be that of the king. Further questions then arise. First, which type of case has priority? Is talk of the *mār bīti* of a non-royal individual a secondary imitation of the royal environment or was a terminology for close associates of the king transferred from originally less august surroundings? If it is true that *mār bīti* terminology has no relevant earlier history in Babylonia (and it appears to be absent even in earlier Achaemenid period texts),⁸⁵ the natural presumption must be that it enters Akkadian under Persian influence; and the role played by *vis* (“house”) in Persian royal inscriptions would certainly be consistent with the idea that “son of the *vis*” was an established Persian term of art.⁸⁶ If so, the model of the King and his “sons of the house” was extended to the entourages of (necessarily) less powerful men – an extension that was

⁸¹ *Dukšiš*: PF 823, 1795, PFa 31, PFNN 812, Fort.6764. King’s daughter: PFa 5 (the wife of Mardonius).

⁸² Kraeling 1953, 255-256 suggests we are dealing with a adopted house-born slave. (He lacks a patronym.) Porten 1968, 230 doubts a slave would witness a document and sees him as “some official whose function eludes us”—while noting the important *mār bīti* of the Murashu documents discussed immediately below.

⁸³ BE 9.69, BE 10.9, IMT 105 (Enlil-šum-iddin). See further below, p.31.

⁸⁴ BE 10.9 (Bagadata), TuM 2.3 204 (Artareme – who is a *mār bīti* in the other sense).

⁸⁵ *Mār bīti* is used as the designation of a deity, the first born son of a temple god (and can be the theophoric element in personal names). CAD cites little evidence about this: Dar.378, YOS 3.62 and TCL 9.117 are all late Babylonian (and might all be Achaemenid) but the text in Weidner 1933/34, 98-100 is of Neo-Assyrian date. The phenomenon needs further investigation.

⁸⁶ Perhaps its mutation into a personal name could be pleaded in support of this as well.

presumably conscious and evidently attracted no adverse reaction from the royal establishment. Secondly, what type of personal relationship is entailed by *mār bīti*? In the extended use of the term there is no obvious reason to postulate a genetic relationship between *mār bīti* and principal and it is natural to take “son of the house” as meaning little more than “member of the household”, “son” being a metaphorical indication of privilege.⁸⁷ Could that be the case with a royal **vis(a)puhra* or *mār bīti* or *bar bayta*?

One’s natural inclination is probably to think not, but I am not sure that it is easy to prove the point. I make five observations.

(1) Of the individuals designated *mār bīti*, Artarius (**Rtarēva-*) and Menostanes (**Manuštana-*) were respectively brother and nephew of Artaxerxes I (and so perhaps son and grandson of Xerxes⁸⁸), and there are strong circumstantial reasons to identify our Arshama as a fairly direct descendant of Darius I. But Arsites (**Ršita-*) is probably not Darius II’s brother,⁸⁹ the identification of Aḥ’banuš as a **Haxāmaniš* (Achaemenes) and so bearer of a name appropriate to the royal family is uncertain (**Haxiyabānuš* / **Haxībānuš* is an available alternative: Tavernier 2007, 200), and of the other five we have no direct and relevant information,⁹⁰ except that Artoxares was allegedly a Paphlagonian eunuch (Ctesias 688 F14[42]): that is hardly consonant with membership of the royal family and may come close to proving that the status of *mār bīti* can be conferred on those who are not the king’s real relatives.

(2) The metaphorical use of “son” (*mār*) to designate members of a group that is not (solely) genetically defined has parallels in Akkadian. But if the stimulus for *mār bīti* is Persian the question is whether such metaphorical use is characteristic of that language, a question that I do not currently know how to answer. But since our primary interest is in **vis(a)puhra* much will also depend on the force of *vis*. In considering that question one should bear in mind the fact that Greeks evidently believed the “house (*oikos*) of the king” to be a significant Achaemenid Persian concept.

(3) The case of Artoxares immediately makes one think of claims that Greco-Roman sources use the terms *sungenês* or *cognatus* to designate as “relatives” of the king privileged people who were in origin nothing of the sort.

(4) If there was nothing to call a royal son who not the eldest and/or the heir apparent except “son of the house”, perhaps that points to the term being at any rate firmly genetically limited. But in a polygamous environment that may still be a rather large pool of only rather distantly mutually related individuals. Perhaps, indeed, the reason for a distinctive word for

⁸⁷ Other *mār* + noun terms display a metaphorical use of “son”: *mār banî* = citizen, free man; *mār damqa* (of uncertain meaning); **mār damqi* = soldier; *mār ekalli* = courtier (“son of the palace”, rather like *bar bayta* if one thinks of *bayta* as a building, but not if one thinks of it as a family); *mār šipri* = messenger; *mār ikkari* = farmer; *mār ištari* = worshipper of a goddess

⁸⁸ Theoretically, of course, Artarius and Artaxerxes might only have shared a mother. -- A distinct OP term did exist for a king’s son, **vās(a)puhra*, attested only in the Akkadian calque of its adjectival form (*umasupitrû*) twice used in the title of an estate in Nippur otherwise written with the sumerogram DUMU.LUGAL = *mār šarri*. This is conventionally rendered “crown prince” (presumably with an implied reference to the putative heir apparent) because of the force of the cognate MP *vāspuhr*. (On this see Stolper 1985, 59-60, Tavernier 2007, 434, CAD 17.112, 20.97) What other sons of the king would have been called (apart from “son of the house”, which must have applied to them too, if not very distinctively) we do not know.

⁸⁹ To believe otherwise would require some complex special explanations of a Ctesian narrative that implies he had rebelled and been eliminated long before 417 BC, when he was still alive according to TuM 2/3 190, PBS 2/1 137.

⁹⁰ If Aḥ’banuš is an Achaemenes and of royal status, then his son Ipradata (Phradates) will, of course, share that status. Of Arbarius (Arbareme) we know that he was Sogdianus’ cavalry commander and defected to Darius. But that says nothing of his family relationships.

the crown prince (n.88) is precisely that there are so many princes – and so many that introduction into the class of others who are not related to the royal lineage at all is unproblematic.

(5) Apart from individual “sons of the house”, the Arshama dossier includes an interesting anonymous use of the term. In A4.7 the writer expresses the wish that Bagavahya should enjoy a thousand-fold increase in favour before “King Darius and the sons of the house”.⁹¹ The implication that a specially designated collective group around the king played a role in the individual Jewish subject’s understanding of Achaemenid power is quite striking. For one thing there is the dilution of the King’s special position. We are very ready to succumb to the influence of Greek constructions of the King as the only free man in a world of slaves or the King’s own construction of himself as a uniquely larger-than-life beneficiary of divine favour. The resulting picture of the King as isolated source of power is undoubtedly one strand of the truth, but it is not the only one (Tuplin 2010). But for the present purposes the interest is different. When we *do* acknowledge that the King worked amidst and through an elite class, we are prone to view that elite primarily as Persian rather than as specifically royal, and this despite, for example, the high proportion of military commanders in the Herodotean Army List who are relatives of the king -- a telling fact, whatever the precise status of that text. This is probably because, taken as a whole, the Greek tradition does *not* routinely categorize top men in the imperial system simply as close members the king’s family. So the question is whether the phrasing of A4.7 should be understood as speaking of the “King and the royal princes” and constitutes a corrective to that impression⁹² or whether it is not, after all, so very different from speaking of the king and his court.

To return to Arshama: the normal response to *bar bayta* (“prince”) makes him a relative of the king whereas the alternative (perhaps “privileged courtier”) neither precludes nor demands such a supposition. If the nexus of arguments around Sarsamas, Arxanes and Arshama rehearsed above is resolved in favour of a half-century tenure of the Egyptian satrapy, that will be a powerful incentive in favour positing royal status – and perhaps a place in the stemma quite close to the heart of the family. The discovery that what we have hitherto thought of as the satrap Arshama’s seal was already being used by the homonymous son of Darius and Artystone in the years before 494 more or less guarantees that supposition.⁹³ More specifically, he may be the grandson of Darius’ son (a straightforward case of papponymic naming, and the dates are just about possible⁹⁴) or perhaps, as Driver (1965, 93) suggested, his son. On this hypothesis, if Arshama really became satrap of Egypt after the mid-century revolt, a son of Darius (Achaemenes – killed at the start of the revolt) was succeeded by a great-grandson or grandson of Darius.⁹⁵

⁹¹ See also A6.3:1 n., on a constructed parallel with the God Of Heaven, and A6.3:7 n. on the PN-and-associates trope.

⁹² Ezra 7.23, where it is said that it is necessary to behave in the right way to the God of heaven “lest there be wrath against the king and his sons” may point in this direction.

⁹³ Garrison (forthcoming [a]).

⁹⁴ Darius’ son Arshama was born no earlier than c. 520 (on the assumption that Darius acquired Artystone, Cyrus’ daughter, as wife as part of the legitimation process following his accession), so he can only have a grandson born by 475 (and so old enough to become Egyptian satrap in the 450s) if both he and his own son or daughter produced children relatively young, but we have no evidence about elite Persian behaviour that makes that particularly implausible.

⁹⁵ Driver’s alternative suggestion, that Arshama was the son of Achaemenes, would also make him a grandson of Darius. But the seal evidence tells against what was always a rather arbitrary hypothesis. – I note in passing that it has been suggested that the Achaemenes who *may* appear in Murashu texts (see above n.90) might be grandson of the satrap of Egypt.

Arshama the satrap

One thing that Arshama is never called is “satrap”. He is “Arshama who is in Egypt” (A6.1, A6.2) or (extremely tantalisingly) “Arsames who is in Egypt as [...]” (P.Mainz 17)⁹⁶ or “lord” or (as we have seen) “son of the house”. This is unremarkable. The term “satrap” is far from omnipresent even in Greek sources and decidedly rare in Persian and the other non-Greek languages of the empire. (It does not occur, for example, in the Bactrian Aramaic letters, leaving us strictly speaking unsure of the status of Akhvamazda. There, as in Egypt and indeed the world of the Persepolis Fortification archive, we are in a system in which, the more important you are, the less your title needs to be re-iterated at every opportunity.⁹⁷) In Egypt a demotic version of the word appears on a Saqqara ostracon (S.75/6-7:2), apparently in reference to the Peticis of Arrian 3.5.2,⁹⁸ and in the text on the *verso* of the Demotic Chronicle that recounts Darius’ commissioning of a collection of Egyptian laws, but otherwise (apparent) holders of the office are referred to as “to whom Egypt is entrusted” (P.Berlin 13539-13540) or “lord of Egypt” (P.Rylands IX 2.17) or (perhaps) “the great one who ruled Egypt”.⁹⁹ The low incidence of official use of the title might have some bearing on the sparseness of its use in Greek sources before the fourth century.

As we have seen the date of his appointment as satrap is only known (as some date in the 450s) if we make the appropriate decision about *Sarsaman* in Ctesias 688 F14(38) – as I think that in the present state of the evidence we legitimately can. The latest date at which we know him to have been satrap is 407. Persian control of Egypt collapsed not long after that date (Persian regnal dates continue at Elephantine and Ain Manawir until 402 or 401; Manethonic calculations implied a somewhat earlier start for the XXVIIIth dynasty). The precise circumstances elude us, as does identity of the satrap at the time – though the economical assumption is that it was still Arshama. If so, he held the office for some half-century, right in the middle of the Persian imperial era, but right at the end of the first and, as it would prove, longer period of continuous Persian rule over Egypt: for the autonomy recovered at the end of the fifth century lasted for some six decades until 343, and the second Persian domination would then last a mere decade – and even then be marred, if not entirely broken, by the intrusion of Chababash in the early 330s.

The absent satrap

Direct documentary reflection of Arshama’s activity *as satrap* is confined to the letters and memorandum about the temple affray in Elephantine and four or five other disconnected items. I shall say a little bit more about some of this material later on. First, we should confront a different aspect of his tenure of the satrapy, *viz.* his absence(s) from Egypt.

