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# The Importance of the Wadi Daliyeh Manuscripts for the History of Samaria and the Samaritans

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**Abstract:** In this article, we deal with the topic of the Samaria papyri from Wadi Daliyeh in three main parts implied by the title. First, we briefly summarize the basic data related to the manuscripts. Second, we analyze their significance for the history of Samaria. Third, the last section is devoted to the meaning of the papyri for the history of the Samaritans.

**Keywords:** Wadi Daliyeh; Samaria; Persian period; Samaritans

## 1. Discovery of the Samaria Papyri in Wadi Daliyeh, Their Date and Content

The Samaria papyri were found by the Ta'âmireh Bedouins in the Mughâret Abū Shinjeh cave in Wadi Daliyeh, approximately 14 km north of Jericho, in or before 1962. The exact date of their discovery is unknown. Scholars in Jerusalem, Yusef Saad, the curator of the Palestine Archaeological Museum, Roland de Vaux from the École Biblique et archéologique française in Jerusalem, and Paul W. Lapp, at that time director of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem (W. F. Albright Institute of Oriental Research), were informed of their existence by the famous dealer in antiquities Khalil Iskander Shahin, known under the name Kando, in April 1962. A set of objects—manuscripts, bullae, and coins—coming from the Bedouins' excavations in the Wadi Daliyeh cave of Mughâret Abū Shinjeh were subsequently purchased for the Palestine Archaeological Museum in Jerusalem (today the Rockefeller Museum) on 19 November 1962 and 7 August 1963. The manuscripts were edited twice. The first edition was prepared by Douglas M. Gropp (Gropp et al. 2001) and the second by the author of this article (Dušek 2007). A few other inscribed fragments were later purchased for the private collection of Martin Schøyen. The script on the new papyri fragments is the same as that used in the main corpus. Some of the fragments seem to contain parts of proper names and other words attested in the main corpus of the Samaria papyri, so it is possible that the fragments from the Schøyen collection originally belonged to this set of papyri (Dušek 2016).

The legal documents, today known as the Wadi Daliyeh Samaria Papyri (WDSP), were probably deposited in the Mughâret Abū Shinjeh cave in Wadi Daliyeh in the context of the events in Samaria during and after the campaign of Alexander the Great in Egypt in 332/31 BCE. Alexander, after having conquered the city of Tyre in July 332 BCE and appointed Andromachus as governor of Syria, continued southward to Egypt. During his stay in Egypt, the inhabitants of the city of Samaria revolted against Andromachus and burned him alive. When Alexander received this bad news, he returned to Samaria and punished the rebels (Quintus Curtius, *Historiae* IV, VIII, 9–11). The owner or owners of the Samaria papyri were probably among the people from the city of Samaria who tried to escape from Alexander's army, and who, with only their most valuable and transportable belongings, wanted to hide in the Mughâret Abū Shinjeh cave in Wadi Daliyeh.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, they were probably found by Alexander's army and they may have been suffocated by a fire lit by Alexander's soldiers at the entrance of the cave (Cross 1974, pp. 17–18).

<sup>1</sup> See the list of the finds from the Persian period in Mughâret Abū Shinjeh in Lapp and Lapp (1974, pp. 13–14).

The Samaria papyri were written in the city or the fortress of Samaria (שמרין בירתא\קריחא) in the province of Samaria (שמרין מדינתא), most of them during the second third of the 4th century BCE, in the last decades of the Persian period before Alexander's conquest of Palestine (Dušek 2007, pp. 441–45). The oldest document that can be explicitly dated, WDSP 22, was probably written between 375 and 365 BCE. The latest document containing a dating formula, WDSP 1, was concluded on 19 March 335 BCE (= the 20th of Adar, year 2 (of Arses/Artaxerxes IV), beginning of the reign of Darius III).<sup>2</sup> Another fragment, WDSP 36 frg. 1, perhaps originally belonged to a document that could even have been written after WDSP 1, between 335 and 332 BCE (Dušek 2007, p. 423).

None of the documents are preserved in entirety. The best-preserved deed, WDSP 1, seems to represent approximately only half of the original document. Most of the Samaria papyri are deeds of sale of slaves, single male or female slaves, or groups of slaves.<sup>3</sup> Some documents concern other transactions regarding slaves,<sup>4</sup> a loan (WDSP 17), a lawsuit (WDSP 11 verso), and other types of contracts. Only papyrus strips remain of some of the documents. WDSP 28—WDSP 37 consist of groups of papyrus fragments.

Bullae, some of them still attached to the manuscripts, were discovered along with the Samaria papyri. The bullae purchased for the Palestine Archaeological Museum were published by Mary Joan Winn Leith (Leith 1997). In 1992, the original corpus of the Wadi Daliyeh bullae of the Palestine Archaeological Museum was enlarged by the publication of approximately forty additional bullae, purchased by R. Hecht and published by Ephraim Stern (Stern 1992, 2002).<sup>5</sup>

Most of the bullae from Wadi Daliyeh bear depictions of various Persian/Near Eastern or Greek motifs such as nude youths and warriors, male and female figures, Dionysian subjects, animals (single or flanking), the Persian Hero, and others.<sup>6</sup> Similar motifs were also used on some of the Samarian coins minted during the 4th century BCE (Leith 1997, pp. 29–30; 2000). The motifs depicted on the Samarian bullae and coins are different from those used in Judah during the Persian period. The Samarian imagery from the Persian period reflects the history and the culture of the region, which was different from that of Judah,<sup>7</sup> and indicates the existence of cultural continuity between the Iron Age Israel and the Persian province of Samaria (Leith 2014).

