Mercenary Communities in the Near East and their Contribution to an East Mediterranean Literary *Koine*[1]

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[This article investigates the role that mercenaries could have played in disseminating cultural elements from the Near East (especially Egypt) to Greece. The topic has previously been pursued by scholars but only from a theoretical perspective. This article uses the Judean mercenary community at Elephantine as a test case to explore the potential contributions that similar Greek communities at Daphnae, Memphis, etc. could have played for Greeks. Furthermore, this article traces the diffusion of a literary structure throughout the East Mediterranean with a conclusion of its significance for the community at Elephantine.]

Keywords: mercenaries, cultural contact, Elephantine, Greek historiography, Hebrew prophets, Ahiqar.

While few scholars today would argue against the idea that Greece in the Archaic and Classical Periods was influenced by the cultures of the Near East, the means of the dissemination of that influence remains controversial.[2] However, of the theoretical models suggested, scholars have typically been particularly averse to the idea that Greeks knew other languages, especially that Greeks could *read* in them,[3] generally citing Momigliano's well-known argument that Greeks by nature had no interest in learning foreign languages.[4] Pushing back against this idea to an extent, Philip Kaplan argued that Greek mercenaries living abroad were important as "cultural-carriers," bringing knowledge of their host Near Eastern cultures back with them to Greek-speaking areas.[5] He argued that a certain number of the mercenaries must have been aristocrats,[6] and so particularly

1. This article began its life as a paper for a seminar with Nate Rosenstein on ancient warfare. In addition, it has benefited from suggestions by Carolina López-Ruiz as well as the anonymous reviewers. Any mistakes, inaccuracies, infelicities, etc. that remain are, of course, my own.

2. The bibliography is too vast to do the topic full justice, so a representative sample of the major theories will have to suffice: Itinerant specialists and charismatics (Burkert 1992); many modes of transmission, but especially bilingual itinerant poets (West 1997); Euboean travelers (Lane Fox 2009); Phoenicians and Greeks living side by side, especially intermarriages (López-Ruiz 2010).

3. Again, the bibliography is too large to include all scholars, but the following are all recent and prominent scholars that argue against Greeks knowing other languages, and more specifically, are sceptical that Greeks would have learned to read other languages: Henkelman 2006, 810-6; Frolov/Wright 2011, 455-6; Vlassoploulos 2013, 145-7; Bachvarova 2016.

4. Momigliano 1975, 12-21.

5. Kaplan 2002. This article is primarily theoretical, but Kaplan 2003 provides more empirical contextualization by looking at Greek mercenaries in Egypt.

6. As Alcaeus' brother certainly was, see fr. 350.

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capable of absorbing elements of Near Eastern literary cultures and transferring them back to Greek literary culture. He also argued that most of the mercenaries must have had a fairly high degree of cultural competence and cache to possess the training and equipment necessary to serve as mercenaries, not to mention the contacts needed to be hired out abroad. Kurt Raaflaub and Nino Luraghi, however, reacted against Kaplan's argument, citing the large number of Greek mercenaries Herodotus attests to in Egypt[7] and recent scholarship arguing against the necessarily high social status of hoplites.[8]

Since the publication of Raaflaub's and Luraghi's articles, the matter has mostly been dropped among Classicists. However, I feel that the idea has received insufficient attention and would like to reopen it. In particular, I feel that the scholars involved have analyzed the question almost entirely in theoretical terms and have not sufficiently analyzed the evidence from actual mercenary communities of the time-period. Granted, there is little literary evidence for Greek communities, but there are other cases that may provide valuable clues for common patterns during the same period. For instance, the absence of engaged analysis of the Judean mercenary community at Elephantine is glaring.[9] By looking at Elephantine as a test case for what sort of cultural production was possible within a mercenary community we may better understand the nature of literary consumption in similar Greek communities. By using evidence from (mostly) non-Greek mercenary communities in Egypt, I will argue that significant literary activity occurred at many Greek mercenary communities in Near Eastern lands. Moreover, because these communities were frequently stable over long periods of time and since mercenary communities of different nationalities lived cheek by jowl with one another, I will argue that they provided a middle-ground in which literary styles and tropes could easily be borrowed across linguistic borders. Finally, I will look at a particular literary convention found in Greek historians, Hebrew prophets, and other texts whose dissemination can perhaps be traced back to these mercenary communities.

