

ON SOME POPYRI AND JOSEPHUS' SOURCES AND CHRONOLOGY FOR THE PERSIAN PERIOD*

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A frequent problem in the history and other sciences is the determination of the extent to which new data affect previously-accepted doctrine. Usually, it seems, the problem is one of excessive conservatism: scholars may at first tend to limit the new data's effect, localizing it to this or that detail, while in fact the new information is eventually recognized to have fundamental and far-reaching implications¹). It may also happen, however, that scholars err on the side of radicalism, wrongly assuming that a change or addition of data implies that the entire body of knowledge, to which it is relevant, must be changed or abandoned. This is especially likely to occur, it seems, if those supplying the new data are not, primarily, practitioners of the field to which it applies. For, on the one hand, they may not be fully familiar with all the underpinnings of the old theory or the ramifications of the new one. And, on the other hand, it is easier to give up some previously-held theory if it was not close to one's heart or interest to begin with²).

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¹) For the classic discussion, see T.S. KUHN, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago-London, 1962. At times, however, failure to recognize implications is due more to their intricacy than to plain conservatism. I have elsewhere shown, for example, that a nineteenth-century epigraphic theory which derived, ultimately, from an eighteenth-century numismatic hypothesis, failed to change, but rather remained on the books until today, even after nineteenth-century numismatic discoveries proved the older hypothesis wrong; no one noticed the connection. See D.R. SCHWARTZ, "Caesarea and its 'Isactium': Epigraphy and Herodian Chronology", *Cathedra* 51 (April 1989), esp. pp. 21-26 [Hebrew].

²) According to KUHN (above, n. 1), scientists are readiest to abandon an accepted theory when there is a new one waiting to take its place, thus preventing the creation of a vacuum. It seems obvious that the rejection of a theory will not cause a vacuum for people basically unconcerned with it.

These ruminations may serve to introduce the following study, in which we shall suggest that many archaeologists and biblical scholars have overestimated the implications for Josephus of a certain new datum. Namely, while the new datum apparently explains why Josephus erred, as most scholars always assumed he did, too many scholars now too readily assume that it in fact shows that Josephus did not err.

I. *A Problem in Josephus and Three Stages of Scholarship*

The problem which we wish to address is the dating of the events which Josephus reports in the last fifty paragraphs of *Antiquities* 11. These paragraphs, which come after the conclusion of Josephus' version of the Esther story, divide easily into two parts: §§297-301, which deal with the high priest Johanan, his brother Jeshua, and a Persian *strategos* (general? governor?) named Bagoes³), and §§302-347, which report a number of interlinking events concerning Johanan's sons Jaddua and Manasseh, the latter's marriage to the daughter of Sanballat (satrap of Samaria), and Alexander the Great. The latter, who is brought into contact with Sanballat, Jaddua and the Samaritans, is the only one of the *dramatis personae* whose identity and dating are unambiguous.

There have been three stages in the history of scholarship concerning the dating of these events, delineated by two papyrological discoveries in the twentieth century. Prior to the discovery of the Elephantine Papyri, first published in 1907, all that scholars knew was from the pages of Josephus, summarized above, complicated by two additional literary data. The first is Nehemiah's notice that he expelled "one of the sons of Jehoiada son of Eliashib the high priest" who had married Sanballat's daughter (Neh 13,28), which sounds as if it is referring to Josephus' Manasseh, although the latter is said to be a grandson, not a son, of Jehoiada. The other comes from the pages of Diodorus Siculus (16.47-51 *passim*; 17.5), concerning the Persian general Bagoas who played a prominent role in the suppression of a revolt against Persia in the days of Artaxerxes III, i.e., in the last decades before Alexander's incursion into the region. Josephus refers to Bagoas as the *strategos* of Artaxerxes (§§297,300).

³) See below, n. 48. A few witnesses to Josephus read "Bagoas".