## 2. The Wadi Daliyeh Manuscripts and Samaria in the Late Persian Period

The Samaria papyri from Wadi Daliyeh provide us with precious information regarding some of the inhabitants of Samaria, including some of its officials. The deeds also contain information on length and weighing measures used in the province during the 4th century BCE, before Alexander.

### 2.1. The Proper Names in the Wadi Daliyeh Manuscripts

The proper names attested in the Samaria papyri and on the bullae may provide us with some information on the population of Samaria in the 4th century BCE, but cannot be used as a representative of the whole Samarian society and its various strata.<sup>8</sup> The persons named in the documents have

<sup>2</sup> On the double dating formula, see (Cross 1985, p. 10\*; Dušek 2007, pp. 118–19).

<sup>3</sup> WDSP 1–9, WDSP 18, WDSP 19? WDSP 22?, WDSP 26.

<sup>4</sup> WDSP 10, WDSP 12?, WDSP 27.

<sup>5</sup> The collection is divided between the Hecht Museum in Haifa and the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. Photographs of four of the bullae in the Hecht collection and another one in a private collection were published by Meshorer and Qedar (1991, pp. 12, 36, and 81). Photographs of twenty-eight bullae from the Hecht collection were published by Leith (1997), Plates XXIII and XXIV.

<sup>6</sup> Concerning the style of the Wadi Daliyeh bullae and their iconographical contexts, see (Leith 1997, pp. 20–32; Schroer and Lippke 2014).

<sup>7</sup> For a comparison of the motifs used in Samaria and Judah in the Persian period, see (Wyssmann 2014).

<sup>8</sup> Thus, Zsengellér (1996), who included in his analysis only the proper names contained in nine of the Samaria papyri, tried to distinguish on that basis three different strata of the Samarian society: the low class, the middle class, and the political elite. Because the names cannot be used as representative of the whole Samarian society, it makes no sense to indicate here the percentage for various groups of names with a theophoric element (e.g., Yahwistic, Idumaeen, Persian).

specific roles related to concrete commercial transactions in the concrete contexts of their conclusion. Moreover, as stated above, none of the manuscripts is preserved in its entirety; some of them are very fragmentary, and so the roles of some persons mentioned in the fragments cannot be ascertained.

It is also very difficult to draw any conclusion regarding the cults existing in Samaria on the basis of the proper names attested in the documents. Some persons mentioned in the papyri probably did not live in Samaria. Moreover, the presence of a theophoric element in a proper name does not allow us to determine the religion of the person's family. None of the persons attested in the documents bears a proper name and a patronymic containing the same theophoric element. There are cases when one of the two names contains a theophoric element and the other does not. There are also cases when the name of the son contains a theophoric element different from that which is in the name of his father.<sup>9</sup>

In the manuscripts from the Persian period and the bullae associated with the finds in Wadi Daliyeh, we discern several categories of proper names:<sup>10</sup> Yahwistic names with the elements *yhw-*,<sup>11</sup> *-yh*,<sup>12</sup> and *-yhw*;<sup>13</sup> proper names with the common Semitic elements El and Ab;<sup>14</sup> Aramaean names with the theophoric elements Sahar, Šamaš, and others<sup>15</sup>; Babylonian, Assyrian, or West Semitic names;<sup>16</sup> Phoenician;<sup>17</sup> Persian;<sup>18</sup> and Idumaeen names (with the theophoric element “Qos”);<sup>19</sup> a possible fragment of an Egyptian name (*Pwt*), and some North Arabic names<sup>20</sup>. There is also a group of hypocoristic names, with no theophoric element,<sup>21</sup> proper names whose interpretation is uncertain,<sup>22</sup> and probably also one gentilic name (*Krtly* [“Cretan”).

The number of persons acting in the role of buyers in the documents is quite limited, and their names are Yahwistic or West Semitic with no theophoric elements; one name is Aramaic, and another, West Semitic with the element “Ab,” belonged to a woman.<sup>23</sup> The buyers were probably inhabitants of the province of Samaria, perhaps even of the city of Samaria. Some proper names of the buyers appear in more than one deed. On this basis, we were able to distinguish three chronologically successive archives in the corpus (Dušek 2007, pp. 454–66):

- the archive of Yehopada(y)ni, probably constituted before the mid-4th century BCE;
- the archive of Neṭira', son of Yehopada(y)ni, containing documents probably written around the mid-4th century BCE;

<sup>9</sup> The seller of the slave in WDSP 1 has a Yahwistic proper name, and his patronymic contains the element “El.” In the inscription of the governor of Samaria on bulla WD 22, the name of the owner of the seal is Yahwistic, whereas the name of his father is probably Babylonian and might have contained the element “Sin.”

<sup>10</sup> Our analysis is based on our own edition of the manuscripts in Dušek (2007, pp. 486–89). For the occurrence of the names in concrete manuscripts, see our index in Dušek (2007, pp. 616–17). A slightly different list and interpretation of personal names in the Samaria papyri was published by Frank Moore Cross (2006).

<sup>11</sup> *Yhwntn*, *Yhwntw*, *Yhwn*], *Yhwyd'*, *Yhw ydn*, *Yhwzkr*, *Yhwbnh*, *Yhw' b*, *Yhwšpt*, [Y]hwšbh, *Yhwr'y*, *Yhwpdny*/Yhwpdyny, *Yhw' qb*, *Yhw' nny*, *Yhw' zr*, *Yhwslh*.