1. *Mercenary Communities*

An important aspect of scholars' antipathy toward the idea of mercenaries' engagement in literary activities, I believe, is the subconscious idea that these Greeks are on the "periphery" and not in the "center" of the Greek homeland, as well as a belief that mercenaries only stayed temporarily in "camps" before returning back to the Greek homeland. But "mercenary" is perhaps not quite the correct term for the type of soldier I will be analyzing here (though I will continue to use it for convenience). "Mercenaries" in the modern sense conjure up soldiers of fortune who sell their services to whomever and then move on to whoever will pay for their services next. The type of soldier I will be analyzing, however, lived in a settled community (sometimes a whole city and sometimes a neighborhood) with his family, thereby propagating a community centered around soldiers over the course of generations. The government paid them, and granted them food and

7. They argue (rightly, I think) that the 30,000 mercenaries that Herodotus mentions is too many to have all been aristocrats (Raaflaub 2004, 209; Luraghi 2006, 22-5). However, they misunderstand Kaplan's argument. Kaplan does not say that *all* or even *most of* the mercenaries were elites, but only that there must have been at least *some* (Kaplan 2002, 240) and that these few elites must have had a disproportionate effect as his "cultural-carriers" between East and West.

8. Raaflaub 2004; Luraghi 2006. For a recent, more detailed look at the *status quaestionis*, see Iancu 2016, 9-15.

9. Kaplan 2002 does mention Elephantine in passing, and Kaplan 2003 does analyze some of the financial and legal documents from the community, but no systematic attempt is made to look at the community's cultural (as in the arts, etc.) engagement.

sometimes land so that they could devote themselves to being full-time professional soldiers.[10] Indeed, Michael Howard has suggested that we should really just consider these soldiers not as mercenaries, but professional soldiers who happen to not belong to the largest and/or most powerful ethnic group in an empire.[11] However, for simplicity's sake, I will continue to refer to them as "mercenaries" in this article. Given that these soldiers and their families lived their entire lives in these communities, we have to consider what sort of cultural practices and production defined these peoples' lives.

In this period the act of writing is an inherently elite activity, and elites are in the center and not on the periphery. However, as Irad Malkin has recently pointed out with great force, we tend to think of what is today mainland Greece as the center of the Greek world, on the analogy that, for example, Paris is the center of France, but the idea is entirely anachronistic for the Archaic and even Classical periods.[12] Moreover, although it is commonly thought that *emporia* and other communities like those made up of Greek mercenaries were a form of sub-*polis* without real civic institutions, we now know that the Greeks saw *emporia* at least as full-fledged *poleis*.[13] We should perhaps then rethink calling places like Daphnae or the Stratopeda "camps" – they were in all probability stable and hierarchical communities like Elephantine.[14] In fact, the Greek mercenary community that was moved to Memphis, the so-called Hellenomemphites, retained well into the Hellenistic period a distinct identity and city-quarter from the Greeks who came after Alexander's conquests.[15]

For these communities to be self-sustaining, women must of course have been present in them. Unsurprisingly, we have evidence that exogamous marriages took place,[16] but it is also likely that women of the same ethnicity as the male mercenaries came and settled with them.[17] For example, the only attested letter written in Phoenician was discovered at Saqqara outside of Memphis.[18] It is a letter from one sister in Daphnae to her sister in Memphis; presumably each is associated with the respective Phoenician mercenary contingent in the two cities. At any rate, children of the mercenaries were brought up as members of the mercenaries' ethnicity and speakers of their language. Mibtaiah, the daughter featured in the Aramaic letter cited above (n. 12), is explicitly called a Judean and has a good Jewish name. The famous Greek inscriptions from Abu Simbel (*ML* 7) show Greeks with Greek and Egyptian names serving under the Pharaoh. Their fathers also bear