Absence in 410-407

We know from A4.5 and A4.7//A4.8 that he left Egypt between 17/4/410 (the start of Darius’ 14th regnal year) and July 410 (the date of the destruction of the temple in Elephantine). He

⁹⁶ It is preceded by a regnal date (year 36 of, presumably, Artaxerxes I), producing an effect resembling the Mylasan inscription SIG³ 167 = RO 54, the Lydian (funerary?) text in Gusmani & Akkan 2004 (starting with the 17th year of Artaxerxes and the satrap Rhosaces) and the Aramaic version of the Xanthos trilingual (FX vi 136; the Greek and Lycian versions omit the regnal date).

⁹⁷ Artavanta’s undefined status is perhaps another example of this. The failure to give him a title is an epistolary acknowledgment of his importance.

⁹⁸ The belief that it occurs in S.H5-450 (cf. Tavernier 2007, 436) must be abandoned: cf. Smith & Martin 2010, 51-53. The correct reading is *Hšsry* (? = OP *Xšačāriya-, a personal name).

⁹⁹ Such, at least, is Menu’s understanding of this phrase in one of its occurrences in the Wn-nfr = Onnophris stela: cf. Menu 2008, 157.

was certainly back in Egypt by the time of A4.9 (the memorandum of Bagavahya and Delaiah recommending reconstruction of the temple), but that still leaves some room for uncertainty. The decision by Bagavahya and Delaiah has a *terminus ante quem non* of 25 November 407, the date on which the Elephantine Jews drafted (twice) a letter to Bagavahya, Delaiah and Shelemiah (Delaiah's brother) requesting their intervention. The actual letter may have been sent a little later than that and we cannot tell how long elapsed between that point and the taking of that decision. Given how close we are to the end of 407, it is highly likely that A4.9 only *proves* that Arshama was in his satrapy or soon expected there by some date in the early part of 406.

Is it possible he was there before that? The Jews had already written to Bagavahya on an earlier occasion, in that case addressing him alongside the Jewish religious and secular authorities in Jerusalem. This was presumably soon after the destruction of the Elephantine temple, and no reply was forthcoming. In the light of A4.9, one might speculate that one reason why they tried again (this time excluding the Jerusalem authorities in favour of those in Samaria) was the knowledge that Arshama was, or would soon be, back in Egypt.

That speculation interconnects with the question of how we deal with the surprising final sentence of the letter of 25 November 407, which says that Arshama “did not know about this which was done to us at all” (A4.7) or “did not know [about this], any (of it) which was done to us” (A4.8) – a sentence that may have a bearing in its own right on the question of Arshama's whereabouts. One would have expected the Elephantine Jews to have reported their distress to the satrap. But this sentence requires us to believe *either* that they made no effort to do so -- but contented themselves with (presumably) approaching other non-Elephantine authorities in Egypt¹⁰⁰ and (certainly) approaching Bagavahya and the Jerusalem priests and nobles¹⁰¹ -- *or* that the sentence is a polite way of saying that, although Arshama did actually know about the temple issue, he had shown no interest in intervening. The latter option perhaps has no compelling implications for Arshama's whereabouts: he could ignore Jewish letters wherever he was, and to assume that he was more likely to do so when absent from Egypt is to beg the question. But the former option might make most sense as a consequence of Arshama's absence from Egypt – provided one can believe that the Jews would treat that Arshama absence as an unarguably cogent reason for not even attempting to approach him in writing. Why might they take that view? We know nothing independently of the reasons for Arshama's departure.¹⁰² Both in A4.5 and A4.7 we are told not just that he left Egypt but that he “went to the King”. Nothing special *has* to be read into that: on the face of it “the King” is simply a destination, substituted for a geographical name because the King did, after all, move from place to place.¹⁰³ Of course, if the letter's authors knew that there *was* something special about the nature of Arshama's visit (or summons) to court – something that might preclude interest in a local issue affecting the garrison in Elephantine – they might well not

¹⁰⁰ There is no direct evidence of such an approach -- unless that is how we explain A4.5, a letter whose addressee is unknown. But, even granted that the local authorities in Elephantine-Syene (Vidranga the *frataraka* and his son Nephayna, the garrison-commander) had colluded in the attack upon the temple, it is perhaps hard to believe that no attempt to contact the authorities in Memphis. A further complication is the possibility that something bad had happened to Vidranga and others involved in the temple-attack – a *possibility* only, not a certainty: Lindenberger's reading of A4.7:16-17//A4.8:15-16 (2001; 2003, 75) deserves consideration. On all of this see Appendix 2.

¹⁰¹ A4.7:17-19 // A4.8:16-18. (They sent no reply.)

¹⁰² For further speculative comment see below, pp.43-44.

¹⁰³ It recalls the terminology of Q-texts in the Persepolis Fortification archive, where we read of travellers that they “carried a sealed document of so-and-so and went to the King (*sunkikka paraš*)”. But the terminology can be used in relation to other destination figures, of course, including Parnakka, Ziššawiš, Irdubama, Karkiš, Bakabana, Irtuppiya, Mišmina and Mašana.

allude to it here: “when Arshama went to the King” *might* be heavy with overtones – albeit ones that we cannot decode. All we can do is assume that the Jews (and everyone else) knew that all of the satrap’s powers and authority were now delegated to a deputy and the satrap himself was effectively *hor de concours*. (The whole problem is deciding whether such a situation was normal when a satrap was absent or requires special explanation in terms of an unusual crisis.) If the Jews *had* tried and failed to get help from that deputy (cf. n.100), the news that Arshama was (or would soon be) back might prompt a re-opening of the question. Of course, if the final sentence of the petition to Bagavahya, Delaiah and Shelemiah is true, we have to take it that re-opening the question initially meant just looking for support from Palestine, (still) not contacting Arshama directly. (The final sentence becomes, in fact, a tacit acknowledgement that, in the end, Arshama’s attitude would matter and a tacit hint that Bagavahya, Delaiah and Shelemiah could take a view of the issue confident that they were not in conflict with a view the satrap had already taken.)

On this reading of the situation, then, Arshama’s absence would (effectively) be over at some date in 407, 27 November 407 being a *terminus ante quem* or (one might say) *terminus circa quem*. To put his return significantly earlier than this is only possible if the final sentence of A4.7//A4.8 is not true and the reason for sending the November 407 petition is unconnected with Arshama’s movements. We are certainly not well-informed enough to preclude the latter; but the former (that the petitioners would actually lie about Arshama to Persian governors in Palestine) is not easy to credit or a sensible starting point for other speculation.¹⁰⁴

Other signs of absence

In the case of A4.1 (419), A4.2 (undated) and the two demotic texts (435 and 429 respectively) – documents that simply refer to Arshama -- and A6.1 (427), A6.2 (411) – letters written respectively to and by Arshama -- there is no obvious reason to suppose that the satrap is anywhere but in Egypt. In the case of the letters in particular addressor(s) and addressee(s) are plausibly in different parts of Egypt. A6.2 is written by Arshama to an Egyptian boatman who is most naturally assumed to be in Elephantine. In A6.1 a large group of officials, including some who are scribes of provinces (presumably sub-divisions of Egypt) write to Arshama. Both letters would make sense if Arshama was in e.g. Memphis at the time. Admittedly we probably cannot prove that he was. In both letters the address-line includes a description of Arshama as “who is in Egypt”. But that would still be consistent with his being outside the satrapy if the phrase were construed as a title, virtually equivalent to “to whom Egypt is entrusted” or (as we might say) “satrap of Egypt”; and it may be that such an understanding makes good sense even if Arshama is *not* outside the satrapy, particularly in A6.1, where people are writing to him from elsewhere inside Egypt and the phrase might seem superfluous if regarded just as (so to say) a postal address. So Arshama’s whereabouts are strictly speaking a matter of speculation. But, to re-iterate, nothing in these documents invites the supposition that he is away from the satrapy, and I do not think that anyone has ever suggested otherwise.

But the question *has* been raised with the Bodleian documents. One has to be careful here. All letters entail some distance between writer and recipient, and (as has just been noted) letters can be sent between different places in the satrapy. So there have to be plain additional indications of a substantial distance separating Arshama from Egypt: a letter to “Nakhtḥor the *pqyd* who is in Egypt, in Lower Egypt” (A6.10:11: cf. n. ad loc), for example, would hardly satisfy that requirement (see below).

¹⁰⁴ For further discussion of the fate of the Elephantine temple during Arshama’s absence see Commentary, Appendix 2.

It is not unnatural to assume that Nakhtḥor's ration-authorization document was written in Mesopotamia or Elam and, although this is not strictly speaking certain (cf. A6.9:1 n.), it would perhaps be unduly contrarian to think otherwise. Hinzani's trip to Susa in A6.12 (whence he has now returned to Egypt) probably also entails that Arshama was in Susa at the time of his visit; but the letter may not guarantee that he is still precisely there or (at any rate) is going to go on being there for the foreseeable future (cf. A6.12:1 n.). There are also two documents that locate Arshama in Babylon. It is next to certain that both Arshama and Varuvahya were there when Arshama wrote to Nakhtḥor instructing him to assist in recovering dues owed to Varuvahya from his Egyptian estates (A6.13);¹⁰⁵ and A6.15 also places Arshama in Babylon, although we cannot be sure that he was still there when Virafsha wrote thence to Nakhtḥor (A6.15:1 n.).

Both A6.13 and A6.15 have external address-lines which describe the letter's recipient(s) as "in Egypt".¹⁰⁶ In these cases that description does match what is likely or certain to be a substantive geographical distance between addressor and addressee. Can we extrapolate from this to other formally parallel cases?

A6.13 is one of three letters from "Arshama to Nakhtḥor the *pqyd*, Kenzasirma and his colleagues the accountants who are in Egypt", the other two being A6.11 (where there is nothing else to indicate Arshama's whereabouts)¹⁰⁷ and A6.12 which may have been written while Arshama was outside Egypt (see above). In A6.15 Virafsha wrote from Babylon to "Nakhtḥor the *pqyd* who is in Egypt". This evokes two types of parallel case.

In A6.10 Arshama writes to Nakhtḥor "the *pqyd* who is in Egypt, in Lower (Egypt)" (line 11) and some contrast is implied between what Arshama has heard at his current location ("here": line 3) and the situation of "officials who are in Lower Egypt" (which is what he has been hearing about). This certainly implies Arshama is not actually on his Lower Egyptian estates (wherever they were) but requires no other conclusion about his whereabouts: he could in theory be in the satrapal residence in Memphis.

The other type of parallel does not involve Nakhtḥor, *Lower* Egypt or an explicit title. It is found in two letters sent by "Arshama, son of the house, to Artavanta who is in Egypt" (A6.3, A6.7) -- part of a set of five (A6.3-7) to the same recipient (spelled Artahanta on one occasion), of which the others are less well preserved and lack surviving address lines, though A6.4:5 can certainly be restored to conform. The substance of these letters (as distinct from the address-line) contains little that pushes towards any particular conclusion as to Arshama's whereabouts.¹⁰⁸ All we can tell for sure is that Arshama and Artavanta are remote enough from one another for letters to be necessary, that (in A6.3) Arshama's *pqyd* Psamshek has recently travelled to Arshama and then back to the vicinity of Artavanta (perhaps carrying the letter in question), and that the involvement of Artavanta was necessary to execute orders from Arshama involving the punishment of slaves - explicitly (6.3) or implicitly (6.7) -- and the assignment of domains (6.4).¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ (The companion letter, A6.14, confirms that Varuvahya was in Babylon, but adds nothing about Arshama). This case, incidentally, establishes that the presence of a demotic annotation (the name Ḥotepḥep) does not guarantee composition in Egypt. Such annotations also appear on A6.11 ("about the fields of Pamun which I have given to Peṭosiri") and A6.12 ("Ḥotepḥep").

¹⁰⁶ See A6.3:9 n. on the geographical annotations in external address lines, which also occur in the Bactrian letters.

¹⁰⁷ Whitehead 1975, 81 claimed that *bgw* (literally "within"; translated as "therein" in Porten & Yardeni) in A6.11:2 indicates that Arshama was outside Egypt. But this is not compelling: see note ad loc.

¹⁰⁸ But note the words "there in Egypt" in A6.4:4, which may constitute a formal indication of Arshama's location outside Egypt (see note ad loc.).