<sup>12</sup> Among these names, we mention as examples *Nhmyh*, *Hnnyh*, *Dlyh*, *Pthyh*, *'qbyh*, and *'nnyh*.

<sup>13</sup> Only one proper name is entirely preserved: *Mkyhw*.

<sup>14</sup> For example, *Yšm' l* (three bullae belonging to a private collection and associated with Wadi Daliyeh; see (Stern 1992, plates I, 1, and III, 1.2; Meshorer and Qedar 1991, pp. 11–12)), *Dlh' l*, *'by' dn*, *'bšlm*.

<sup>15</sup> For example, *Šhr*, *Šhrtntn*, *Brykšmš*, *'zr'*, *'qyb'*, *nṭyr'*, etc.

<sup>16</sup> For example, *Sn' blt*, *Nbw' hdn*, *Šlmm*.

<sup>17</sup> *Yšdb' l*, [B]' *lytw*, *'sytwn*.

<sup>18</sup> Apart from the names of the Persian kings (Artaxerxes, Darius), the Persian names include, for example, *Whdt*/Whwdt, *Bgbrt*, and some names not preserved in their entirety.

<sup>19</sup> *Qwsdkr*, *Qwsnhr*.

<sup>20</sup> *'blhy*, *Bsn*, *Hlpn*, *'moldw* ... , *Rby' lhy*.

<sup>21</sup> *'tr*, *'ry*, *Hny*, *Hnn*, *Yd'*, *Yqym*, *Yš[w]*' (bulla WD 23), [N]hwm, *Ntn*, *'nny*, *Škwy*, *Šlwm*, *]šlwm*, *]šlm*, *Ttn*, *Lnry*, and *'b(d)n* (bulla WD 54).

<sup>22</sup> E.g., *Mspnq* ... , *Mnd*], *lnh*, *Ptlmn*], and others.

<sup>23</sup> *Yhwnw* son of *Lnry* (WDSP 1, WDSP 4, WDSP 14, WDSP 20); *'by' dn* (WDSP 2—the name of a woman); *Yhwpdyny* and *'ry* son of *Dlyh* (WDSP 3); *Yhwpdyny* (WDSP 9 and WDSP 11r); *Nṭyr'* son of *Yhwpdny* (WDSP 5, WDSP 8, WDSP 9, WDSP 18?); *Ybn*] (WDSP 15).

- the archive of Yehonur, son of Laneri, which includes deeds written at the end of the Persian period, before 332 BCE.

The first two archives, that of Yehodapda(y)ni and his son Neṭira', belonged to the same family, the father and his son after him. It is not clear whether Yehonur, the owner of the most recent archive, also belonged to the same family or not; the documents are not explicit in this regard. But it is possible that the three archives actually belonged to three generations of the same family, and the documents could have been carried and deposited in the Manuscript Area of the Mughâret Abū Shinjeh cave by a single person, its last owner.

The proper names of the persons acting in the documents in the role of vendors (of slaves or real estate) seem to reflect a cultural horizon larger than that of the province of Samaria. They bear West Semitic, Yahwistic, Idumaeen (with the element "Qôš"), and possibly even Persian and Egyptian names.<sup>24</sup> The vendors of real estate (WDSP 14, WDSP 15) may have been inhabitants of the city of Samaria, but at least some of the vendors of slaves may have lived elsewhere than in the province of Samaria.

Most of the proper names of the slaves sold in the transactions recorded in the Samaria papyri are Yahwistic,<sup>25</sup> and they may have originated in Samaria or Judah. Other slaves bear North Arabic, Idumaeen, and Persian names,<sup>26</sup> and may have originated in other regions, not in Samaria. Some slaves had West Semitic names without theophoric elements.<sup>27</sup>

The names of many witnesses who were present during the conclusion of the contract are written in the deeds with or without their patronymics, and often with no official titles. Most of the witnesses bear Yahwistic names, but also names with the element "El," West Semitic names with no theophoric element, and Aramaic and Arabic names as well.<sup>28</sup> We may suppose that these witnesses were probably people living in Samaria, either for a short or a long period.

Some of the witnesses were officials belonging to the administration of the Persian province of Samaria. The names of three types of officials appear among the witnesses: governor, judge, and prefect. The officials mentioned among the witnesses in the contracts are identified by their proper name and their official title, never with a patronymic (this rule was apparently not valid for seals, see WD 22 below). The name of Ḥananyah or 'Ananyah, governor of Samaria (חַנַּנְיָהּ פַּחַח שְׁמַרְיָן), is attested among the witnesses in WDSP 7,17. The document is dated to Adar 5, year 4 of Artaxerxes (probably III), i.e., 4 March 354 BCE. Another governor, probably Delayah son of Sin'uballit, attached his bulla (WD 22) bearing a Hebrew inscription with his name and title (לְדַלַּי יְהוּ בֶן סַבְאָל בַּלַּט פַּחַח) [שְׁמַרְיָן] to papyrus WDSP 16, which can be dated approximately to the time of Artaxerxes III, in the first third of the 4th century BCE (Dušek 2007, p. 316). Sin'uballit, the father of the governor, was probably Sanballat the Horonite, attested by the book of Nehemiah<sup>30</sup> and in an Aramaic letter from Elephantine, dated to 407 BCE.<sup>31</sup> Delayah, son of Sin'uballit, is attested in the same Aramaic letter from Elephantine from 407 BCE, in its copy, and also in a memorandum sent by Bagavahya, governor

<sup>24</sup> Ḥnnyh son of Byd'l (WDSP 1); Qwsnhr (WDSP 2); Yqym (WDSP 3); Dlh'l and Ḥny (WDSP 5); Jhwbg[? (a possible Persian name?, WDSP 7); Ḥnn (WDSP 8); Jlwmy (WDSP 14); Yd' (WDSP 15); pwt[ (a possible Egyptian name?, WDSP 19); Yqym and Ḥnn? (WDSP 22).