10. Fitzpatrick-McKinley 2017, 377-82.

11. Howard 2012, 210.

12. Malkin 2011, 1-9.

13. Hansen 2006, cf. also Demetriou 2012, 16-23.

14. Experts on the Near East have dealt with this question more fully than Classicists have. For a recent summary of the Achaemenids' (and earlier empires') policies on creating permanent mercenary communities of ethnic contingents (including Greeks) in non-native lands, see Fitzpatrick-McKinley 2017, especially 377-82. The leaders of these multiethnic/national empires liked to create these mercenary communities because the mercenaries formed military contingents loyal to the imperial administration rather than local elites. In turn, native locals resented the mercenaries to a degree since the locals had to cede income producing land to the mercenaries as well as redistribute some of their own resources to the mercenaries. This resentment helped to keep the mercenaries' communities somewhat distinct from the surrounding locals'.

15. Thompson 1988, 17. Cf. Fitzpatrick-McKinley 2017 more generally for mercenary communities' persistance in maintaining their ethnic identity.

16. See e.g. *TAD* B28 for a marriage contract involving an interethnic marriage.

17. Kaplan 2003, 15-6.

18. *WAW* 14 70.

a mix of Greek and Egyptian names, and I would hardly be the first to suggest that at least some of them must have been born in Egypt to Greek mercenary ancestors who had "gone native," at least in respect to their names.

The presence of inscriptions and other forms of writing in Greek, Aramaic, Phoenician, and Carian[19] is also important for understanding these communities' structure. Most importantly, the ability for these mercenaries to write in their ethnicities' "native" languages implies that there were education systems in Egypt for learning to read and write in Greek, Aramaic, Phoenician, and Carian. What is important for my argument is that children in the ancient world received their education through canonical, literary texts.[20] Therefore, if mercenaries were reading and writing in their "native" languages even though they were born and raised in Egypt, there must have been belletristic literature present in the mercenary communities.[21] As already pointed out above, high literature was in fact found in private libraries in the mercenary community at Elephantine. In fact, Robert Rollinger has suggested that the Aramaic translation of Darius' Behistun Inscription discovered at Elephantine probably functioned as a school text for learning to read and write Aramaic.[22]

2. *Literary Texts found in Mercenary Communities*

Now that I have established that it is not unlikely that many mercenary communities may have had access to belletristic literature in their "native" languages, let us discuss these mercenaries' texts in order to see what the texts' content could possibly tell us about the communities' interests. I will start by examining the two texts that were unambiguously owned by mercenaries (the *Tale of Ahiqar* and the Aramaic translation of Darius' Behistun Inscription) and then turn to other texts (Greek and Aramaic) that can reasonably be attributed to mercenary communities. Throughout these texts I suggest that there is among the mercenaries a clear current of interest in their transnational identity and an interest in borrowings from other cultures.

Because the *Tale of Ahiqar* and Darius' Behistun Inscription were both written on papyrus, the texts are quite fragmentary. However, *Ahiqar* is known from later translations and we of course know the Behistun Inscription from the original carvings, so we can reconstruct the narrative thrust in lost portions of these two texts. The *Tale of Ahiqar* is made up of two portions:[23] the first is the

19. The Carian alphabet is now deciphered: see Adiego 2006 for grammar and texts (as well as an interesting account of his journey towards deciphering the language).

20. Carr 2005 provides a generally excellent overview of what we know about education in the first millennium BC in each of the major civilizations of the Eastern Mediterranean. Generally, Carr 2005, 9; Mesopotamia: 17-46, but see also Charpin 2010, 32-33 for the disappearance of the scribal *edubba* system after the 19th century and the emergence of education pursued in individuals' homes (a weakness in general of Carr's work is his overemphasis of the importance of scribalism); Mesopotamian sphere of influence: 47-62; Egypt: 63-90, see also Baines 1983, 581; Archaic and Classical Greece: 91-110, see also Cribriore 2001, 179-80, for later periods.

21. It has in fact been argued that one of the Greek mercenaries in the inscriptions from Abu Simbel (noted above) makes a joke that requires knowledge of the Homeric *Odyssey* (Dillon 1997).