¹⁰⁹ A.6.5-6 are about domains too, but too fragmentary for a clear narrative to emerge.

What we make of the situation is very much tied up with what we make of the status of Artavanta. One argument might run like this. Artavanta has no title (such as *pqyd* or accountant). This makes it harder to use the titular explanation of “who is in Egypt” in order to justify a scenario in which Arshama is *not* absent from Egypt. To be more precise: the description “who is in Egypt” might serve as a quasi-title for the satrap (as we have already seen in A6.1 and A6.2), but Artavanta is not the satrap. So *either* the description marks the distinctive geographical fact that he is in Egypt, whereas the addressor (Arshama) is not *or* it is quasi-titular after all, indicates that Artavanta is (so to say) “acting satrap” and therefore surely entails the same conclusion – that Arshama is somewhere outside Egypt.

The only way to evade that conclusion would be to identify a regular role for Artavanta as authoritative intermediary between an Arshama resident in Memphis and the business of his landed estates in Upper and Lower Egypt (i.e. throughout the satrapy) and to maintain that by extension he might be accorded a quasi-satrapal description. I do think that one can perhaps imagine such a role: one might even in Babylonian terms describe Artavanta as a *mār bīti* of Arshama – a rather grander example, perhaps, than the ones that one sees in Nippur, but appropriately so since Arshama is, after all, the satrap. And one might then note the respectful way in which Arshama addresses Artavanta (6.3:1 n.) and suggest that he is also being respectful in marking the addressee as the one “who is in Egypt”.

The degree of Arshama’s absenteeism or (what is not quite the same) the regularity with which it is actually reflected in his correspondence and other Egyptian documents thus remains hard to assess. The default assumption will probably remain that it is quite a prominent feature of the record and what some will see as the special pleading of some of the arguments just rehearsed may in the end serve to validate that default assumption. There will clearly be an inclination to think that, since some of the Bodleian letters were written outside Egypt and none of them (perhaps) *have* to have been written inside Egypt, the parsimonious hypothesis is that they were all written outside Egypt. Whether the collection’s archival character helps to validate that hypothesis is a moot point.

Meanwhile one final observation is required about a part of the dossier lying outside the Egyptian documentation. Ctesias represents Arshama’s support for the cause of the future Darius II as an important element in the latter’s success – at least it seems reasonable that that is the implication of his support being picked out in the narrative sufficiently for Photius to note it. Do we assume that when Arshama declared his support he was in Babylon – or wherever we assume Darius’ elevation to the throne to have occurred? It seems likely. Did he travel east from Egypt post-haste as the succession-crisis developed? Had he been at or near the imperial heartland from well before the latter part of 424? Does the phrasing of Ctesias 15(50) actually imply he had originally expressed allegiance to Sogdianus and then defected (as Arbarius did) or had he managed to bide his time, whether in Egypt or Babylon or wherever, before picking Ochus as the one to back? I do not at the moment think there is any way of answering these questions.¹¹⁰

Arshama the estate-holder

Arshama’s status as estate-holder is apparent from both Egyptian and Babylonian documents. Taken together they show him to have had a claim on property in Nippur (the Akkadian

¹¹⁰ We lack for Arshama the fortuitous documentary hint that (perhaps) tells us of Gobryas’ absence from Babylonia in summer 522 at the start of the troubles surrounding Darius I’s eventual accession (YOS 3.106:7,31, with Stolper 2003, 279).

dossier),¹¹¹ in various other parts of Babylonia, Assyria and Syria (A6.9)¹¹² and in Upper and Lower Egypt (the Bodleian archive).

The estates of A6.9

Of the estates in the provinces named in A6.9 little more can be said than that they were available (directly or indirectly) as a resource from which Nakhṭor and his travel party could draw daily subsistence. That they sufficed to cover *all* his requirements when travelling through the relevant regions is not stated and should not be inferred: in fact, the geographical discontinuity precludes it.¹¹³

The estates in Babylonia

In the case of the estates in Nippur the Akkadian documents provide us with nine transactionally identical items (leases of livestock),¹¹⁴ a lease of arable land involving property belonging to Arshama,¹¹⁵ two documents (one Murashu, one non-Murashu) in which his land or land belonging to someone from his household is part of a boundary-definition (but otherwise has no relevance to the transaction being recorded)¹¹⁶ and one rather more unusual document about the resolution of a dispute involving Arshama's servant and the Murashu firm (IMT 105).¹¹⁷ Taken globally the documents prove that Arshama owned land and livestock in Babylonia and that management of the latter at least was in the hands of a Babylonian *paqdu*. I comment for the moment just on two points.

(a) The livestock leases are of particular interest not only for what they say about livestock management¹¹⁸ but also for two other facts: they are the latest dated documents in the entire Murashu archive and the lessor (and Arshama's *paqdu*) is one Enlil-suppē-muḥur –

¹¹¹ Van Driel 1993, 223 does note that the livestock to which many of the documents relate might not actually have been in Nippur, even if the contractual arrangements were made there. All we can tell (from the dates of the contracts) is that they were somewhere where lambing could be expected to happen in November.

¹¹² If the *paqdyn* here are Arshama's estate officials, this is straightforward. If they are provincial officials whose payments are to be reimbursed from Arshama's "estate which is in your province" (6.4:2), it must still be implied that he *has* estates in all the relevant areas. On *paqdyn* see A6.4:2 n.

¹¹³ See the introduction to the commentary on A6.9.

¹¹⁴ Driver 1965, 88 was wrong to suggest that in BE 9.1 the animals are "in the charge of" Bēl-ittannu, judge of the Sin-canal. Bēl-ittannu only appears as the person in whose presence the transaction was concluded (which is the role characteristically fulfilled by judges of the Sin Canal: cf. Cardascia 1951, 20, Stolper 1985, 41). In the other texts no such figure appears, but the overseer of Arshama's animals, Šabahtani, is mentioned as the person in charge of the particular livestock being leased (except apparently in PBS 2/1 145, for which the *index nominum* has no corresponding entry). Meanwhile two slaves and an *ustarbaru* of Queen Parysatis are among the witnesses in these documents (Dandamaev 1992, 166.)

¹¹⁵ In EE 11 Enlil-šum-Iddin leases out grain fields, including land of Arshama's estate, crown-land (*uzbarra*) by the Sin-magir canal, as well as a canal and 40 oxen with their harness and other land. He does so for an annual payment of 1300 kur of barley, 100 kur of wheat, 100 kur of spelt and some other products. The text confirms directly that Arshama owned real estate in Babylonia (Stolper 1985, 65, Dandamaev 1992, 33).

¹¹⁶ IMT 9 (the field of Šamaš-ibni from the household of Aršamu), TCL 13.203 (the border of the *mār bīti* Aršamu).

¹¹⁷ It was once believed that that one of the Nippur *ḥaṭrus* was called Aršammaja (cf. CAD A/2, 308) and was linked to Arshama; but the name is now read as Arumaja (Stolper 1985, 72).

¹¹⁸ Their important place in the evidence about Babylonian sheep and goats is fully discussed in Van Driel 1993. The basic rent (the leaseholder must return two thirds of the live-births of the flock) is attested at Persepolis as well: cf. Henkelman 2005, 157.

a man who is attested earlier as a servant (*ardu*) or *paqdu* of the Murashu firm. Putting these two facts together, Stolper 1985, 23 speculates that Arshama effectively expropriated the Murashu family at some date in or after c.414 and that that is why Enlil-suppē-muḥur had passed from their service into his. If this is correct, it presumably puts Arshama's economic engagement with the landscape of southern Babylonia onto a whole new level. The circumstances of the change and its ongoing implications seem to lie beyond our gaze, but, since the Murashu could hardly have assembled their business in the first place without the blessing of the royal administration, one may at least observe that its termination at the hands of the likes of Arshama is entirely appropriate.

(b) IMT 105 records a complaint brought by a servant of Arshama (Šiṭa) against Enlil-šum-iddin, son of Murashu (Stolper 1985, 65). The complaint is that Enlil-šum-iddin, members of his household, servants and commissioned agents have taken some of Šiṭa's property. The complaint is first brought before Bammuš, “[son of the] house” ([LU DUMU].É(?)) and some other notables, who then travel to Nippur for its final resolution. Enlil-šum-iddin paid an indemnity of 500 kur of barley (which Dandamaev 1992, 34 regards as a high sum) and received guarantees against further litigation which were validated by an oath sworn by gods and the king. This incident is interesting for various reasons.

In the first place it can be compared with what is found in BE 9.69 and BE 10.9. In BE 9.69 Udarna' (*Vidarna-), son of Raḥīm-II, claims before a Nippur assembly that the same range of associates of Enlil-šum-iddin (together with some of his own relatives) had taken utensils and other property from his house. Enlil-šum-iddin questioned the accused, recovered the property and returned it. In BE 10.9 Baga'data' (*Bagadātā-) the *ustarbaru*, son of Bel-nadin, claimed that Enlil-šum-iddin and his associates had destroyed two places called Rabija and Hazatu and removed silver, gold, livestock and other property thence. This time Enlil-šum-iddin denied the charge – but paid a huge indemnity in return for guarantee against future prosecution. The indemnity is much larger than that in IMT 105, but the essential situation sounds rather similar. This is particularly striking because, whereas the incident in BE 9.69 occurred at the end of Artaxerxes I's 39th year (in early spring 425), BE 10.9 was written on 16.1.1 Darius = 26 April 423, only a little more than a month after IMT 105 (9.12.accession of Darius = 20 March 423): in other words, the two most similar cases are almost exactly contemporaneous. Moreover these documents belong very early in Darius reign (the first one just over two months after the earliest example of his claim to be king being recognized in the dating formulae of Babylonian documents, on 10 January 423) and at time at which, on conventional reconstructions of the events following Artaxerxes' death Darius had not yet disposed of Sogdianus. Could the actions of Enlil-šum-iddin and his entourage be a side-effect of troubled times? Or should the fact that a similar well-grounded accusation could be made already two years earlier warn against any such specific inference? Tolini, who discusses the incident at some length (2011, 1.505-519), concludes, perhaps prudently, that a specific political link cannot be postulated.

Secondly, there is a pattern connecting the complainants. The first two are men with Iranian names but Babylonian patronymics. That suggests families that have chosen (to put it crudely) to side with the foreign imperial power. The third is the servant of Arshama, another collaborator with and positive beneficiary of Achaemenid rule – for there is no reason to doubt that the property was Šiṭa's (not simply property belonging to Arshama for which he had administrative responsibility) and reasonably substantial.

Thirdly, prosopographical details are provided in IMT 105 about the process for dispute-resolution, something that does not happen in the two other texts. These details show not only that there was an *ustarbaru* and *šaknu* (*ḥaṭru* supervisor) among those involved in hearing the case in Nippur but more strikingly that those who received the initial complaint alongside the “son of the house” Bammuš (*Bāmuš) included a “satrap” (whose name is lost

but can probably be restored as *Siḥa*¹¹⁹) and one *Ispitāma*’, son of *Patēšu* (i.e. **Spitāma*-, son of **Paθēša*:- Tavernier 2007, 273, 314). As König 1972: 78 noted, these names call to mind Ctesias 688 F1(42), where Petisas and his son Spitamenes go as emissaries to Megabyzus (along with Artarius, Amytis and Artoxares) to settle latter’s revolt. The identification is supported by Stolper (and extended to the *Ispitāma*’ of PBS 2/1 27 and 29 and the *Patēšu* of BE 10.33 & 37).¹²⁰ Altogether the events of IMT 105 are drawing in some very high-status people. In fact, Tolini (2011, 1.505-519) argues that the initial denunciation took place in Babylon and that this happened because the King was currently there: i.e. *Šiṭa* took advantage of this circumstance to bring his grievance to the attention of people with real clout, perhaps even to the King himself. Does the special level of high-rank Iranian concern with this case (resulting in **Bamuš* and the rest actually going to Nippur to join with local figures in settling it) reflect the status of *Šiṭa* as a servant and protégé of Arshama – something putting him in a different league from **Bagadātā*- (himself an *ustarbaru*) and **Vidarna*-? In any case, *Enlil-šum-iddin* survived the episode and in soon back in Babylon, doing new business in the context of the King’s re-allocation of land in Babylonia (Tolini 2011, 1.519-528).