<sup>25</sup> Yhwḥnn son of Š'lh (WDSP 1); Yhw' nny son of 'zr' (WDSP 3); Nḥmyh (WDSP 4); 'nnyh [son of X], [Y son of Y]hwšbh (WDSP 5); Ḥnnyh? (WDSP 7); Mkyhw (WDSP 8); Yhw'qb (WDSP 12); [X son of Yd']yh (?) (WDSP 19).

<sup>26</sup> 'blly (WDSP 6); Qwsdkr (WDSP 9); Bgbrt (WDSP 10).

<sup>27</sup> Ntn? (WDSP 7); Zbdh, son of [X] (WDSP 19).

<sup>28</sup> Yhw'zr son of Bsn, [X] son of Yqym (WDSP 2); ]'l son of Škwy, Jdwmn, sons of Dlyh, 'tr, [son of] 'nny, Šlwmy son of Šhrntn (WDSP 3); 'qbyh [son of X], [X son of . . . ]lyh (WDSP 5); Syw/t[ (WDSP 7); [Yqy?]m son of Ttn, his father – (that) of Ḥnn, Jšlm son of Lnry (WDSP 8); Yhwšpt[, Šm[ (WDSP 9); [X son of] Jšlyh (WDSP 10); Qwd/rn, Jw' son of Sn' blt (WDSP 11r); P . . . [ (WDSP 15); [X] son of Km[ (WDSP 18).

<sup>29</sup> See (Dušek 2007, pp. 321–31).

<sup>30</sup> Neh 2:10, 19; 3:33; 4:1; 6:1, 2, 5, 12, 14; 13:28.

<sup>31</sup> TAD A4.7, 29.

of Judah.<sup>32</sup> Delayah, son of Sin' uballit, probably succeeded his father as governor of Samaria after 407 BCE, and he probably held this function approximately during the first third or the first half of the 4th century BCE.

Other officials attested among the witnesses of the Wadi Daliyeh documents are judges and prefects. A judge with a Persian name, Vahudata (וה(ו)רה דיןא), who might have been of Persian origin, witnessed the conclusion of contracts WDSP 2, WDSP 3, and perhaps also WDSP 10, all dated around the mid-4th century BCE. He might have been the owner of the seal imprinted on one of the three bullae WD 17, WD 36, or WD 51.<sup>33</sup> A prefect with a Phoenician name containing an Egyptian theophoric element (אסיחון סנא "Isyaton the prefect") appears among the witnesses in WDSP 8,12 which can be dated to around 350 or 350–340 BCE (Dušek 2007, p. 215). "Hanan the prefect" (חנן סנא) is mentioned in the fragmentary document WDSP 11r,13, which can be dated to the end of the reign of Artaxerxes II (405–359 BCE) or the beginning of the reign of Artaxerxes III (359–338 BCE) (Dušek 2007, p. 252).

A comparison of the proper names in the Samaria papyri from the Late Persian period with the proper names attested in the Samaria ostraca, written in the city of Samaria during the first half of the 8th century BCE,<sup>34</sup> is interesting. The Samaria ostraca contain Yahwistic names as well as names with the theophoric element "Ba'al".<sup>35</sup> The Samaria papyri from Wadi Daliyeh, written approximately four centuries after the Samaria ostraca, demonstrate that Yahwistic names were predominant in the Samarian onomastics of the 4th century BCE. This indicates that the biblical affirmation on the definitive deportation of Israel to Assyria in 2 Kings 17:6 and 23<sup>36</sup> should not be considered to be a historical fact. The Samaria papyri from Wadi Daliyeh prove that the Yahwistic population remained in the land in spite of the deportation of 27,290 or 27,280 people reported in the inscriptions of Sargon II (Cogan 2008, pp. 82, 89, 93). Ba'alistic proper names, well attested in the 8th-century Samaria ostraca, are not attested in the 4th-century Samaria papyri. It is nevertheless difficult to draw any solid conclusion on this fact.

The Yahwistic names attested in the 8th-century BCE kingdom of Israel in the Samaria ostraca, as well as in the inscriptions from Kuntillet 'Ajrud, contain the "northern" Israelite form of the theophoric element *Yw*.<sup>37</sup> This form was apparently no longer used in the province of Samaria in the Persian period. The Yahwistic proper names contain only the "Judaean" form of the theophoric element *yhw-*, *-yh*, and *-yhw*.

## 2.2. Length and Weight Measures in 4th-Century BCE Samaria

The Samaria papyri from Wadi Daliyeh also provide us with an insight into the systems of measurement and weighing (especially in relation to payments). Because of the fragmentary state of the manuscripts, the evidence is quite limited and incomplete.

The only indication of a unit of length is in manuscript WDSP 14,6, which seems to concern the construction or reconstruction of some halls, and their sale, transmission, or lease: ארך 10 20 א [||| ||| 1] "length of (38/39 cubits)".<sup>38</sup> The א that precedes the number is very probably an abbreviation for אמה "cubit," or in a plural form אמן\אמין "cubits". We do not know exactly how long the cubit used in Samaria in the Persian period was. If the units of length corresponded to the Babylonian standard, as we suppose for the units of weight (see below), the cubit used in Samaria could have corresponded to 48–50 cm (Powel, pp. 470–71, §I.4 g).