22. Rollinger 2016. Similarly, in the later Hellenistic and Roman periods it has been argued that Egyptian-speaking priests used canonical Greek literary texts in order to learn and use Greek, see Jay 2016, 194-5.

23. The text found at Elephantine was copied ca. 500-400 BCE; for translation and introduction see Charlesworth 1985, 479-507, cf. Holm 2007b, 284. However, the full text is not preserved at Elephantine and must be supplemented by recourse to later version; see Charles 1913 vol. II, 715-84 for introduction to and translation of the later versions (see *infra* for more details). Note that Esarhaddon does not appear in the later versions, only Sennacherib. Whether the

narrative about the sage Ahiqar's life and the second is a list of proverbs attributed to him. The narrative portion tells how Ahiqar was a respected counselor to the Assyrian emperor Sennacherib. After Sennacherib's death, his son Esarhaddon comes to the throne, and Ahiqar retains his position for a while. However, Ahiqar's adopted son secretly turns Esarhaddon against him, lying and claiming that Ahiqar is plotting against the throne. Ahiqar's friend, the court official Nabu-shuma-ishkun, however, secretly hides Ahiqar and tells Esarhaddon that he has been killed. The Pharaoh poses a series of riddles to the Assyrian king, who laments Ahiqar's death. At this point, Nabu-shuma-ishkun reveals that Ahiqar is still alive, and he is sent to Egypt to deal with the Pharaoh's riddles. Ahiqar returns to glory at the Assyrian court, the adopted son gets his come-uppance, and at this point Ahiqar pronounces the proverbs.

It could not have escaped the notice of the text's readers at Elephantine that Ahiqar's situation was remarkably similar to their own. They too were sojourners in Egypt. Moreover, Bezalel Porten has suggested that exiles during the reign of Manasseh (7th century) laid the foundations of the community. [24] Since Manasseh was a vassal of Esarhaddon's, the mercenaries would even have become, for all practical purposes, exiles in Egypt on account of the same Assyrian emperor. It seems likely then that the mercenaries at Elephantine saw their own transnational experience mirrored in Ahiqar's. I will return to this text below to expand on this thought.

The *Tale of Ahiqar* is a narrative that pulls together strands from all over the Eastern Mediterranean: it takes places primarily in Assyria and Egypt with an Aramean as the main character. Furthermore, the story found its audience among Judeans at the southernmost tip of Egypt. Moreover, its very genre reflects its transnational mixture: autobiographical works are common in Egyptian literature but essentially unknown in Mesopotamian and Aramaic.[25] The Behistun Inscription pulls together transnational strands that are no less distant.[26] These Judean mercenaries possessed a text originating from nearly the furthest possible point away in their world. Achaemenid royal inscriptions were important given that they were imperial productions, but the Judeans at Elephantine can be shown to be engaging with an important facet of the text. Darius announces in the inscription that he wants copies of the text made and distributed across the empire for people to learn what he has to say in the inscription:[27]

proverb section immediately followed the narrative portion or was intertwined throughout the narrative is open to question, see Kottsiepter 2009.

24. Porten 1968, 12.

25. Dalley 2001, 155 argues that the *Tale of Ahiqar* has affinities with the Egyptian genre of funerary autobiography. Tremper Longman collected a number of texts in his aptly named *Fictional Akkadian Autobiography*. However, his definition of "autobiography" is extremely loose (as he notes): anything that includes the elements of "fictionality, prose, tripartite structure, first-person narration" (Longman 1991, 11). This rather catholic embrace of elements leads to the inclusion of texts in his analyses like the *Sin of Sargon*, which do not correspond well with the popular modern conception of autobiography nor the stricter parameters of the Egyptian funerary autobiography (see *infra* for more details). Longman includes a brief discussion of *Ahiqar* in his subcategory "fictional Akkadian autobiography with a didactic ending," (Longman 1991, 119). I agree that the Aramaic work does share elements with the Akkadian works addressed in this section, but I do not think that this fact invalidates Dalley's argument: in fact, it bolsters her argument (and mine) since it demonstrates the level of generic playfullness animating *Ahiqar*.

