

The Passover Papyrus from Elephantine

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I READ with great interest the article of Prof. W. R. Arnold in the *JOURNAL*, vol. xxxi, p. 1-33. But, though I agree with the distinguished author on many points, I cannot accept his conclusion that we have little reason for connecting Darius II with the directions given by Hananyah to the garrison of Elephantine for the celebration of the feast of passover, as found in Papyrus 6. Professor Arnold supposes that Hananyah is speaking, not by the authority of the Persian king, but on the commission of the priests at Jerusalem, and therefore he would read (ll. 3. 4): "This year, the fifth year of Darius the king, being sent from the king to Arsames, I, Hananyah, visited the city of Jerusalem" (or something of that sort). I object that this reading would not be complete. After having told that on his way from Darius II to Arsames he stopped over at Jerusalem, Hananyah could not immediately proceed: "Now, do ye count thus," etc. The suppletion, "I visited the city of Jerusalem," ought to be followed by: "when the priests gave me directions for the celebration of the feast of passover in order that I might deliver them to you" (or something of that kind). For such a long suppletion, however, we lack in the papyrus the required space. I believe, therefore, that Sachau was quite right in assuming that שליח in l. 3 is used impersonally, and I should like to read (ll. 3. 4): "And now, in this year, year 5 of Darius the king, (a message) was sent from the king to Arsames, relating to the celebration of the feast of passover by the Jews,"—if the last word of the lacuna is אדירא, —or, "relating to the cele-

bration of the feast of Massoth,— if the last word of the lacuna is אַזְמָה, *azyma*. There is no space for more than the suppletion, “relating to,” etc.; but this suppletion, as I have already pointed out, is postulated by the words which follow: “Now, do ye count thus,” etc. And if this cannot be doubted, the authority by which Hananyah is speaking must be the authority of Darius II.

I have a few remarks to add:

1. Professor Arnold says (p. 18) that there is something decidedly queer about the expression: “this year, the fifth year of Darius the king, a message was sent from the king to Arsames,” etc. He means that the time of the year ought to be mentioned also. In my judgment this opinion is perilously near the line of over-subtlety. At all events, Professor Arnold forgets that Hananyah is only giving a report of the rescript sent by Darius to Arsames. That in such a report often only the year of the king was mentioned is shown by Ezra 6 3, and this is valid not only if the decree of Cyrus is authentic, but also if it is falsified, for we may take for granted that a falsifier would not disregard the usual formula.

2. In the opinion of Professor Arnold Papyrus 11 sheds light upon Papyrus 6. Certainly Papyrus 11 gives us some information about Hananyah. From this papyrus we know that Hananyah was not Egyptian born. A few years before Papyrus 11 was written he came to Egypt. But that is all the information it gives. It is impossible to show from the contents of this document that Hananyah came to Egypt in the year 419. Professor Arnold has felt this himself, for (p. 28) he says that Papyrus 11 was written some time after 419, taking for granted (from the contents of Papyrus 6) the very point in question,— that Hananyah came to Egypt in 419. That being the case, he has no reason for affirming on the basis of Papyrus 11 that it can no longer be disputed that the interpretation he gives of l. 3 of the passover papyrus is correct (p. 30). It is possible that Hananyah came to Egypt long before 419.

3. Though I believe that Hananyah in Papyrus 6 is

speaking by the authority of the Persian king, I think that Professor Arnold is quite right in assuming that the pass-over papyrus gives us a picture of the new-born Judaism reaching out to reform and control the half-heathen Judæans of the Diaspora, for doubtless it was at the instance of this new-born Judaism that the Persian government concerned itself with the religious affairs of the Jews, or rather sanctioned and promulgated the priestly decrees.