<sup>32</sup> TAD A4.7, 29; A4.8, 28; A4.9, 1.

<sup>33</sup> See (Dušek 2007, pp. 95–96, 512). For the bullae WD 17, WD 36, and WD 51, see (Leith 1997, pp. 209–12).

<sup>34</sup> For the date of the Samaria ostraca, see (Lemaire 1977, pp. 39–43). For the *editio princeps*, see (Reisner et al. 1924, vol. 1, pp. 227–46).

<sup>35</sup> André Lemaire (1977, pp. 47–55) reports eleven Yahwistic names and eight Ba'alistic names. See also the list of proper names in the Samaria ostraca in Reisner et al. (1924, vol. 1, pp. 230–31).

<sup>36</sup> "In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria captured Samaria; he carried the Israelites away to Assyria. He placed them in Halah, on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes." (2 Kgs 17:6). "So Israel was exiled from their own land to Assyria until this day" (2 Kgs 17:23).

<sup>37</sup> For the Samaria ostraca, see (Lemaire 1977, pp. 47–55). For the proper names with the element *Yw* in the inscriptions from Kuntillet 'Ajrud, see (Meshel et al. 2012, pp. 73–142, especially p. 128).

<sup>38</sup> For the manuscript WDSP 14, see (Dušek 2007, pp. 290–306); for the analysis of the line, especially pp. 297–99.

The transactions recorded in the deeds from Wadi Daliyeh report the payments in weighed silver, using two units of weight: the sheqel and mina. The sheqels are abbreviated with the letter  $\psi$  in the expression  $\psi$  כסף “sh(eqel[s]) of silver”. The “mina,” a multiple of a sheqel, is fully spelled: כסף מנה\מנן “silver mina/minas”. During the 4th century BCE, the system of payments in weighed silver apparently coexisted in Samaria with the system of payment in coins, and some of them were minted in the province of Samaria (Meshorer and Qedar 1991, 1999), but the two systems were apparently independent of each other (Dušek 2007, pp. 497–500). The manuscripts from Wadi Daliyeh provide no hints for the determination of the weight of the sheqel. It was probably different from the weight of the sheqel used during the Persian period in the transactions recorded in the Aramaic documents from Elephantine.<sup>39</sup> It is most likely that the sheqel and mina in the Wadi Daliyeh documents corresponded to the Babylonian units, with a sheqel of ca. 8.4 g, and a mina corresponding to the weight of sixty sheqels, i.e., ca. 504 g (Dušek 2007, pp. 505–7).<sup>40</sup> The reason is that the legal formulary of the Samaria papyri depends on the Neo-Babylonian legal tradition (Gropp et al. 2001, pp. 19–32),<sup>41</sup> so the use of the Babylonian units is the most probable. This fact allows us to give several examples of the prices of slaves in 4th-century BCE Samaria:

- WDSP 5, which seems to have been written approximately before 350 BCE, concerns a sale of a group of slaves for one silver mina, probably corresponding to ca. 504 g of silver;
- WDSP 3, probably written before 350 BCE, reports the sale of a slave for the price of ten or thirty sheqels, corresponding to ca. 84 g or 252 g of silver (unfortunately, the price of the slave is damaged in the manuscript);
- WDSP 2, written in December 352/January 351 BCE, concerns a sale of two slaves, a man and a woman, slaves “with no defect and with no mark,” for 28 silver sheqels, i.e., ca. 235.2 g of silver;
- WDSP 4, probably written approximately between 350 and 340 BCE, concerns the sale of a slave for the price of 30 sheqels of silver, i.e., ca. 252 g of silver;
- WDSP 1, concluded on 19 March 335 BCE, reports the sale of a slave “with no defect” (line 2), for the price of 35 silver sheqels, i.e., ca. 294 g of silver.

Concerning the prices of real estate, some evidence is provided by the fragmentary manuscript WDSP 15:

- WDSP 15, probably written around the mid-4th century or around 350–340 BCE, seems to concern the sale of several houses for the price of 1 silver mina and 6 or 9 sheqels of silver, corresponding to ca. 554.4 g or 579.6 g of silver.

### 3. The Wadi Daliyeh Manuscripts and the History of the Samaritans

For more than two millennia, the identity of the Samaritan community is defined, among others, by two elements: the sanctuary of Yahweh on Mt. Gerizim, and the text of the Pentateuch, whose Samaritan version provides a legitimation of the sanctuary. In this section, we attempt to summarize what we know about the Yahwistic sanctuary on Mt. Gerizim and about the existence of the Pentateuch in Samaria at the time when the manuscripts from Wadi Daliyeh were written, during the 4th century BCE. As the topic is very complicated and a lot has been written on it, it is impossible to discuss all the details here. Thus, we summarize only the basic facts.

<sup>39</sup> The system of weights used in the documents from Elephantine was different from that which is attested in the Samaria papyri. The documents from Elephantine do not seem to have used the unit “mina.” Moreover, the system at Elephantine used the Persian unit “karsh,” which was not used in the province of Samaria. The sheqel at Elephantine seems to have corresponded to the weight of the Attic didrachma of ca. 8.76 g. See (Porten 1968, pp. 62–70).

<sup>40</sup> The approximate weight of a sheqel of 8.33 g and a mina of ca. 500 g has been fixed by Powel (Powel, p. 510, §V.4 and §V.5). We do not agree with Gropp, who argued that the mina in the Samaria papyri corresponded to the weight of fifty sheqels (Gropp et al. 2001, p. 28). For more details, see (Dušek 2007, pp. 85–86).