26. For introduction, text, and translation, see Greenfield/Porten 1982.

27. NB: all translations of ancient texts are my own unless otherwise stated. Note also that Rollinger 2016 focuses on this passage of the text to make his claim that it was used as a school text.

> θāti Dārayavauš xšāyaθiya: vašnā Auramazdāha ima dipiciçam taya adam akunavam patišam ariyā; utā pavastāyā utā carmā garftam āha; patišamci nāmanāfam akunavam; patišam uvādātam akunavam; utā niyapaiθiya utā patiyafraθiya paišiyā mām; pasāva ima dipiciçam frāstāyam vispadā antar dahyāva; kāra hamātaxšatā[28]
>
> Thus says Darius the King: By the will of Auramazda I made this form of writing also in Aryan (=Persian); it was recorded both on clay tablet and on parchment; in addition I constructed a genealogy; also I made a lineage; and it was written down and read out before me; then I sent out this form of writing everywhere among the lands; the people worked hard [on studying the Behistun Inscription]. (DB §70)

The Judeans therefore are engaging with and showing an interest in the transnational aspirations of the text. Darius shows a desire for his text to be taken up by his subjects in all corners of his empire (on clay tablet and on parchment would seem to imply that it was recorded in Akkadian and Aramaic), and these Judeans have obliged him in this by continually reading, studying, and absorbing it into their community for a century after Darius' death, thereby displaying their interest in cross-cultural themes.

Now that I have assessed the texts from Elephantine and discovered an interest in transnational themes mirroring the mercenaries' experience, I will turn to some other texts from Egypt that can probably be assigned to (foreign) mercenaries. The first one that I will examine, and the one after the Elephantine texts to be most unambiguously related to mercenaries, is Papyrus Amherst 63. This unique document is written in the Aramaic language using Egyptian Demotic cursive. We can be near certain that the text belonged to Elephantine's twin mercenary garrison, composed of ethnic Arameans rather than Judeans, at Syene (modern Aswan).[29] The document comprises a number of distinct texts, but for our purposes three are particularly important. The first is a commemoration of the community's displacement first from Mesopotamia to Israel and then from Israel to Syene.[30] The second is a translation of Psalm 20:2-6 into Aramaic.[31] The third is an account of Shamash-shuma-ukin's rebellion in Babylon. [32]

The account of the mercenary community's long exile from Mesopotamia to Egypt is particulary important for this article. This account shows that the community was intensely aware that they were aliens in their host society. Moreover, during the course of their wanderings they

28. Unfortunately, this portion of the text is not preserved in the badly damaged Aramaic version (if it existed, see *infra*). The rock-relief at Behistun was carved originally in Elamite and then translated into Old Persian and Akkadian. These three complete versions slightly differ in their wording at places, and the preserved portions of the Aramaic version clearly follow the Akkadian version, cf. Greenfield/Porten 1982, 1, but also *passim*. The portion reproduced above is found only in Column IV of the Old Persian version (and a condensed even later back translation into the Elamite version). However, Column IV was added later and tells about both the creation of the Old Persian script and the proliferation of copies of the inscription (cf. Schmitt 1991, 19). The existence of the Aramaic version at Elephantine therefore implicitly realizes Darius' ambitions explicitly expressed in the Old Persian version.

29. Steiner 1991. Holm 2017, 3 presents the most exhaustive argumentation for the papyrus's provenance in Syene. Cf. van der Toorn 2016 for the community's status as a mercenary contingent.

30. Steiner 1991. See also van der Toorn 1992. Whether the text as a whole is a New Year's celebration (as Steiner originally argued) or not largely hinges on whether *ḥdyš* is understood as corresponding to Akkadian *ḫaduššūtu* (wedding-celebration) or Hebrew *ḥôdēš* (new-moon/new-year celebration), cf. van der Toorn 2017, 639-40. Cf. Holm 2017 for the celebration of a Sacred Marriage ceremony in the text.

