

Place Date Language Material Number of texts Type Collections Find/Acquisition	Nakhtor
	Egypt, unknown 427-400 BC Aramaic with a few Demotic annotations Leather 14 + fragments Official, letters Oxford, Bodleian Library Bought by Ludwig Borchardt before 1933
Bibliography	<p>G. R. Driver, <i>Aramaic Documents of the Fifth Century B. C.</i>, Oxford 1954 (1957, 1965). [editio princeps]</p> <p>P. Grelot, <i>Documents araméens d'Égypte</i>, Paris 1972, 297-327 nos. 62-74. [French translation]</p> <p>J. D. Whitehead, <i>Early Aramaic Epistolography. The Arsames Correspondence</i>, PhD diss., Chicago 1974.</p> <p>B. Porten / A. Yardeni, <i>Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt, Vol. 1, Letters</i>, Winona Lake 1986, 92-129 nos. A6.1-16.</p> <p>B. Porten / A. Yardeni, <i>Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt, Vol. 4, Ostraca and Assorted Inscriptions</i>, Winona Lake 1999, 138-150 nos. D6.3-14.</p> <p>[numbers in bold refer to the edition of Porten/Yardeni]</p>
Description	<p>The archive consists of fourteen Aramaic letters and several fragments purchased by Ludwig Borchardt sometime before 1933 and acquired by the Bodleian Library, Oxford, in 1943/44 (where they are kept until now).ⁱ The documents are written on leather, whereas papyrus was used for almost all other Aramaic papyri from Egypt. They were probably stored in the leather bag belonging to the collection together with some seal bullae bearing motives comparable with those found in Persepolis. Godfrey R. Driver has published the documents in 1954.ⁱⁱ</p> <p>The archive entirely consists of incoming letters. Eleven letters (A 6.3-13) are written on behalf of Arsames, the satrap of Egypt. Therefore, the archive is known as the “Arsames correspondence”. The other letters (A 6.14-16) were written by Varuvahya and Varfish, two Persian princes, and by Artahaya, an official. Five letters (A 6.3-7) are addressed to Artavant, who was probably Arsames' deputy in Egypt when he was absent, and another (A 6.8) to the military officer Armapiya. Seven letters (A 6.10-16) were written to Nakhtor, an official responsible for Arsames' domains and the successor of a certain Psamshek, son of Ahhapi, mentioned several times in the documents.</p> <p>The archive mainly deals with the management of Arsames' private domains. Many letters (A 6.3, 5-7, 10, 15) concern the staff belonging to these domains. In two letters (A 6.4, 11), Arsames reaffirms royal grants to successors of his officials. A 6.13-14 are two requests to deliver rent from the domains of Varuvahya to Babylon. There is also an open letter (A 6.9) that authorizes the support of Nakhtor and his entourage during their journey from Babylon(?) to Egypt passing several provinces in Assyria and Syria.</p> <p>Arsames was a Persian prince and satrap of Egypt during the reigns of Artaxerxes I and Darius II. Therefore, the archive can be dated to the late fifth century BC. He was also holder of domains in Nippur (in Mesopotamia) as it is attested in the Late Babylonian archive of the</p>

Murašû family.ⁱⁱⁱ In the course of revolts, his Egyptian domains were obviously devastated and part of the staff seized or killed (A 6.7, A 6.10-11).

The language of the letters indicates that they were written in the eastern part of the Persian empire.^{iv} In fact, three letters (A 6.13-15) mention Babylon, where Arsames may have stayed when he sent the letters to Egypt. According to a letter of the archive of Jedaniah son of Gemariah (A 4.5; arch_id 404) Arsames went to the king in 410 BC.

The stylistic features of the letters are considered typical of the official correspondence of the Persian administration although comparable documents are not yet known. In fact, the archive can be divided into private business letters and official orders mentioning the officials involved (A 6.8-13). In the case of A 6.13-14, a business letter as well as an official order refer to the same subject. Some official orders (A 6.11-13, D 6.11) contain demotic subscripts, mostly personal names. These letters remained perhaps in the chancery (at Memphis?) while a demotic copy, written by the scribe mentioned in the subscript, was sent to the Egyptian official Nakhthor.^v Additionally, various letters (A 6.4-5, 7-8, 10, 12-13, 15) bear Aramaic summaries of their content beside the external address.

Two papyrus letters discovered in the course of excavations of Otto Rubensohn und Friedrich Zucker at Elephantine (1906-1908) are associated to this archive because they were also written to or on behalf of Arsames. A 6.1 [427 BC] is an answer of several officials of the Persian administration in Elephantine to an order of Arsames concerning a certain share. In A 6.2 [411 BC] Arsames authorizes the repair of a boat and the provision of appropriate materials. Together with three letters of the Jedaniah archive (A 4.1, 7-8 [419, 407 BC]) these are the only Aramaic letters from Egypt bearing a date.

ⁱ See L. Borchardt, *Nachricht von einem weiteren Funde aramäischer Urkunden*, in: *Allerhand Kleinigkeiten, seinen wissenschaftlichen Freunden und Bekannten zu seinem 70. Geburtstage am 5. Oktober 1933 überreicht*, o. O. 1933, S. 47-49.

ⁱⁱ A second revised edition without plates and transcriptions of the fragments was published in 1957; a third edition in 1965.

ⁱⁱⁱ See M. W. Stolper, *Entrepreneurs and Empire. The Murašû Archive, the Murašû Firm, and Persian Rule in Babylonia* (UNHAI 54), Leiden 1985.

^{iv} J. D. Whitehead, *Some Distinctive Features of the Language of the Aramaic Arsames Correspondence*, in: *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 37 (1978), 119-140.

^v J. Tavernier, *Multilingualism in the Fortification and Treasury archives*, in: P. Briant, W. F. M. Henkelmann, M. W. Stolper (eds), *L'archive des Fortifications de Persépolis. État des questions et perspectives de recherches* (Persika 12), Paris 2009, 59-86.