

	<p><b>Jedaniah and Mahseiah, sons of Eshor</b></p> <p>Place Date Language Material Number of texts Type Collections Find/Acquisition</p> <p>Elephantine 471-410 BC Aramaic Papyrus 11 Private, notarial documents Cairo, Egyptian Museum; Oxford, Bodleian Library Bought by the Bodleian Library, Lady William Cecil, Robert Mond (1904)</p>
<p><b>Bibliography</b></p>	<p>A. H. Sayce / A. E. Cowley, <i>Aramaic Papyri Discovered at Assuan</i>, London 1906, nos. A-K [edition princeps].</p> <p>E. Sachau, <i>Aramäische Papyrus und Ostraka aus einer jüdischen Militärkolonie zu Elephantine</i>. <i>Altorientalische Sprachdenkmäler des 5. Jahrhunderts vor Chr.</i>, Leipzig 1911, pl. 35 [editio princeps].</p> <p>B. Porten, <i>Archives from Elephantine. The Life of an Ancient Jewish Military Colony</i>, Berkeley – Los Angeles 1968, 235-263 [description].</p> <p>P. Grelot, <i>Documents araméens d'Égypte</i>, 169-207 nos. 32-41 [French translation].</p> <p>B. Porten / A. Yardeni, <i>Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt</i>, Vol. 2, <i>Contracts</i>, Winona Lake 1989, 14-51 nos. B 2.1-11.</p> <p>B. Porten, <i>The Elephantine Papyri in English (DMOA 22)</i>, Leiden – New York – Köln 1996, 79-80 nos. B 23-33 [English translation and commentary].</p> <p>[numbers in bold refer to the edition of Porten/Yardeni]</p>
<p><b>Description</b></p>	<p>The archive consists of eleven Aramaic documents. Most of them were purchased in 1904 by Lady William Cecil and Robert Mond for the Bodleian Library, Oxford. As one of the documents (<b>B 2.5</b>) was discovered in the course of the excavations of Otto Rubensohn and Friedrich Zucker at Elephantine (1906-1908) and first published by Eduard Sachau in 1911, the other documents were obviously discovered there as well.</p> <p>The archive consists of notarial documents for different types of transactions dating from 471 until 410 BC. A great part of them are withdrawal documents (<b>B 2.2, 2.8, 2.9, 2.10</b>). This type of document was regularly written on behalf of the losing party after a legal suit about property rights. Recently, Alejandro Botta has proposed that Aramaic withdrawal documents (<i>spr mrḥq</i>) derived from the well-known demotic <i>sh-n-wy</i>-documents.<sup>1</sup> Other texts concern the grant (<b>B 2.1, 2.4, 2.7</b>) or bequest (<b>B 2.3</b>) of property. A marriage document (<b>B 2.6</b>) and a division of slaves (<b>B 2.11</b>) also belong to the archive. Several documents were not written at Elephantine but at Syene, the seat of the local governor (<b>B 2.2-4, 8</b>).</p> <p>This private archive covers three generations of the family of Mibtahiah, daughter of Mahseiah. Therefore, it is usually attributed to her in modern literature and not to her sons, the archive keepers. Mibtahiah was a wealthy woman owning several houses and slaves. She may have been the aunt of Jedaniah, son of Gemariah, the leader of the Jewish community at Elephantine in the last quarter of the fifth century BC (arch_id 404).</p> <p>The oldest documents of the archive belong to Mibtahiah's father Mahseiah, son of Jedaniah. In 459 BC, he gives a house to his daughter on the occasion of her marriage with Jezaniah, son of Uriah (<b>B 2.3</b>). Ten years later, Mahseiah gives his apparently widowed daughter to</p>

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Eshor, son of Djedhor, as wife (**B 2.6** [449 BC]). Later on, her father gave her another house which he bought from Meshullam, son of Zakkur (**B 2.7** [446 BC]), who is also mentioned several times in the archive of Ananiah, son of Haggai (arch\_id 450). The last three documents of the archive belong to Jedaniah and Mahseiah, the sons Eshor and Mibtahiah. Interestingly, Eshor is called Nathan in one of these texts, which shows that he adopted a double name (**B 2.10** [416 BC]). Probably the older documents came into the hands of the sons of Mibtahiah, who can therefore be regarded as the archive keepers.

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<sup>i</sup> A. Botta, *The Aramaic and Egyptian Legal Traditions at Elephantine. An Egyptological Approach* (Library of Second Temple Studies 64), London – New York 2009, 96-198.