31. Nims/Steiner 1983. Van der Toorn 2017 has identified two other non-canonical psalms.

32. Steiner/Nims 1985.

seem to have adopted the worship of Anat-Yahu and the importance of Bethel as a center of worship.[33] The adoption of Psalm 20 is perhaps also linked to their sojourn in Israel, though the textual history of the Psalm is difficult.[34] So we can see the Syenians' openness to adopting elements from various cultures and incorporating those elements into their "native" Mesopotamian culture on account of their long exile.[35]

The last narrative that has importance for my arguments is the account of Shamash-shuma-ukin's rebellion. This narrative tells the story of Shamash-shuma-ukin's rebellion against his brother, the Assyrian emperor Assurbanipal, and his subsequent death in the flames that consumed Babylon during the suppression of the rebellion. It marks another instance of a story passing across cultural lines, from Assyrian royal inscriptions into this other community's story-telling tradition.[36] However, the importance of this story does not end here. A similar retelling of the story is found in Ctesias' *Persika* (preserved in Diodorus Siculus 2.22-28). It is striking that Ctesias was also a displaced person like the Syenians since he was a Greek doctor who lived and worked for years at the Persian court. We may speculate that Shamash-shuma-ukin's displacement from his native Assyria to Babylonia and his subsequent tragic rebellion against the powers that removed him from his home resonated with other expatriates.

Next we come to a Greek text that was discovered in Egypt. This papyrus was found in Saqqara near Memphis, probably dating to shortly before Alexander's conquests.[37] If the papyrus was copied and interred in Egypt prior to Alexander's conquests, then it presumably belonged to the mercenary Hellenomemphites and would confirm my major contention that permanent, stable mercenary communities (including Greeks) must have owned works of high literature. The papyrus contains the text of the Athenian poet Timotheus' work the *Persians*, a lyric poem describing the Battle of Salamis. Edith Hall argues that the work helps to delimit Greek identity against non-Greeks, particularly through the Greeks' ability to swim versus the barbarians' inability.[38] Here again, if my assumptions are correct, we would have another community of mercenaries that possesses a text interested in staking out identities in a multiethnic milieu. The martial themes of the poem surely appealed to Greek mercenaries' sensibilities no less.[39] Furthermore, given the hatred for the Persians' rule in Egypt, a poem describing the defeat of the Persians' at Salamis was appropriate for the times. If my understanding of the text's context is correct, it also shows that the Hellenomemphites absorbed their hosts the Egyptians' perspective on Persian rule (cf. *infra*).[40] Indeed, Kostas Vassopoulos has already studied the funerary artwork of the Hellenomemphites and noted how it is a hybrid mixture of Greek and Egyptian elements, delineating the

33. Van der Toorn 1992.

34. It is not clear whether the Hebrew and Aramaic versions of the Psalm are independently derived from some ur-Canaanite Psalm or whether the Aramaic version is directly translated from the Hebrew. See Zevit 1990. Van der Toorn suggests that the Aramaic version is the earlier by the textual criticism rule of *lectio brevior probabilior*. However, now that we know that the Psalm celebrates Yahweh rather than Horus even in Aramaic (Holm 2017, 3 n. 16) as do the other two non-canonical psalms, I am not so sure that Hebrew is not the more probable original language.

35. Holm 2017, 28-9 sees the document as a whole lamenting the loss of prestige of Aramaic in the Syenians' world, and the document therefore is a last ditch effort to create a canon around which the community can attempt to stave off its demise.

36. Steiner/Nims 1985.

37. Hordern 2003, 63-8.

38. Hall 2006.

39. I am indebted to Carolina López-Ruiz for this point.

40. Cf. the similar argument made by van Minnen 1997, 257.

Hellenomemphites' liminal identities.[41] We can imagine that a poem that defines Greek identity surely must have been appealing to Greeks who lived in the midst of an alien host culture.