The estates in Egypt

Arshama has estates in Upper and Lower Egypt (A6.7; cf. A6.4, A6.10).¹²¹ Psamshek seems to be described as *pqyd* for domains in both areas in A6.4 (the text is restored, but the restoration is surely plausible), whereas in A6.10 (address line) *Nakhtḥor* is *pqyd* in Egypt, but more specifically located in Lower Egypt. How substantive a distinction this is I am not sure. On the one hand, the fact that A6.7 can describe a group of thirteen slaves as “appointed...among my domains which are in Upper and Lower Egypt” even though they must in practice have been located at some particular place in one or the other region suggests that “my domains which are in Upper and Lower Egypt” is purely formulaic (i.e. that the specification “Upper and Lower” is not adding anything very substantive); and on the other hand the substance of A6.10 relates specifically to Lower Egypt¹²², so the formulation of *Nakhtḥor*’s title in that document might have been adjusted accordingly. One could maintain, then, that both men might have been described as “*pqyd* in my domains in Upper and Lower Egypt”, but also as “*pqyd* in Egypt” or even (if the situation made it specially fitting) “*pqyd* in Lower Egypt” or “*pqyd* in Upper Egypt” – though this last option is not strictly speaking directly attested by A6.10:11. This leaves it hard to tell how many *pqydn* Arshama might have had at once in Egypt and whether, as a matter of fact, the remit of *Nakhtḥor* or Psamshek was actually confined to one part of the country.¹²³

¹¹⁹ Tolini 2011, 1.511,514,517. The man is known from PBS 2/1 2,3. He is not the “satrap of Babylonia” in our normal understanding of such terminology. But use of the title *ahšadrapanu* does highlight his status as (etymologically) “protector of the kingdom” and thus representative of the king.

¹²⁰ These remarks are based upon Stolper 1985, 94 and the text of IMT 105 in Donbaz & Stolper 1997, 152-153. A new reading of IMT 105, however, suggests that, rather than *Is-pi-ta-ma-*’ [DU]MU.NITA(?) *šá Pa-te-e-šú* (*Ispitama* the son of *Patēšu*), we may have *Is-pi-ta-ma-*’ [DUM]U É! *Pa-te-e-šú*, i.e. *Ispitama* the *mār bīti*, son of *Patēšu*.

¹²¹ These terms are usually interpreted in the conventional way (Upper = southern, Lower = northern). For the possibility that this might be wrong see A6.4:2 n.

¹²² The suggestion in Lewis 1958 that we restore “Upper Egypt” in line 4 is not cogent: see n. ad loc.

¹²³ The only possible closer geographical specification for an estate in the Bodleian letters is the naming of *Papremis* (reading somewhat uncertain) in reference to the estate of *Virafsha* in A6.15:6 (see note ad loc.). What is said there might imply that Arshama also had land in the same region (hence *Nakhtḥor* could purloin wine that allegedly really belonged to *Virafsha*). This (rather shaky) argument would again link *Nakhtḥor* with Lower Egypt, at least in conventional usage (but cf. n.121).

Driver (1965, 15) was inclined to think the *pqyd* a very senior official, perhaps the highest position beneath the satrap in the administration of Egypt. In this he was evidently influenced by the politeness of Artahay to Nakhtḥor in A6.16 and by an assumption that the *pqydn* of A6.9 were state-officials. But, although A6.9 remains a problematic text (see Commentary), there is no doubt that the Egyptian *pqydn* of the Arshama dossier should primarily be associated with the estate environment in which the texts *prima facie* locate them.¹²⁴

Stolper 1985, 65-6 described the situation in Egypt in the following terms (I have added some references):

“[Arshama’s] extensive estate was managed by ... men entitled ‘bailiff, comptroller’ (*pqyd*). It included small farms, designated ‘allotments’ (*bg*), held by the owner’s personal subordinates.¹²⁵ The farms were required to pay tax or services (*hlk*) to the estate (*l byt*) [A6.11]; in the same way Labaši, for example, collected the *ilku* due from bow lands within the crown prince’s estate [sc. in Babylonian Nippur]. Aršam’s Egyptian bailiffs held property within the estate, once termed a ‘grant’ (*dšn*), conferred by Aršam and the king [A 6.4]; similarly, Parysatis’ bailiff held a fief within her estate, and agents of crown collaborated with the bailiffs in control of personnel on the crown prince’s estate. In short ... the structure of Aršam’s Egyptian estate corresponds in broad outline and in terminological particulars to the structure inferred for the estates of other members of the royal family in Babylonia”

This assessment holds good, but one should not, of course, hastily infer that the parallel extends to Egyptian estates being composed of *ḥaṭrus* or bow-fiefs. We do not know how the Egyptian estate of Arshama or Virafsha or Varuvahya came to be defined (Varuvahya’s domain was given to him by Arshama, but this says nothing of its original formation: A6.13:1), but the configuration of land-holding within the estates may have developed on the basis of the native Egyptian set-up, just as that in Nippur had Babylonian roots. The ultimate authorisation for the holding of land is doubtless royal – something perhaps reflected in the way that Ankhoḥapi’s land-grant (*dšn*), received as *pqyd* and presumably located within Arshama’s estate, is described as having been given to him by the king and Arshama (A6.4:1).

A number of further observations can be made about the Egyptian estates of Arshama and his fellow Persians.¹²⁶

(1) They were not confined to one part of Egypt: talk of Upper and Lower Egypt may be somewhat formulaic (see above), but it must also mean what it says. In other parts of the empire too high-level figures had property in more than part of a satrapy, as is now proved in the case of Babylonia by new documentary information about Parysatis.¹²⁷

(2) The *pqyd*’s duty is not merely to manage but to enhance the estate: that at least is the implicit contention of A6.10. The statements that harbour this implicit contention are, of course, provoked by a particular circumstance, viz. Arshama’s belief that Nakhtḥor is not even maintaining the *status quo* during a time of disturbance. But that the principle had general applicability seems credible, even if we choose not to believe that in normal times estate-managers were permanently on the look-out for people who could be forcibly recruited to Arshama’s service as branded or tattooed workers.

¹²⁴ For fuller discussion of uses of *pqyd* (which also occurs in one of the Bactrian letters) see 6.4:2 n.

¹²⁵ On *bg* see 6.4:2 n., A6.13:1 n.

¹²⁶ For completeness’ sake I note that D6.14 fr.(o) *verso*:2 is restored as containing *hngyt*, partner-in-chattel (**hangaiṭa-*, Tavernier 2007, 425), a term known from several Elephantine contracts (B3.6:5, B3.10:18, B3.11:12, B3.12:27, B5.5:9, D2.10:11). How this might have fitted into the story of the management of Arshama’s estates is anyone’s guess.

¹²⁷ Stolper 2006a . Greek sources already showed that she had property both in Transeuphratene and the Tigris valley (Xen.An.1.4.9, 2.4.27).

(3) The estate owed *mndt'* to its owner, and (where necessary) this was actually carried from Egypt to the absentee landlord elsewhere in the empire. We learn this from A6.13, where Arshama instructs Nakhtḥor and the accountants to assist in ensuring that Varuvahya's *pqyd* Ḥatubasti disburses the *mndt'* and the "accrued interest" and arranges for its transport to Babylon,¹²⁸ and A6.14, which is Varuvahya's letter to Nakhtḥor on the same subject.¹²⁹ On the meaning of the word *mndt'* see A6.13:3 n., a discussion which also raises the question of the relationship between *mndt'* (as encountered in A6.13-14) and the *hlk'* owed to Arshama's estate by Pamun and Peṭosiri (as encountered in A6.11).

(4) Those who pay *hlk'* in A6.11 do so because they have a land allotment (*bg'*), and their relationship to that allotment is described with the word *mhḥsn* – a word that recurs in a variety of other contexts in the Arshama dossier (A6.2) and elsewhere, both in Egypt and in other parts of the empire. Porten-Yardeni translate the underlying verb as "hold-as-heir", but, although it is clear that we are dealing with technical terminology (it is not reasonable to regard *mhḥsn* as just an anodyne equivalent of "have" or "hold"), the claim that there is a necessary connection with hereditary ownership is far from certain. An interconnection with service obligations is more likely to be definitively important. For fuller discussion see A6.13:2 n.

(5) Various other human aspects of the estate (in addition to the *pqyd* who manages it) deserve note.

Kenzasirma and his colleagues the accountants (an Iranian title, **hamāarakara-*) appear several times as co-addressees with Nakhtḥor (A6.11-14). A6.2 (a document from Arshama's administrative life as satrap) refers to "treasury accountants" (also Iranian: **hamāarakara-* of the **ganza*), who play a role in the resourcing of boat-repairs, but Kenzasirma and his colleagues on the face of it are something separate and belong purely to the estate-environment: see A6.11:7 n.. They appear in letters that relate to the assignment of a domain within the estate, the disbursement of rations to Ḥinzani the sculptor and the payment and transport of *mndt'*. One may suspect that the processes of ration-provision to which A6.9 would have given rise involved similar estate-accountants in places outside Egypt.

We encounter an *wršbr* (A6.5, A6.11), another Iranian term most recently interpreted as **varčabara* = "worker" or "worker-supervisor", but previously variously said to mean "plenipotentiary", "forester", "mounted officer", "shield-bearer" and "quarter-master": for details see A6.5:2 n. Peṭosiri, the man petitioning to recover his father's land-grant in A6.11, has the title, but one can deduce nothing about its practical content from his petition – save that (as a potential land-holder) he is more likely to be a "worker-supervisor" than mere "worker".

At a lower level there are workers designated as *grd* = Iranian **garda*: see A6.10:1 n.. This is the word used generically (in Elamite form: *kurtas̄*) for workers in the Persepolis Fortification archive and it can embrace various types of activity. In A6.10 they are glossed as "craftsmen", in A6.12 as (perhaps) "artists" – this latter in the text where we encounter what is in some respects Arshama's most remarkable employee, Ḥinzani the sculptor or image-maker. We note also in A6.15 that *grd* (not here further qualified) can belong to a woman – probably, in context, Virafsha's wife. (She is referred to as "my lady" by Virafsha's *pqyd*.) This, of course, recalls the Persepolis environment as well, and one may legitimately wonder whether Virafsha's wife or whoever the "lady" may be was an estate holder in her own right.

¹²⁸ An interesting detail is that the transport of the rent to Babylon might be carried out not by Ḥatubasti but by his son or brother (A6.14). I do not know how strong a piece of evidence this is that the functions of a *pqyd* might be shared with his family. But one recalls that Psamshek's father had been Arshama's *pqyd*.

¹²⁹ For journeys of Egyptian estate-manager to the heart of empire cf. A6.9 and (perhaps) PFATS 424 (cf. A6.9:2 n]).

Another employee-category is *nšy byt* = “people of the household” (a loan from Akkadian: *nišê bīti*), attested in A6.11, A6.12 and D6.8. In A6.11 and A6.12 the phrase refers to people associated with Pamun (the deceased landholder) and Ḥinzani (the sculptor). In D6.8 some unknown people address Arshama and refer to “people of our household”; so here too the phrase is apparently not used in immediate reference to *Arshama’s* personnel. Pamun was a *bg’*-holder and the father of someone who is now a *wršbr* (and postulant *bg’*-holder) so having “people of the household” is presumably characteristic of people who are not on the bottom level of the system. At the same time the fact that Ḥinzani can both have household personnel and be himself classified as *grd* reminds us that socio-economic classification is not a straightforward matter. It is not clear whether the fact that the phrase is borrowed from Akkadian means that it has specific technical overtones.