<sup>41</sup> The legal documents from Elephantine depend on a different legal tradition, probably Neo-Assyrian (Gropp 2000).

### 3.1. The Yahwistic Sanctuary on Mt. Gerizim in the Persian Period

We have seen above that the majority of the names attested in the Samaria papyri from Wadi Daliyeh are Yahwistic, i.e., are composed with a theophoric element *yhw-*, *-yh*, or *-yhw*. Who were these Yahwists? They were very probably the descendants of the ancient Israelites who survived after the destruction of the kingdom of Israel by the Assyrians after the defeat of Samaria in 722 BCE, and who continued to live in the province of Samaria, which was ruled by the Assyrians, then the Babylonians, and, in the 4th century BCE, when the Samaria papyri were written, was part of the Persian satrapy of Transeuphrates.<sup>42</sup>

During the Persian period, the religious center of the Yahwistic community in Samaria was the sanctuary of Yahweh on Mt. Gerizim.<sup>43</sup> We do not know when exactly the Mt. Gerizim sanctuary began to be used (Dušek 2014). We only know that the earliest explicit evidence thus far known, literary as well as archeological, dates from the Persian period. In *Jewish Antiquities*, Flavius Josephus reported two stories (*Ant.* 11.302–312; *Ant.* 11.321–325) related to the foundation of the sanctuary, which probably preserved some historical facts, but also contain some legendary elements, and are situated in a partially wrong chronological framework.<sup>44</sup> The analysis of Josephus' accounts in the light of other written and archeological sources indicates that Sanballat, governor of Samaria approximately during the second half of the 5th century BCE, and an adversary of Nehemiah mentioned in the Hebrew Bible,<sup>45</sup> was probably involved in fostering the Samaritan Yahwistic sanctuary approximately a century before the context in which it was dated by Josephus, i.e., in the second half of the 5th century BCE.<sup>46</sup> It seems that Josephus confused two different historical events: the building of the sanctuary of Yahweh on Mt. Gerizim in the late 5th century, and, in the late 4th century, the beginning of the construction of a city, which existed until the late 2nd century BCE and surrounded the sanctuary.<sup>47</sup> Josephus' story of the foundation of the Mt. Gerizim sanctuary in *Ant.* 11.321–325 may in reality have concerned the foundation of the city around the sanctuary of Yahweh in the late 4th century BCE.

Three arguments allow us to date the foundation on Mt. Gerizim more precisely.

First, according to Josephus, the sanctuary on Mt. Gerizim was founded after Manasses, together with his wife Nikaso (daughter of Sanballat), was expelled from Jerusalem and moved to Samaria. If we trust the biblical account in Neh 13:28, the son-in-law of Sanballat was expelled during Nehemiah's second mission in Jerusalem. Nehemiah's first mission in Jerusalem ended in the 32nd year of Artaxerxes I (Neh 5:14; 13:6), in 433/432 BCE. It means that the sanctuary on Mt. Gerizim was probably constructed after 433/432 BCE.

Second, Josephus reports that the sanctuary on Mt. Gerizim was founded when Sanballat was an old man; he died shortly after its foundation (*Ant.* 11.311 and 325). Some letters from Elephantine help us to arrive at an approximate date for this late period of Sanballat's rule in Samaria. The letter TAD A.4.7, 29, indicates that at the time when the letter was written, in 407 BCE, the administration of the province seems already to have been in the hands of the two sons of Sanballat, Delayah and

<sup>42</sup> Knoppers (2013, pp. 18–44) convincingly argues that most of the Israelite population remained in the land after the conquest of Samaria/Israel by the Assyrians in the 8th century BCE. This fact makes clear that the Samaritans were not a kind of "Jewish Sect." Purvis (1968), for example, considered the Samaritans to be a Jewish sect, and this opinion cannot be held anymore. The opinion that the Samaritanism is a kind of "downgraded Judaism," based on the reading of 2 Kgs 17, is wrong. The text of 2 Kgs 17:24–41 is a late literary construct, probably written in the Persian period as Jewish anti-Samaritan polemics; see (Kartveit 2018).

<sup>43</sup> It is not clear whether it was a temple or an altar; see (Pummer 2016).

<sup>44</sup> The first story in *Ant.* 11.302–312 is dated by Josephus to the time of "Darius the last king," when Samaria was supposedly ruled by Sanballates. His daughter Nikaso married Manasses, the brother of Yaddus, the high priest of the Jerusalem temple. Following a negative reaction to this marriage in Jerusalem, Manasses and Nikaso had to leave Jerusalem and moved to Samaria. Sanballates subsequently built the sanctuary on Mt. Gerizim and appointed Manasses high priest there. The second story in *Ant.* 11.321–325 concerns the foundation of the Mt. Gerizim sanctuary by Sanballates at the end of the Persian period, during the conquest by Alexander the Great of Tyre and Gaza in 332 BCE.

<sup>45</sup> Neh 2:10, 19; 3:33; 4:1; 6:1, 2, 5, 12, 14; 13:28.

<sup>46</sup> On Sanballat in historical sources and modern scholarly debate, see (Dušek 2012b).

<sup>47</sup> On the city around the Mt. Gerizim sanctuary excavated by Yitzhak Magen, see below.

