

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE ELEPHANTINE TEMPLE

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<http://www.ccg.org/english/s/p097.html>

“ . . . **The Temple at Elephantine assumed the duties of the sacrifice** until the Temple was rebuilt in the reign of Darius II. The Temple at Elephantine was then destroyed by attack (see Pritchard *The Ancient Near East*, Vol. I, pp. 278-282). The Aramaic letters in Pritchard, translated by Ginsberg, show the records of the Passover directive to the empire mentioned in Ezra (see the paper *The Sign of Jonah and the History of the Reconstruction of the Temple* (No. 13)). The contributions to the restoration of the Temple are mentioned, as are the circumstances of the destruction of the Temple at Elephantine in the 14th year of Darius II. **The Governors of Judah also had policy control of the priests at Elephantine. The texts show that the sacrifice never ceased during the time of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple** and was restored to Jerusalem on the rebuilding of the Temple there.

The sacrifice ceased with the New Covenant and the last destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem in 70 CE, but the feasts in the dispersion continued. The temple priesthood at Jerusalem tried to reduce the efficacy of the sacrifices at Leontopolis (Schurer, pp. 146-147). At the time of Antiochus V Eupator (164-162 BCE) the priest Onias IV, son of the High Priest Onias III, went to Egypt and found favor with Ptolemy VI Philometor and his consort Cleopatra. They gave him a ruined temple in Leontopolis in the nomos of Heliopolis (hence not in the nomos of Leontopolis proper and thus another area), which had earlier been a shrine of the agria boubastis. It was approximately 24 miles north of Memphis in the Delta. **It was built on the pattern of the Temple in Jerusalem but was smaller** (see *The Wars of the Jews*, Bk. VII, Ch. 10.3, pp. 426-432; cf. Schurer, *ibid.*, p. 146).

Formal Jewish temple worship was established there from 160 BCE onwards. That temple was constructed there in accordance with the direction of God to Isaiah (Isa. 19:19). God set up this Temple for one purpose: To show that His son would be in Egypt and from out of Egypt he would call his Son. **There was a functioning Temple there with a functioning sacrificial system,** and at no time was Christ ever severed from the communication of the Temple and his God. The Leontopolis Temple was closed by order of Vespasian in 71 CE according to Bullinger (*Companion Bible*, appendix 81) or 73 CE according to Schurer (Vol. III, p. 146). This Temple was established in Goshen where the light was during the Exodus so that Messiah could be sheltered there from Herod as a child. **The sacrifices there were ordained by God through prophecy.** . . .“

Reference: *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume XIII
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<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13709a.htm>

Directly connected with inscriptions through language and period are the Aramaic texts written on papyrus and discovered in Egypt. Nearly all of them proceed from the Jewish military colony established in the Island of Elephantine (Philo). Four large sheets in the Museum of Cairo, found in 1904, contain about 240 lines of writing, well preserved. The documents (sale, gift, release, marriage contract, etc.) proceed from the same Jewish family and are dated (471-411 B.C.). Other leaves, in greater number but less complete, belong to the Museum of Berlin and have just been published (1911) by M. Sachau. The first three **concerning the worship and the sanctuary of Jahweh at Elephantine are of great interest to Biblical study.** There are besides letters, accounts, lists of colonists, and what would not be looked for, fragments of the history of the sage Ahikar and a partial translation of the celebrated inscription of Darius, graven in cuneiform characters on the rocks of Behistoun in Persia. Elephantine has furnished also a large number of fragments of pottery, commonly called ostraka, bearing inscriptions in ink, of the same date as the papyri. Several hundred are preserved in the collection of the "Corpus I.S." at Paris. Thanks to all these documents we are at present able to form a more or less exact idea of the Aramaic language in the period prior to the Scriptural Books of Esdras and Daniel.

Reference: The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume X
Book of Nehemiah:

(2) With these events the beginning of the Book of Nehemiah is connected. Nehemiah, the son of Helchias, relates how, at the court of Artaxerxes at Susa where he fulfilled the office of the king's cup-bearer, he received the news of this calamity in the twentieth year of the king (Neh., i), and how, thanks to his prudence, he succeeded in getting himself sent on a first mission to Jerusalem with full powers to rebuild the walls of the Jewish capital (Neh., ii, 1-8). This first mission lasted twelve years (v, 14; xiii, 6); he had the title of Perah (v, 14; xii, 26) or Athersatha (viii, 9; x,1).

It had long been the opinion of most historians of Israel that the Artaxerxes of Nehemiah was certainly the first of that name, and that consequently the first mission of Nehemiah fell in the year B.C. 445. The Aramaic papyri of Elephantine, recently published by Sachau, put this date beyond the shadow of a doubt. For in the letter which they wrote to Bahohim, Governor of Judea, in the seventeenth year of Darius II (B. C. 408), the Jewish priests of Elephantine say that they have also made an application to the sons of Sanaballat at Samaria. **Now Sanaballat was a contemporary of Nehemiah, and the Artaxerxes of Nehemiah, therefore, was the predecessor, and not the successor, of Darius II.**

Reference: Donald D. Binder, "Diaspora Synagogues."

<http://faculty.smu.edu/dbinder/diaspora.html>

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“ . . . For it was perfectly clear that the rumour of the overthrowing of the synagogues beginning at Alexandria would spread at once to the nomes of Egypt and speed from Egypt to the East and the nations of the East and from the Hypotaenia and Marea, which are the outskirts of Libya, to the West and the nations of the West. **For so populous are the Jews that no one country can hold them, and therefore they settle in very many of the most prosperous countries in Europe and Asia both in the islands and on the mainland,** and while they hold the Holy City where stands the sacred Temple of the most high God to be their mother city, yet those which are their by inheritance from their fathers, grandfathers, and ancestors even farther back, are in each case accounted by them to be their fatherland in which they were born and reared, while to some of them they have come at the time of their foundation as immigrants to the satisfaction of the founders. **And it was to be feared that people everywhere might take their cue from Alexandria, and outrage their Jewish fellow-citizens by rioting against their synagogues and ancestral customs** (Philo, Flacc. 45-47).

[This gives more evidence that the scattered Jewish communities were all united with Jerusalem as its headquarters, which means that, Jerusalem's priests could not suddenly unilaterally change the calendar-rules without disrupting communities "world-wide". The calendar-rules had to remain fixed to maintain unity. This not only exhibits Philo's view that synagogues existed throughout the Greco-Roman world in the first century, but also his belief that Gentiles saw them as the central targets for anti-Jewish attacks. Note also how Philo expresses his conviction that [quoting him] "**a strong solidarity existed between the Jerusalem Temple and the Jews living in the diaspora.**" ; Israel remained unified even though scattered.]

http://www.hope.edu/bandstra/RTOT/CH5/CH5_1B.HTM

“The temple in Arad matches the general structure of the Jerusalem temple described in the Hebrew Bible. It proves the existence of sanctuaries outside Jerusalem during the monarchy until the time of Hezekiah”