At the bottom of the system are “slaves”, encountered in the shape of the slaves of Psamshek’s father Ankhoḥapi, who are to be punished (A6.3)¹³⁰ and the Cilician slaves of Arshama, who bear the OP loanword label *’bwšk* = Iranian **abišavaka-*, allegedly meaning “presser”,¹³¹ and who are *not* to be mistreated (A6.7).¹³² Both groups of slaves are listed by name. But the distinction between “slaves” and *grd* is perhaps hardly watertight. In A6.10 Arshama tells Nakhtḥor he must seek additional craftsman-*grd*, bring them to his court, brand (or tattoo) them and hand them over to the estate. The victims of such treatment are hardly straightforwardly “free” individuals. Once again there is a resonance with Persepolis, where the status of *kurtaš* is a matter of debate (A6.10:1 n.) and Curtius speaks of branded foreigners in the neighbouring countryside.¹³³

The reference to the “courtyard” in A6.10 is interesting in its own right. The word used is *trbs*, a word also found in a number of other texts, where it refers to a literal courtyard (part of the description of a house).¹³⁴ Driver believed the reference was to the “court” of satrap as representative of the King; but since the Akkadian equivalent can mean stable or stall, and since the place for branded *grd* is arguably the “economic” not political aspect of Arshama’s world, one must surely be uneasy about this suggestion, at least put in those terms. But it may not be entirely off the mark. What Arshama says is that the new *grd* should be brought to his courtyard, branded and made over to his estate. A “courtyard” does seem the right sort of place for the formal act of appropriation in both its physical and bureaucratic dimensions. But how exactly are we to envisage it? Is there a single such place serving all of Arshama’s estate(s)? Or is it really only a virtual place – might there be several actual locations in different parts of Lower or Upper Egypt to which prospective Arshama-estate *garda* could be taken? (If A6.12:2 refers to a memorandum about ration-payments, that would be a documentary appurtenance of the virtual “courtyard”: see note ad loc.) In either event we are perhaps not so very far after all from talk of people going (or being taken) to a king’s or dignitary’s “gates”.¹³⁵ It is also worth noting we are somewhere close to the way that Greek

¹³⁰ D6.3 fr.(a) may conceivably refer to the same context. It is interesting that Psamshek requires the authorisation of Artavanta for punishment of the slaves (who had stolen property and attempted to flee) to be carried out. It appears that, even if ‘Ankhoḥapi is now dead (which is not certain), Psamshek has not inherited full title to his slaves. Perhaps ‘Ankhoḥapi had them in virtue of his role as *pqyd* and the slaves in some sense really belong to Arshama’s estate.

¹³¹ So Tavernier 2007, 415 (after Shaked). See A6.7:5 n. for other suggestions.

¹³² The situation seems to be that they had temporarily disappeared but turned out not to have been attempting flight but simply to have been innocently caught up in confusion occasioned by an Egyptian rebellion.

¹³³ Curt.5.5.6. (Just.11.14.11 and Diod.17.69 mention only the amputation of ears, noses or limbs.)

¹³⁴ See A6.10:7 n.

¹³⁵ “Gates” terminology occurs in D6.7, perhaps in reference to Arshama’s establishment in Babylon.

aulê – once a cattle-stall -- became a term of royal discourse. In the end the domestic, economic and (let us say) political spheres do have a tendency to interact and intersect.

One final aspect of the estate's human environment is multi-ethnicity. Arshama's attested *pqydy*n are Egyptian, but Varuvahya's may have a Babylonian name (alternatively it is mixed Aramaic-Egyptian) and Virafsha's certainly has an Iranian one.¹³⁶ The chief accountant Kenzasirma (addressee of several letters along with Nakht̥or) has what may be an Anatolian name.¹³⁷ There are also several references to Cilicians: the thirteen slave "pressers" of A6.7 (who are listed by name); two members of Nakht̥or's travel party (A6.9) (described as servants of Arshama); and ten individuals (uncategorised but presumably slaves) who were to be given by Arshama to Virafsha (A6.15; cf. D6.7), five of whom were duly delivered in Babylon, while the rest remain an object of contention between Virafsha and Nakht̥or. The general run of evidence about the Achaemenid empire or about Egypt in particular does not otherwise prepare one for this strong showing by Cilicians in the environment of an Egyptian satrap.¹³⁸ Another interesting thing about them is that, although most of the thirteen individuals in A6.7 seem to have Anatolian names, two have Iranian ones (*Sāraka- and *Bagafarnā-).¹³⁹ Mismatches between personal name and apparent ethnicity, including cases involving Iranian names, are not rare in the Achaemenid empire (this is the world of e.g. Spitaka the Greek, attested in the celebrated Customs Account document: C3.7KV2:16), but Iranian-named slaves are perhaps less expected -- though not unexampled: compare *Bagabr̥ta-, son of Eli[...] in WDSP 10.¹⁴⁰ More generally, of course, the multi-ethnicity of estate personnel has analogues elsewhere in the Arshama dossier:¹⁴¹ the *azdakara* (Iranian term for "herald") of A6.1 has an Akkadian name; A6.2 provides Carians with Egyptian names (members of a well-established Caro-Egyptian community) and Phoenician-named shipwrights; the names of scribes do not always linguistically match the Aramaic in which they are presumably writing (the Egyptian-named Ah̥pepi in A6.8 and Iranian-named Rašta in A6.9-13);¹⁴² and occasional demotic Egyptian annotations on Aramaic letters (A6.11-13, D6.11) leave a trace of a parallel bureaucracy which is, of course, directly represented by Saqqara S.H5–DP 434 and P.Mainz 17.¹⁴³

The intrusion of linguistic *Iranica* into the non-Iranian languages of the dossier is hardly surprising.¹⁴⁴ Sometimes this is a matter of (putative) Aramaic calques of Iranian idiom,¹⁴⁵ but more often we are dealing with the importation of individual bits of Iranian vocabulary.¹⁴⁶ There are 51 Iranian words (ten of them official titles, the rest nouns,

¹³⁶ See A6.13:2 n., A6.15:1 n.

¹³⁷ See A6.11:1 n. It may be Lycian; that of Armapiya in A6.8 very likely is (A6.8:1 n.)

¹³⁸ A6.7:2-5 n.

¹³⁹ Two more might do too: '[.]m and [...]my are marked as "Anatolian/Persian" in Porten & Lund 2002, 326, 424.

¹⁴⁰ Note also Nanaia-silim, a slave variously called Bactrian and Gandharan in BM 64240 (Sippar: 512/1 BC) and Darius 379 (an Egibi document from 508/7) – is this an Iranian who has been given a Mesopotamian name?

¹⁴¹ As in the rest of the written evidence about Achaemenid-era Egypt – and indeed other parts of the empire.

¹⁴² cf. Rwhšn (*Rauxšna-), scribe of B3.9, and (perhaps) *Magava- s. of *Mithrabara- in P.Mainz 17 (with Vittmann 2007)

¹⁴³ See A6.11:8 n.

¹⁴⁴ Already discussed at length in Whitehead 1974, 189-276 and 1978, 131-137.

¹⁴⁵ See A6.3:1 n., A6.3:6 n., A6.3:6,8 n., A6.4:2 n., A6.7:6,7 n., A6.7:8 n., A6.8:3 n. (two items), A6.10:3 n.

¹⁴⁶ The summary lexical data that follow entail various assumptions and are certainly subject to error and omission. They depend heavily on Muraoka & Porten 2003, 342-345, Tavernier 2007 and Naveh

adjectives or prepositions) supplied by the Aramaic documents of the Arshama dossier. (This is, of course, excluding personal names and toponyms.) Of these 51 words, 23 occur just in the Bodleian letters, 24 occur just in other parts of the Arshama dossier and 4 occur in both (*ganza-, *hamāarakara-, *handaiza-, *rdba-). 23 of the 51 also occur in Aramaic form outside the Arshama dossier, six in Egypt (*framānakara-, *ganza-, *hangaiθa-, *kařša- *nāupati-, *rdba), eleven outside Egypt (*āčarna-, *azdā-, *dāmya- or *ramya-, *gṛda-, *handarza-, *ništāvana-, *patigāma-, *srauřyata-, *upaiti-, *uspṛna-, *zyāni-) and six both in Egypt and elsewhere (*āčarna-, *azdā-, *bāga-, *frataraka-, *hamāarakara-, *piθfa-). There is thus a decent overlap between the lexical *Iranica* of the Arshama dossier and those of other sources of Official Aramaic, though items from outside Egypt are almost all from Bactria. By contrast, although Egyptian Aramaic documents *outside* the Arshama Dossier provide another 37 words, only four of them occur outside Egypt, one in Bactria (*ādranga-) and three in other sources (*gṛiva-, *hamāra-, *maguř). A further 96 words are supplied solely by non-Egyptian Aramaic documents.¹⁴⁷ Of these 65 come from the Bactrian letters, 29 from non-Bactrian sources and only two from both (*ganzabara-, *kapautaka-), a result which perhaps underlines the separateness of the Bactrian environment *except* where it shows overlap with the comparable official documents of the Arshama dossier. Put another way, these data simply reflect the facts that (a) the Arshama dossier and the Bactrian material have no real parallels elsewhere and (b) the Bactrian material, originating from a wholly Iranian environment, shows a much larger Iranian linguistic impact. For a fuller discussion of these matters see Shaked (forthcoming) and Tavernier (forthcoming).

Arshama and the politico-military history of his times

As we have already noted, Greek sources allow us to say that Arshama probably became satrap of Egypt in the aftermath of the revolt of the 450s, certainly played a role in the succession of Darius II, though the details elude us, and may conceivably have mounted (but probably did not) a successful, if treacherous, attack on the city of Barca. What do the non-Greek parts of the dossier have to say about Arshama's involvement in the politico-military narrative of Achaemenid history – matters with wider potential impact than the state of repair of a boat on the sand in front of the Elephantine fort (A6.2) or whatever issue(s) might once have been addressed in the now sadly battered Saqqara S.H5–DP 434?

One strand of modern study has tended to stress adjustment to the Persian *status quo* and to reject “collaborationist” interpretations of such adjustment. Perhaps that is a fair response to over-simple attitudes, but it is indubitably true that Egypt did rebel from time to time and with a degree of seriousness that ensured the disorder caught the attention of the outside world and cannot reasonably be sidelined as just a bit of local difficulty. Neither the Arshama dossier nor the wider Egyptian documentation can produce quite the cumulative impression of an explanatory background to rejection of imperial rule that has been claimed for Babylonia in the 55 years from original conquest (or, perhaps more particularly, the 38 years from the accession of Darius) to the troubles of 484. The documentation is simply too different in character and much smaller in quantity. The spectacle of Iranian ownership of Egyptian land and control (perhaps violent) of the means to exploit it dimly visible through the window of the Arshama letters is one that may be consequential upon re-conquest as much as conquest (insofar as it is not just traditionally Egyptian¹⁴⁸) and might contribute to developments that would call for further re-conquest; the way Arshama responds to

& Shaked 2012. (Note that the list of *Iranica* at Naveh & Shaked 2012, 55-57 does not include all the items identified as *Iranica* in their commentary.)

¹⁴⁷ Thirteen are uncertain, even by the sometimes liberal standards of this exercise.

¹⁴⁸ See A6.10:6-7 n.

“disturbances” by telling Nakhtḥor to find more people to be branded and assigned to his “courtyard” is striking. But all this remains anecdotal and unquantified. Reading an episode such as the demolition of the Jewish temple in Elephantine (A4.5, A4.7-A4.10) as usable evidence about larger issues around the relations between rulers and ruled in a multicultural setting is not entirely easy, as Pierre Briant has reminded us (Briant 1996a) – though his strictly legalistic understanding of the event surely suppresses some interesting and important dimensions.¹⁴⁹ In any event, some of the Arshama texts do actually speak of rebellion or disturbances, and an argument can be advanced for seeing these as a point at which the contents of a pair of leather bags touch the world of high politics.