Shelemyah. A memorandum regarding the matter of the reconstruction of the Elephantine temple of *Yhw* sent from Palestine to Elephantine some time after 407 BCE already contains a proclamation of the leaders of the provinces of Judah and Samaria, the governor Bagavayah on behalf of Judah, and Delayah, probably the son of Sanballat, on behalf of Samaria. An approximate *terminus ad quem* of the construction of the sanctuary on Mt. Gerizim can be fixed to 407 BCE.

Third, the first of Josephus' two stories, *Ant.* 11.302–312, is dated to the time of "Darius the last king" (*Ant.* 11.302), who was Darius III "Codomanus." Josephus probably made a chronological error in moving the events related to Sanballat in the time of the Persian king Darius a century later, from the late 5th century BCE, from the time of Darius II "Ochus," to the late 4th century BCE, to the time of Darius III "Codomanus," the last Persian king. Darius II "Ochus" reigned from 424 to 405 BCE. If the sanctuary on Mt. Gerizim was actually built by Sanballat in the time of Darius, it was under Darius II, after 424 BCE.

The three arguments, based on the written evidence, allow us to date the foundation of the sanctuary of Yahweh on Mt. Gerizim to approximately between 424 and 407 BCE. The results of the archeological excavations on Mt. Gerizim, led by the team of Yitzhak Magen since 1982, provide approximate confirmation of such a chronological conclusion. Magen dated the earliest known evidence from the Mt. Gerizim sanctuary, consisting mainly of ceramics, bones, and coins, to the 5th century (Magen 2007, pp. 158–64, 176–80; Magen 2008, pp. 167–69). The sanctuary was surrounded by a city, the development of which seems to have begun after the conquest of the southern Levant by Alexander the Great in 332 BCE (Magen 2008, pp. 3–93, especially p. 89), and it continued to develop during the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE. Both the city and the sanctuary were probably destroyed by John Hyrcanus in the late 2nd century BCE.

### 3.2. The Pentateuch in Samaria in the 4th Century BCE?

The Yahwists whose names appear in various roles in the Samaria papyri from Wadi Daliyeh were very probably members of the Yahwistic community in the province of Samaria, the center of which was, in the 4th century BCE, when the documents were written, already situated in the sanctuary of Yahweh on Mt. Gerizim. Manuscripts of the Pentateuch from later periods provide a legitimation of the existence of the Mt. Gerizim sanctuary.<sup>48</sup> But did the Samaritan Yahwists in the 4th century BCE, whose names very often appear in the manuscripts from Wadi Daliyeh, already know and use the Pentateuch?

An Aramaic letter, written in 419 BCE and found at Elephantine in Egypt, contains instructions concerning the Feast of Unleavened Bread.<sup>49</sup> Pierre Grelot argued that the letter reflects a customary priestly law as it existed before the fixation of the priestly texts of the Pentateuch in a written form, and before their unification with the text of Deuteronomy (Grelot 1955). The fact that the Yahwistic community at Elephantine in Egypt needed to receive the instructions on the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the form of a letter indicates that they did not yet know the text of the Pentateuch with the text of Exodus 12 (Lemaire 1995, especially pp. 60–61). The fixation of the priestly documents of the Pentateuch and their unification with Deuteronomy might have been connected with the activity of Ezra, who very probably arrived in Jerusalem in the early 4th century BCE, in 398 BCE, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes II (405–359 BCE).<sup>50</sup> A new document, perhaps already the Pentateuch, seems to

<sup>48</sup> For the texts of the Samaritan Pentateuch legitimating the existence of the sanctuary on Mt. Gerizim, see (Tov 2012, pp. 87–88). For example, the Samaritan Pentateuch contains an additional Samaritan tenth commandment referring to Mt. Gerizim, composed from the texts of Deut 11:29a, Deut 27:2b–3a, Deut 27:4a, Deut 27:5–7, and Deut 11:30. The Samaritan Pentateuch also contains what is probably the original reading of Deut 27:4 referring to Mt. Gerizim instead of the later Masoretic version citing Mt. Ebal (see, e.g., Nihan 2007, pp. 213–14; Pummer 2007, p. 245; Kartveit 2009, pp. 300–9; Schenker 2010; Dušek 2012a, p. 90; Himbaza 2018, especially pp. 109–11).

<sup>49</sup> It is the letter TAD A4.1, labelled by Porten and Yardeni as "the Passover Letter."

<sup>50</sup> Ezra 7:7–8. The year of the arrival of Ezra in Jerusalem has been much discussed. A great number of scholars opted for the seventh year of Artaxerxes I (465–425 BCE), in 458 BCE; thus, for example, (Williamson 1985, pp. xxxix–xliv). In our opinion,



have been produced during the 4th century BCE, and united the Yahwists in Judah and in Samaria under the same Law. Christoph Nihan argued that this new document guaranteed mutual recognition by the Judaeans and Samaritan Yahwists of the legitimacy of their altars on Mt. Gerizim and in Jerusalem (Nihan 2007).