The starting point is A6.7, where we read that Egypt rebelled (*mrđt*) and that, as a consequence, the *hyl*’ was “garrisoned”, which is taken to mean that it retired to the protection of a fortress. It is the consequences for thirteen Cilician slaves that is the subject of the letter and *ceteris paribus* one would not think the events in question are *very* distant in the past. *Mrd* is the word used persistently in DB (Aramaic) to mean “rebel” (in reference to major political and military disturbances), and it recurs in A6.10, which contrasts “formerly when the Egyptians rebelled” (*mrđw*) (when Psamshek was *pqyd* and behaved well) and current “disturbances” in Lower Egypt,¹⁵⁰ in which Nakhtḥor is not doing what he should. Here the word is *šwzy*’ – a *hapax legomenon* translated “rioting” in Porten & Lund 2002 and considered possibly Iranian, though with no etymology suggested either there or in Muraoka & Porten 2003, 345. (The word is not recognized as Iranian in Tavernier 2007.) Next, in A6.11:2,4 we have a third word, *ywz*’, used of the “unrest” during which Pamun perished. We are in the Nakhtḥor era again – at least for dealing with the consequences of Pamun’s demise and the abandonment of his domain. Tavernier 2007 recognizes *this* as Iranian: **yauza-* (Median), “revolt, turmoil, rebellion”. (Compare Av. *yaoza-* = “excitement”, OP *yaud-* “to be in turmoil”.) It is the word used in XPh §4 (the famously tantalizing reference to an unnamed land that was in turmoil at the time of Xerxes’ accession to the throne), and it recurs in its Aramaic guise in D6.12g, though in a hopelessly broken context.

All of the texts just mentioned are part of the Bodleian archive and are therefore as they stand undatable.¹⁵¹ Outside that archive A5.5 has *mrđy*’ (“rebellious”: the same word again as that used in DB [Aramaic] and A6.7) at the end of an equally undated document that also alludes to soldiers (*hyl*), a *degel* (a military sub-unit), chiefs of centuries, killing, and a fortress. But no continuously sensible narrative survives, so there is not a lot to be got from the text. A4.5 is more helpful: this refers to Egyptians “rebellious”, yet again using the same word (*mrđw*). More specifically, the reference is to an occasion when *degelin* (military sub-units) of Egyptians “rebelled” but the Jews did not leave their posts or do anything bad (A4.5:1-2). They mention this as a *Priamel* to presentation of the events around the destruction of temple in mid-410. So it happened before that date. But how long before? The authors of A4.5 also refer to what did *not* happen as long ago as 526-522 BC (the temple’s survival at the time of Cambyses’ conquest and occupation of Egypt), and this non-event recurs in the memorandum reporting the view of Bagavahya and Delaiah that re-building should be permitted (A4.9) – rather remarkably given the succinctness of that document. So both the Jews of Elephantine and the representatives of the imperial power were apt to see things in a very long perspective, and the Egyptian “rebellion” of A4.5 might also not be a very recent occurrence. On the other hand, it could also theoretically be part of the same context as the Egyptian “rebellion” of A6.7 and A6.10; and in that case the event would be no longer before the 410 horizon of A4.5 than the period within

¹⁴⁹ For fuller discussion see Appendix 2. On Briant’s interpretation in particular see pp.142-143.

¹⁵⁰ Lewis’s wish to read “Upper Egypt” here does not seem justified. But the reading “Lower Egypt” is admittedly not certain either. See A6.10:4 n.

¹⁵¹ Ruzicka 2012, 243 infers, perhaps rightly, that troublemakers deliberately targeted Arsham’s estates (and presumably, we might add, those of other “lords”).

which Psamshek might have held the office of *pqyd*. A separate question is whether the *locus* of the trouble was (or included) the fairly immediate vicinity of Elephantine: that is, whether the *dgl n zy Msry*' (detachments of Egyptians) that the Jewish letter-writer has in mind included some who were part of the military environment of Tshetres or were just Egyptian soldiers misbehaving somewhere else in Egypt. There is probably no way of resolving this question with any confidence, especially as the start of the document is lost and the writers may well have supplied other details that would originally have made the answer clear: the few words left cannot readily bear the weight of much inferential argument.¹⁵²

So the situation is this. There are four references to rebellion: two are in letters by Arshama (A6.7, A6.10),¹⁵³ the third is in a letter by members of the Jewish community in Elephantine (A4.5) and the fourth in a letter whose author is not certainly identifiable but might be one Mithradates (A5.5): in all cases but the last the rebels are explicitly Egyptian. The letters by Arshama are from the Bodleian set, while the other two letters represent two further different archival backgrounds (though both are in Elephantine). In addition to these references to rebellion there are also single references to (current) disturbances (A6.10) and to (past) unrest (A6.11), both in letters from the Bodleian set. The "disturbances" and the "rebellion" are certainly different events (the "rebellion" being the earlier one), since they are both mentioned in the same letter (A6.10) and an explicit contrast is drawn between them. The only indication of date is that the Jews' references to rebellion is in a letter written not earlier than July 410.

The simplest way of dealing with this material is certainly to hold that all references to "rebellion" (A4.5, A5.5, A6.7, A6.10) concern the same event and that this event is also what was meant by the past "unrest" in A6.11. The argument in favour of this last point (apart from the wish to keep things simple and not to multiply entities) would be that any suggestion of substantive difference created by the use of a different word (by the same nominal author, Arshama¹⁵⁴) is mitigated and perhaps negated, by the fact that the different word in question is Iranian – so that we may be faced by what is merely a stylistic or indeed an arbitrary choice between what the writer regarded as synonyms in two different languages.¹⁵⁵

This simplest solution was espoused by David Lewis (Lewis 1958). He then took an important further step and identified the "rebellion" and "unrest" with the situation in 411 alluded to by Diodorus 13.46.6, who speaks of the Arabian and Egyptian kings plotting against *ta peri tēn Phoinikēn pragmata*.¹⁵⁶ As an economical use of all the sources (Aramaic and Greek) this still looks like a good argument. It could only be wholly undermined either by questioning Diodorus' authority (so that there is no ground to believe in a significant disturbance to Persian rule of Egypt in 411 in the first place) or by claiming that, despite its currency in the Aramaic

¹⁵² The existence of a separate Elephantine letter about rebellion (A5.5) perhaps marginally increases the chances that we are dealing with an episode with immediately local repercussions. But, of course, we do not *know* that the authors of A4.5 and A5.5 were talking about the same episode.

¹⁵³ We cannot be sure that the same Aramaic scribe wrote both, as there is no identifying scribal signature in A6.7. The named scribe of A6.10 was Rašta, though this does not guarantee he personally wrote it (see Appendix 1). That A6.7 refers to "Egypt" (*Mšryn*) rebelling, whereas A6.10 speaks of "Egyptians" (*Mšry*) doing so, might conceivably be a difference reflecting different scribal taste (whether that of the actual writer or the supervising "scribe"): see A6.7:6 n. It does not authorize the drawing of any substantive distinction between the events.

¹⁵⁴ And indeed the same scribe, at least as between A6.10 and A6.11.

¹⁵⁵ It is slightly ironic that the Iranian term is actually put in the mouth of the Egyptian Pamun; but then the letter is already making him speak in Aramaic.

¹⁵⁶ An episode with which Tissaphernes' postulated issuing of coins at Dor has been connected: Qedar 2000-2002. Given the geographical horizon, any salient "Egyptian king" has to be pictured as based in the Delta in the manner of Amyrtaeus (Hdt.2.140, 3.15).

version of DB, the Aramaic word translated “rebellion” need not connote events big enough to register outside the most local of radars (so there is no ground for attaching any of the Aramaic evidence to Diodorus’ 411 event). But both approaches do look a little contrarian and the latter, in particular, begs a lot of questions.

There are, however, two further observations that may complicate matters to a certain degree.

One is that the “rebellion” of A6.7 is associated with “the wicked Inaros” (A6.7:7)¹⁵⁷ – the man responsible for seizing the Cilician slaves whose fate is the subject of that letter. Inaros was the name of the Libyan insurgent whose uprising immediately preceded Arshama’s appointment as satrap of Egypt. We *could* in theory choose to identify the two troublemakers. In that case A6.10:1 and A6.11:2 might also be referring to the Inaros revolt,¹⁵⁸ and the whole batch of Bodleian letters (assuming that they are not of chronologically greatly diverse origin) would belong to the start of Arshama’s period of office.¹⁵⁹ There is probably no way of disproving such a scenario, assuming that palaeography cannot serve such a purpose (see above pp.14-15); and it must be conceded that, if the consequence is that none of the Aramaic sources (except conceivably A5.5) reflect the contents of Diodorus 13.46.6, no one could properly regard that as an impossible circumstance: where Egyptian troubles are concerned, multiplication of entities is not necessarily an offence against reason.

The second observation picks up on that point. Egypt rebelled rather often while under Achaemenid rule (Inaros was not unique) and, in particular, showed a consistent tendency to do so at or fairly soon after the transition of power from one Great King to another (522; 486; c. 460; c.404; and the rebellion of Chababash in the 330s).¹⁶⁰ The only salient occasion on which the sources seemingly record *no* rebellion is the transition from Artaxerxes I to Darius II in 424-423 – a transition so chaotic that it seems to cry out for an Egyptian reaction. Perhaps it is the rule-proving exception. Or perhaps we should consider the possibility that the sources’ apparent silence is illusory. There are two ways in which the evidence could be reconfigured to achieve this.

One is to detach Diodorus from the Aramaic evidence. Diodorus’ report only requires us to postulate trouble in the Delta region and among the adjacent Arabs of North Sinai and the southern Levant. The letter from the Jews of Elephantine (A4.5) might (or might not) only refer to the environs of that city and the same could be true of A5.5 (the letter perhaps written by Mithridates), while the geographical location of the “rebellion” in Arshama’s letters is (again strictly speaking) uncertain.¹⁶¹ So one could maintain that the Aramaic evidence hangs together but relates to a situation earlier than 411, for example one in or shortly after 424/3¹⁶² – there being nothing to prevent us putting the Bodleian archive wherever we wish chronologically

¹⁵⁷ The reading is not entirely certain, of course: cf. note ad loc.

¹⁵⁸ So could A4.5:1, of course, since the writer *might* be adducing relatively old history. (But A5.5 could not perhaps be disposed of so easily, assuming its palaeographical assignment to the later fifth century is sound.) That the Inaros rebellion might have resonances beyond the world of the Delta and Memphis is not to be discounted. A supportive indication is available if he is really mentioned in a demotic ostrakon from Ain Manawir (Chauveau 2004, Winnicki 2006). He is there described (in a dating formula referring to his second year) as “prince of rebels” or (more likely) “prince of the Bacali”. Either way it is perhaps interesting that they do not call him pharaoh.

¹⁵⁹ This view is espoused by Dandamaev 1989, 241-243 (citing Henning, Diakonoff and Harmatta for a similar view). See also A6.7:7 n. For Chababash see e.g. Ruzicka 2012, 189-205.

¹⁶⁰ On the historiographical problem presented by the event in 522 cf. Tuplin (forthcoming [e]).

¹⁶¹ Given Nakthor’s association with Lower Egypt, the (past) unrest of A6.11 may have been in that part of the country, as the (current) troubles of A6.10 probably were (A6.10:4 n.). But there remains slight uncertainty about what “Lower Egypt” signifies: A6.4:2 n.

¹⁶² Porten 1968, 279 also contemplated this (referring to the Egyptian *degelin* of A4.5:1).

speaking, subject only to the outer limits of Arshama's attested association with Egypt and the rather flexible indications of Aramaic palaeography

The other way to reconfigure the evidence in search of Egyptian upheavals in 424/3 is to detach the "rebellion" of the Bodleian letters (A6.7 and A6.10) from the "rebellion" of the letters of the Elephantine Jews (A4.5) and (?)Mithradates (A5.5), on the grounds that the difference in archival origin between the two sets of documents diminishes the force of the assumption that all events described with the word "rebellion" belong in the same context. On this view the Jews and (?)Mithradates are referring to Diodorus' 411 upheaval (and perhaps show that that upheaval had repercussions in southern Egypt), but the Bodleian letters still belong in an earlier chronological horizon and allude to a situation in or shortly after 424/3.¹⁶³

Both of these solutions yield *two* attested periods of upset in the twenty years before the more definitive recovery of independence in or after 404. The problem, of course, is that, although this is more tidy in terms of long-term trends (because it allows the succession crisis of 424/3 to be reflected in Egypt), it is undeniably less tidy as a way of reconciling a specific set of sources. But it is worth stressing that the only alternative (if we revert to Lewis's solution but still, as I think we should, keep our eye on long-term trends) is to suppose that the control exercised over Egypt by Arshama at and after the time he sided with Ochus against Sogdianus in 424/3 was particularly tight and proved good enough to keep a lid on any Egyptian reaction for over a decade. We have seen (above p. 30) that it is possible that Arshama was actually outside the satrapy during some of the succession-crisis, but it is perhaps conceivable that he was able to be back in Memphis sufficiently quickly to pre-empt trouble. So adopting Lewis's solution may turn out to tell us something about the effectiveness of Arshama's regime in Egypt, though it will also leave us wondering what brought about the eventual breakdown of order in 411 -- a breakdown which (on this view) involved trouble in the Delta and Sinai (a pharaonic pretender plotting with an Arab ruler), the "Lower Egypt" of A6.10 (cf. n.161) and perhaps also in distant Elephantine, if A4.5:1 does have a relatively local reference. The alternative approach, by contrast, implies that Arshama was not able to prevent some manifestation of disorder relatively soon after the upheaval at the heart of the empire or (indeed) the Egypto-Arabian plotting of 411, the former perhaps precisely because he had been away in 424/3 and did *not* return quickly enough.

But Arshama's possible absence from Egypt in 424/3 is not the only absence relevant to this story of rebellion(s). Whether we adopt the Lewis solution or allow ourselves to postulate an additional period of trouble shortly after 424/3, the difficulties in 411 were, it seems, sufficiently under control by early summer 410 for Arshama to leave the satrapy (see above pp.26-28) – though how *completely* they were under control will, of course, depend (in inverse relationship) on how pressing the reasons for Arshama's departure were. The problem is that we *know* nothing about those reasons and we also have to factor in the fact that, on a conventional view, he then stayed away for well over three years. Is that a sign of the depth of the crisis that took him away or the shallowness of the threat to Persian control of Egypt that preceded his departure? Even adopting Lewis's solution, we could go with a minimal version of the salient data in which the Egyptian and Arabian activities reported by Diodorus were modest and not

¹⁶³ The question whether there was trouble in Egypt and specifically in Elephantine takes on extra resonance in view of the fact that someone in Elephantine chose to write out a copy of the Aramaic version of the Behistun text in the early years of Darius II's reign. The notion that this saluted the centenary of Darius I's accession is an engaging one (see e.g. Tavernier 1999), and in the aftermath of the events of 424/3 (themselves nearly a centenary celebration in their own right) it might not seem politically neutral. Granerød 2013 even speculates that Arshama played a role in disseminating Darius I's story. If (as he also speculates) forces from Syene-Elephantine had accompanied Arshama to Babylonia in 424-423, people at the First Cataract might be specially susceptible to interest in, and attempts to exploit, the historical parallel.

well co-ordinated – simply a version of endemic tendencies to local dissidence that provided an excuse as much as a reason for the diversion of a Phoenician fleet – and we choose to find in the Aramaic texts no evidence for trouble in central or southern Egypt (i.e. we locate the Bodleian archive’s “rebellion” and “unrest” in a conventionally interpreted Lower Egypt and deny that there were any specific Elephantine or Tshetres repercussions). Rejecting Lewis’s solution, this minimal reading becomes even easier, because the Bodleian material can theoretically be shifted to an earlier date and removed from the calculation.¹⁶⁴ Corresponding maximal interpretation will prefer Lewis’s solution, take Diodorus as evidence of a reasonably serious threat, affirm that A4.5 (and A5.5) *are* evidence for there being trouble in Tshetres, choose a geography for the Bodleian letters that does not confine “rebellion”/“unrest” to northern Egypt – and note that the current “disturbances” of A6.10 are happening while Arshama is away from his satrapy.¹⁶⁵ My personal preference is for readings of salient individual texts that speak for the maximal interpretation of Lewis’s solution, but Lewis’s solution may not be correct, and, if the only secure evidence of trouble fairly soon before Arshama’s departure in 410 is what we find in Diodorus and A4.5, it may not be enough in itself to make Arshama’s prolonged absence really problematic.

One is somewhat loath to believe that three year absences were a norm of satrapal government, and it remains extremely disconcerting that this apparent case cannot be more satisfactorily tied down. A search in sources external to Egypt for possible contexts for Arshama’s behaviour is not very productive.

We know (or can plausibly) speculate that one of Arshama’s general interests in the second half of the 410s was the sequestration of the business assets of the Murashu family (see above pp.31-32). But this had already happened (or was in train) by 413 (the earliest date at which Enlil-suppē-muḥur, the erstwhile Murashu agent, is found acting for Arshama), and it is not obvious that it is an undertaking that would in itself entail Arshama’s prolonged residence in Babylonia. Whether it is a development (centred in Nippur) that was part of some larger alteration in the Babylonian economy – one that would provide a more substantial context for Arshama’s presence – we cannot tell.¹⁶⁶

In 409 a rebellion in Media came to an end. We know this only from a two-line report in Xenophon’s *Hellenica* (1.2.19), which does not make clear how long the rebellion had been going on but certainly leaves open the possibility that it was already in train when Arshama “went to the king”. Disaffection so close to the heartland of the empire could certainly be described as a serious matter. But was it serious enough for the King to summon Arshama to his side – and keep him there well after the trouble had been suppressed?

Another (better documented) external context is, of course, the complex situation on the Aegean edge of the empire where the activities of a Persian rebel (Amorges) and the King’s instruction to the local satraps to recover lost imperial tribute had led to the awkward co-operation of Sparta and Persian against Athens in the last phase of the Peloponnesian War. Hyland (forthcoming) rightly reminds us that these developments might be a matter of interest to the satrap of Egypt and specifically suggests a potential economic effect, viz. that Spartan disruption of commercial activity between the Aegean and East Mediterranean caused a diminution of the tax revenues of Arshama’s satrapy. An analogy is drawn between Arshama’s

¹⁶⁴ Of course, whatever the date of the difficulties to which the Bodleian letters refer, those who believe the letters were written outside Egypt must accept that Arshama left the country at some point in their aftermath. But nothing compels the interval to be as short as that between Diodorus’ 411 horizon and the departure in 410 attested in A4.5 and A4.7//A4.8.

¹⁶⁵ Admittedly this might have been just a little local difficulty. Perhaps indeed Arshama is advancing an *a fortiori* argument (Psamshek behaved well during a serious rebellion; Nakhthor is failing during a minor disturbance).

¹⁶⁶ Nothing of the sort seems to emerge in Tolini 2011 or in Stolper’s work on the Kasr archive.

trip to the king and the trip of Pharnabazus in 398 to complain about the conduct of the post-400 war *against* Sparta. Arshama, it is suggested, wanted to complain about the fiscal impact on his satrapy of the King's interference in the Peloponnesian War. But, whereas we can discern an outcome for Pharnabazus' intervention (a naval strategy whose eventual result was the Battle of Cnidus), it is less clear that Arshama's putative intervention had any effect (the biggest change that occurred within 410-407 was the despatch of the young Cyrus to Anatolia, which represented an intensification of support for Sparta), or indeed that this scenario would explain a three year absence from Egypt.

One final thought: if there *was* some disturbance of Persian authority in Egypt in 411 (and especially if it *did* extend to Elephantine), one wonders whether there might have been a connection between the mood of the country in 410 and what looks like the strange alliance between the provincial governor of southern Egypt, the garrison-commander of Elephantine and the local Egyptians against the Jewish community and their temple (A4.5, A4.7-4.10). For many people this episode (which resulted in the temple's destruction in summer 410 and its reconstruction between 406 and 402) may well be the most interesting feature of the Arshama dossier – and it is one upon which the Bodleian letters cast no direct light. It was also one which Arshama allegedly only became involved rather belatedly: the Jewish community leaders were still claiming that he knew nothing about it as late as November 407 (A4.7:30 // A4.8:28-29). But somewhere in the background lay a royal determination about Jewish religious observance in Elephantine that passed through Arshama's hands in 419, and the eventual resolution of the problem undoubtedly required his *imprimatur*. The details will be fully discussed in the commentary on the relevant parts of the dossier (A4.1, A4.5, A4.7-10) in Ma and Tuplin (forthcoming). Meanwhile a discursive account of the issues can be found in Appendix 2.

Envoi

But, if the Bodleian letters are rather light on information about religious language and belief (though we do at least see the verbal markers of Persian polytheism and are offered the chance to contemplate – but reject – the idea of an assimilation of god and King¹⁶⁷), the other historical topics highlighted by Ma in his introduction to this publication (accountancy-culture, land tenure, satrapal remuneration, corvée labour, cross-regional ethnic movement, storage and disbursement of resources for state use, military systems, long-distance travel, the employment of skilled craftsmen) are all well represented, even if accountancy culture is no more than implicit in A6.11-14 by the standards of its much more enticing instantiation in A6.2. Now that we have the Bactrian letters published in Naveh & Shaked 2012 -- and can hope that further ones will eventually be published as well -- Nakhthor's archive has lost the uniqueness it once enjoyed. But it remains a remarkable *entrée* to one corner of the world of a satrap and prince of the blood royal, and through him to the life of an extraordinary empire.

¹⁶⁷ See A6.16:2 n.

THE BODLEIAN ACHAEMENID ARAMAIC LETTERS: A FRAGMENTARY HISTORY

Lindsay Allen

The collection of objects comprising the Arshama ‘dossier’ entered the Bodleian Library in 1945, in fulfillment of a contract of sale agreed at some point between 1938 and 1944 (Craster 1952, 1944). This purchase, from the estate of the archaeologist Ludwig Borchardt (1863 – 1938), remains the group’s only known provenience. Silence, elision and mythopoesis punctuate the story of the collection’s origin in Borchardt’s hands. During their first fifty years in the university library, where the lettered surface is paramount, the legible letters were selectively read for their documentary content. The full collection, however, comprises not just thirteen largely complete letters and numerous fragments, but also eight clay sealings, which carry images of two seals, and two fragmentary bag sections. These items acquired the resonant but vague identity of dispatches discovered within “the post-bag in which they had been conveyed and preserved” in the first full publication in 1954. This characterization has influenced the terms on which scholars have engaged with the content of the letters ever since. The current re-examination of the entire corpus offers an opportunity to raise previously neglected questions about its assumed archaeological unity, and physical coherence. This introductory discussion aims to highlight the obscurity of the collection’s published origins, and to articulate the different impositions of identity made during its early transaction history.

Borchardt and the dealer with no name

The date(s) and place(s) of discovery of the Arshama collection are unknown. Nevertheless, two main narratives of their discovery in the hands of a dealer exist. The first, told by their first known buyer, Borchardt, was later selectively translated and rephrased by Driver. Borchardt’s story was published in 1933 at the beginning of a two-page outline of his acquisition of the corpus, the final paper of a collection of short essays published by the author on the occasion of his own eightieth birthday. The essays are on an assortment of small topics, mostly relating to Egyptian architecture, which was Borchardt’s core area of expertise. This first *Nachricht* of the find is often cited, but under-examined, and Borchardt’s narrative deserves greater attention.

His account opens with the introduction of a strange and secretive dealer, previously unknown to the archaeologist, who presented him with a mysterious bundle of ancient letters. Borchardt says that the dealer gave him a false name, so this falsity is not worth repeating in the published text; moreover, the dealer would not say where he was from. He enticed the scholar by revealing three letters that he had already successfully opened by laying them in the dawn dew. Borchardt recognized the language as Aramaic but, judging by the paucity of detail in his account, he was unable to read most of it. The dealer had with him a leather bag in which he said the letters were found, but Borchardt was not sure whether it was large enough for the surviving collection. He also speculated whether it was a division from a larger find. The dealer would not say where he had obtained the objects. Borchardt reports that he asked whether they were from Assuan, but the dealer would not speak and “did not even blink” in reply. He concludes that the dealer himself may not have known the origin of the material, but had acquired it by purchase. Borchardt gives no date for the encounter.