This means that a written document, negotiated between the Samaritan and the Judaeans Yahwists, may have guaranteed the coexistence of the two sanctuaries in the same Yahwistic religion, and may already have existed in the 4th century BCE, before Alexander, when the Wadi Daliyeh manuscripts were written in the city of Samaria. We do not know whether it was already the text of the Pentateuch, as it is known from the later periods, or not. But nothing proves that, at this time, the document would have been widespread and read among the ordinary Yahwistic population of Samaria. A comparison with later periods even seems to indicate that the Samaritan Yahwists, who were very probably among the people who died in the Mughâret Abū Shinjeh cave in Wadi Daliyeh at the end of the Persian period, did not yet consider the text of the Pentateuch to be a text that should be copied for, distributed among, and read by ordinary people. This is what is suggested by a comparison of the nature of the finds from the Persian period from the Mughâret Abū Shinjeh cave in Wadi Daliyeh with the texts from the Roman period discovered in the vicinity of the Dead Sea, mainly in the Judaeans Desert. These discoveries indicate that, at this time, the people who escaped to the Judaeans Desert and hid themselves with their valuables in some of its caves carried with them not only the keys to their houses, jewelry, and other precious and important objects, but also their legal documents and biblical scrolls.<sup>51</sup> It is clear that an argument *a silencio* should always be handled with a great deal of care, but the absence of any religious texts among the finds from the Persian period in Wadi Daliyeh may indicate that, at the end of the Persian period, in the province of Samaria, the text of the Pentateuch did not yet have the status of a text accessible to the “ordinary” members of the Yahwistic community, and was not yet handled as a valuable personal object. This hypothesis seems to be confirmed by the fact that, to date, the existence of a manuscript from the Persian period of the Pentateuch, or of any other text later adopted in the canon of the Hebrew or Christian Bible, is not yet known.

The Pentateuch, or portions thereof, probably shared between Mt. Gerizim and Jerusalem from the 4th century BCE onward, represented what we call a “fragile equilibrium” between the two Yahwistic communities in Samaria and Judah.<sup>52</sup> This unity, consisting of a mutual recognition of the two altars on Mt. Gerizim and in Jerusalem by the Yahwists in Samaria and Judah, probably collapsed in the 2nd century BCE, probably after 168 BCE, when the reference to the altar on Mt. Gerizim in Deut 27:4 was probably changed in the Judaeans texts to “Mt. Ebal,” and, in consequence, the Mt. Gerizim sanctuary lost its legitimacy for the Judaeans. It is also in the 2nd century BCE that the Greek term Ἰουδαϊσμός “Judaism,” appears for the first time in the written evidence to designate the Jewish religion, i.e., the Yahwistic religion centered in Jerusalem, different from the Yahwism in Samaria.<sup>53</sup> It is probably only at that time that the Samaritan Yahwists began to be officially perceived in Jerusalem as a religion different from Jerusalem.

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the most likely possibility is that Ezra arrived in Jerusalem in the seventh year of Artaxerxes II, in 398 BCE, and we rely upon the arguments in favor of this chronological interpretation presented by A. Van Hoonacker (1890, 1923, 1924), Cazelles (1954), Grelot (1955), Harold H. Rowley (1965), and Lemaire (1995).

<sup>51</sup> We mention some examples. The caves in Wadi Murabba‘at yielded Hebrew and Aramaic documentary texts and the Bar-Kokhba letters, as well as fragments of biblical manuscripts of Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Isaiah (Benoit et al. 1961). The refugees who hid in the Cave of Letters during the Second Jewish Revolt against the Romans carried with them into the cave objects such as metal utensils, wooden and leather objects, keys, glass plates, jewelry, and purses (Yadin 1963). They also brought their legal and epistolary texts (Yadin et al. 2002), and fragments of biblical manuscripts of Numeri and Psalms were also found in the cave (Peter Flint in Charlesworth et al. 2000, pp. 137–66). Fragments of the books of Genesis, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Ezekiel, and Psalms written before 73 CE were discovered at Masada, together with other texts (Talmon et al. 1999).

<sup>52</sup> (Dušek 2012a, pp. 93–96). Himbaza (2018), in the case of Deut 27:2–8, speaks of a compromise version of the text, accepted in Judah and in Samaria.

<sup>53</sup> The term Ἰουδαϊσμός is used for the first time in 2 Maccabees 2:21; 8:1; and 14:38 (twice).

In consequence, “Samaritanism” as a Yahwistic religion on its own, opposed to Judaism, was probably not yet as strictly defined in the 4th century BCE, when the Samaria papyri from Wadi Daliyeh were written, as became the case during the 2nd century BCE. This is why the people with Yahwistic names mentioned in the Samaria papyri cannot be considered “Samaritans” in the sense in which we use this term today, and which very probably began to be used only in later periods, as a result of Jewish self-determination as a religion different from Samaritan Yahwism.

#### 4. Conclusions

The Samaria papyri from Wadi Daliyeh provide us with information on the existence of a group of a population bearing Yahwistic names that coexisted in Samaria with people bearing names containing other theophoric elements. Nevertheless, as we argue above, the existence of various divinities attested in the proper names that appear in the manuscripts does not mean that all these divinities had their cults in Samaria.

There is explicit evidence of the cult for Yahweh in Samaria, whose sanctuary on Mt. Gerizim seems to have been founded in the second half of the 5th century BCE, probably between 424 and 407 BCE. Thus, the Yahwists, whose names are attested in the manuscripts from Wadi Daliyeh, probably already had their religious center there. Concerning the Pentateuch, whose Samaritan version provides a legitimation of the existence of this sanctuary, the evidence is much less clear. A written document negotiated between the Samaritan Yahwists (with center on Mt. Gerizim) and the Judaeans Yahwists (with center in Jerusalem) may have already existed in the 4th century BCE, before Alexander. But it is not certain if it was already the Pentateuch as we know it from the later periods.

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#### Abbreviations

Ant.	Flavius Josephus, <i>Jewish Antiquities</i>
TAD A	Bezalel Porten and Ada Yardeni. <i>Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt</i> . Vol. 1: <i>Letters</i> . Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, 1986.
WD	Wadi Daliyeh
WDSP	Wadi Daliyeh Samaria Papyrus

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