Thus the account comprises several layers of silence, with a caesura in knowledge between the buyer and seller (and between the seller and the entire world of words). Borchardt describes a dealer with no verifiable name, no origin, and besides, no authentic knowledge of the objects, while he himself could glean no information even from the legible

texts. The only geographical anchor, Assuan, appears as an unanswered question in a one-sided dialogue. Its appearance serves to float a mirage of believable provenance into the story without linking Borchardt to any disreputable recovery of antiquities. This protective narrative scaffold invites inevitable suspicion about the narrator. “Bazaar archaeology” of the 1920s and 1930s often depended on the shameless attribution of marketed antiquities to common but fake provenances. One such classic locale was Hamadan in Iran, to which Luristani bronzes and Achaemenid gold were attributed (Muscarella 1980). Middlemen in the transit of antiquities could give an adjacent or slightly altered region of discovery to that which they learned from their suppliers, possibly in order to preserve their sources. Total silence and obfuscation of even an assigned place of origin on the part of the dealer is unusual. The particular vividness in the popular imagination of archaeology in Egypt during the 1920s blurred the boundaries between fiction and reality. Egyptian terrain became an unreal and magical zone from which curses, monsters and strange texts could emerge. The cinematic mystery of Borchardt’s encounter with his dealer settles into this imaginative landscape. Whether there was a reason for his mystification is another matter, and relates to Borchardt’s previous career.

Borchardt was a well-known and experienced excavator, having led the Imperial German Institute for Egyptian Archaeology from 1907 until 1928. He was not untouched by scandal; the Egyptian government accused him of secretly exporting to Berlin the famous limestone bust of Nefertiti. He had probably excavated this piece at Amarna between 1912 and 1913, but failed to exhibit it the following year in a presentation of the finds, and may not have declared it during the partition of finds (Breger 2005, 146 n.25: “Inspector Lefebvre...who was responsible for the partition in question, later said he could no longer reconstruct what exactly he had seen that day.”). Here too, silences and lack of evidence punctuate Borchardt’s handling of an object. While no directly incriminating evidence has since come to light, the decision not to publicly exhibit the bust for over a decade resembles “an explicit policy of concealment” (Breger 2005, 145-146). When Nefertiti resurfaced in Berlin in 1924, Borchardt’s apparent deviousness angered the Egyptian authorities. The head’s geographical and museological dislocation from its place of origin has since enabled its “material and phantasmic appropriation” as an icon of world art, as well as of German twentieth-century historical imagination.

Borchardt’s behaviour in the Nefertiti saga should perhaps not be wholly extrapolated into the interpretation of his Arshama acquisition story. The two types of objects carried very different levels of transformative cultural power for their exhibitor at the time, not least because the Aramaic letters were far less identifiable as “Egyptian”, and projected no comparably iconic visual. Borchardt claimed an archaeological provenance for the Nefertiti bust in 1924, despite intentionally concealing the object. This suggests that Borchardt could have admitted to involvement in the excavation of the Aramaic letters, if such had been the case. However, the controversy over Borchardt’s actions in the 1920s may have made him more circumspect in his later publications. By 1933, when his essay collection was published, the question of restitution of the Nefertiti bust was still being discussed (Breger 2005, 154-155). Additionally, by the mid-1920s, the plundering of sites for the market was beginning to impinge on both academic and political discourses as a problem. In 1926, James Henry Breasted authorised the posting of a letter on the noticeboard of the University of Chicago’s Luxor house, which forbade the buying of antiquities in the marketplace by expedition members.¹ By these emerging standards, Borchardt’s reported purchase was dubious, whether his published account was real or not. His silent and nameless dealer partly absolved

¹ I am grateful to John Larson of the Oriental Institute, Chicago, for bringing this letter to my attention.

Borchardt in either case, either by obscuring his own illicit export of excavated finds or by mitigating his market purchase by making the loss of context appear irreversible. As well as romance and comparative innocence, Borchardt's story bestows a profound dislocation upon the Arshama corpus: they are from a nameless source, from nowhere.

The first analyses

By the time they arrived in the Bodleian, most of the well-preserved letters were already opened and had been sealed between glass. There had been a significant period of study of the collection in Germany, between its export from Egypt until Borchardt's death in 1938. Borchardt had already had photographs taken, which he had sent to his colleague Eugen Mittwoch in order to identify the texts before the publication in 1933. Mittwoch who recognized Arshama's name, related him to the Elephantine papyri published by von Sachau in 1906 and supplied a rough translation of the first letter. Borchardt's accompanying comments are framed by his encounter with the dealer, and are intermixed with his own uncertainty about the nature and provenance of the collection. Partly because of the texts' illegibility and his own archaeological interests, he responded with interest to the sealings. Frustratingly, he does not specify whether any of them were still attached to a folded letter when he purchased them. Instead, Borchardt read the iconography, describing the strange, un-Egyptian shapes and reddish-tinged clay. He saw in the impressions a Persian king about to fell an already-beaten enemy, flanked by "war-horses", and the dead below.

Borchardt concluded his essay with the expectation of further insight from Mittwoch, and with the hope that his collection would reach "the right hands". A single, tantalizing photographic plate accompanied the essay, making it unclear whether this first publication constituted a communication, or an advertisement. By the time of Borchardt's death in 1938, the Arshama collection constituted not just the letters, bag(s) and sealings, but also a full set of photographs and a compiled typescript of scholarly commentary produced by a team of scholars including Eugen Mittwoch (1876-1942), Walter Henning (1908-1967), Hans Jacob Polotsky (1905-1991) and Franz Rosenthal (1914-2003). This initial phase of study proved to be influential, as when the Bodleian made its purchase, it acquired the entire assemblage, ancient and modern. Craster's 1952 history of the Bodleian Library told the story of the purchase, stating that the library contracted to buy this "post bag" of the "Governor of Egypt" in 1944. Since communication was weak in wartime, the "documents and their post bag" were delayed and only reached Oxford after the war. Craster concluded that the Bodleian had acquired the "only known original official documents of the Achaemenid Empire". His view was uncomplicated by awareness of the Persepolis Fortification and Treasury archives, discovered in the course of the Oriental Institute of Chicago excavations in the 1930s.

Craster's presentation was influenced by Driver's initial write-up of the acquisition in 1945, in the *Bodleian Library Record*. Opening with the same single photograph from Borchardt's 1933 publication, he elaborated on the value of this collection over the papyri already known from Egypt. These letters were special because (he concluded) they were from the Achaemenid government, and related to someone of "royal Achaemenid blood". He stated that they were "all... found together with the remnants of the post-bag in which they had been conveyed and preserved." He admitted that some "semi-official or unofficial matters" might have crept into the correspondence, but he summed up "the probability is that they came from Susa or Babylon...". Driver's narrative of imperial government began to eliminate some of Borchardt's uncertainty from the documents' history. Several aspects of his account became accepted as fact in many subsequent references to the collection, most particularly the "post bag" characterization of the whole group.

In other ways, Driver's full publication of the material in 1954 was indebted to Borchardt's original presentation, and the ensuing collective scholarly work in Germany.

Driver paraphrased Borchardt's description of his encounter with the mysterious dealer in his introduction, but omitted the uncertainty expressed about the relationship between the letters and the bag (Driver 1954, 1). Driver's description of the iconography of the seal followed Borchardt's quite closely, but he did not mention the single sealing which differed from the rest: an impression that shows a Babylonian-style stamp seal (Driver 1954, 2). He did not number the individual sealings, which received no separate catalogued identity until 2011. The first edition of his publication featured a full selection of photographs of the letters, sealings, bags and a single still-closed letter, all of which were of a similar type and quality to Borchardt's first published picture. The first edition also made no mention of the unpublished study material which the library received as part of the purchase, but this changed in the second, revised edition. Perhaps in response to prompting, the revised title page prominently featured the subscription "with help from a typescript by E. Mittwoch, W.B. Henning, H.J. Polotsky and F. Rosenthal." The whereabouts of the original typescript itself is not currently known. The dismay of its original authors at the extent to which Driver's publication made unacknowledged use of their work became an oral memory within the discipline.²

Driver's emphasis on the imperial character of the collection, documents from a "Persian chancery", suggests some of the specific appeal of the purchase to the Bodleian in the context of the late 1930s and early 1940s. The library's greatest expansion of its holdings in Hebrew and Aramaic dated to the tenure of Arthur Cowley as librarian between 1906 and 1923, at a time when other institutions too were competing to build papyrological collections (Emmel 1989, 47). Craster refers to the period immediately following the first world war as a golden age of gifts and acquisitions in this area. By the 1930s, a new collecting context had evolved which may have been a catalyst for the Bodleian's acquisition. A series of exhibitions in 1927, 1931 and 1940 fostered a new, international vogue for acquiring 'Persian Art', a category that evolved to include both Islamic and pre-Islamic artefacts from far beyond the borders of modern Iran. The Achaemenid empire formed a significant antique core to the celebrated exhibitions of 1931 and 1940, which were staged in London and New York (Pope 1931, Ackerman 1940). At the same time, the Oriental Institute Chicago raised the art of publicity to new heights with their archaeological expeditions in the Middle East; their dig at Persepolis prominently featured in the *Illustrated London News*, the *Times* and *National Geographic* from 1933 onwards (Anon. 1933a & 1933b; Breasted 1933a & 1933b). Arthur Upham Pope inflated the popular glamour of the Achaemenids with publications of unprovenanced artefacts in silver and gold in successive editions of the *ILN* during the same period. Pope worked in Oxford on his monumental series *A Survey of Persian Art* between 1938 and 1939, and the Clarendon Press produced the series of six volumes from that year onwards.

All of this publicity created a new market for Persian antiquities, in which both American and European museums purchased unprovenanced architectural fragments, inscriptions, jewellery and tableware. This wave of acquisition spread even to established collections that already held significant collections of Near Eastern antiquities, such as the Louvre. In London, the British Museum, whose unparalleled quantities of Achaemenid architecture were donated and purchased in the previous century, lobbied the National Art Fund in 1937 to purchase an additional relief that had emerged on the local market (Smith 1938).³ This climate might have encouraged the Bodleian's investment in the Achaemenid period through the purchase of Borchardt's collection.

² I am grateful to Shaul Shaked for recalling this memory with particular reference to Polotsky.

³ Sidney Smith to the Chairman, National Art Collection Fund, October 1937, Department of Egyptian & Assyrian Antiquities, CORRESPONDENCE, A-N.

Dislocated objects

Despite the increased visibility of the Achaemenid aesthetic world after the 1930s, Driver's publication of 1954 marked the beginning of an academic drift in which the texts dominated the collection of associated artefacts. The 1954 folio reproduced all available photographs, and included an image of all eight sealings together. The plate was placed towards the end of the book, and came at the end of a series of plates showing increasingly atomized and illegible letter fragments. The unnumbered sealings echoed the fragments in arrangement. Following the sealings are slightly murky images of the bag fragments, as though the plates were assembled according to an ascending scale of incoherence. In the 1957 edition and later reprints, the illustrations of the sealings and bags were omitted. J. David Whitehead subsequently reexamined the texts in detail, and new photographs were prepared for the edition of the texts produced by Porten and Yardeni in 1986, at which point the remaining sealed letter was also opened (Porten, personal communication).

Whitehead's study gave consideration to the evidence in the letters for sealing and format, but did not include a detailed publication of the sealings themselves. Meanwhile, the sealings surfaced in composite form in an anepigraphic line drawing published by Roger Moorey in 1978, and then again in a photograph reproduced by John Boardman (Boardman 2000, 164 fig. 5.21.) In both cases, Arshama's seal served as an example of artistic production in the Achaemenid empire, but without reproduction of the letters which they accompanied. The twin streams of iconographic and textual interest were therefore expressed in not just disciplinary but also geographical zones of publication - impressions of Arshama's seal were sourced exclusively from scholars who made them visible from inside Oxford. The post-bag, which has so dominated the scholarly profile of the collection, occupied no publication zone at all. The Bodleian's primary mission as a repository of text had not always excluded objects. The library housed coins until 1922, and retained some of its sculpture collection until 1933 (Macgregor 2001, 41-42). Within the rationalized institution, the artefactual detritus of the Aramaic letters became a shadow to the texts they carried. In 2011, at the first encounter of the project team with the whole assemblage of letters and objects, each sealing was given a number. During the course of this project, we began to ask detailed questions of each component of the Bodleian's purchase from Borchardt, and to ask whether and in what fashion they may fit together.