Finally, I will turn to the so-called Cheikh Fadl Inscription, the most difficult of the texts surveyed here because of its extremely fragmentary nature.[42] The inscription is painted on a number of panels in a funeral chamber, containing texts in a number of genres. Unfortunately, the section of the text that we are most concerned with is almost entirely destroyed, and no narrative sense can be made of it. However, given that it is written in Aramaic, the person buried in the tomb was presumably an Aramean or Aramaic-speaking mercenary. Considering the characters that appear in the text, namely Esarhaddon, Sennacherib, and Inaros, this text is likely an early version of the Inaros Cycle, stories told in Demotic Egyptian from the Roman Period.[43] The Inaros Cycle comprised stories about the legendary king Inaros who repelled Esarhaddon's Assyrian invasions of Egypt. Unsurprisingly, these stories were allegorical propaganda against Persian, Roman, and Greek rule of Egypt.[44] Two remarkable phenomena appear here. First, again a mercenary community is defining itself through a text in which identity is delimited against other cultures, in this case an Egyptian "nationalist" text against foreign occupation (real and allegorical). What is even more surprising, however, is that a "foreign" mercenary contingent has adopted as part of its own identity the nationalistic program and texts of its host culture.[45] Moreover, it has long been noted that the Inaros Cycle appears to share a great deal of characteristics with Homeric Epic.[46] Ian Rutherford has recently argued that these similarities could be due to the fact that Greeks, both the mercenaries living in Egypt as well as Athenian allies, played an important role in the Egyptians' fight to keep foreign conquerors, especially the Persians, out of Egypt. The Homeric poems therefore became a cross-cultural means to talk about fighting the evil empire in the East.[47] The text discovered at Cheikh Fadl therefore represents a dazzling array of multicultural elements and makes what should be a nationalist story, the liberation of Egypt, into a web of transnational meaning.

This last point is particularly important for the final portion of my paper. By surveying these texts, I have demonstrated the mercenaries' interest in their own transnational identity and in adopting other cultures' stories. Our last text reveals most prominently this tendency since the mercenaries adopted a story cycle wholesale from the Egyptians and made it their own by translating it into Aramaic. Making use of this idea, I will investigate a particular literary convention used by Greek and Hebrew writers, several of whom can be associated with the mercenary communities in Egypt. I will trace this standardized format from its origins in Phoenician royal inscriptions to its dissemination across genres and cultures around the Eastern

41. Vlassopoulos 2013, 129-30; 236; 253-4.

42. See Lemaire 1995 for text and introduction. It was discovered at Cheikh Fadl and was probably written ca. 500 BCE.

43. Ryholt 2004. Holm 2007a. Jay 2016.

44. Ryholt 2004.

45. Cf. the argument at Malkin 2011, 82 that the Greek mercenaries in the inscriptions from Abu Simbel (*ML* 7) are adopting the host Egyptians' vantage point by referring to themselves as ἀλλογλόσσοι.

46. See Jay 2016, 127-210 for a recent summary.

47. Rutherford 2016, *passim* but especially 99-100. It is interesting that the Inaros rebellions against Persian rule are contemporaneous with the change in Greeks' understanding of the *Iliad* that Edith Hall famously identified in *Inventing the Barbarian*. Jay 2016, 199-202 also argues that the Inaros Cycle reverberated for Egyptian soldiers in the Fayum in the Hellenistic Period in much the same way that I argue the Hellenomemphites received Timotheus' *Persai*.

Mediterranean. I will suggest that mercenary communities provided stable multinational middle-grounds where literary tropes and usages could be swapped back and forth across linguistic boundaries.

3. *The Literary Convention*

The literary convention that I will trace has its origins in the genre of so-called *dedicatory inscriptions* found among Northwest Semitic speakers.[48] These inscriptions follow a rather strict convention: an incipit naming the object that was dedicated, the name of the person who dedicated the object (in the third person), and the report of his actions (also in the third person). In later literary genres derived from this format, the first-person is used in specific circumstances. I will argue that particular genres adhered to the elements of this convention, cross-culturally and cross-linguistically, from ca. 800 BCE to ca. 300 BCE. After this period, for whatever reason(s), there was a break-down in the strictness of the convention, especially in the Greek cultural sphere.[49] However, that is not to say that the individual elements did not persist in later periods or arise independently elsewhere. The convention for the *incipit* analyzed below in particular has remained in the modern European languages (drawing on Biblical usage) as a way to give a hoary feel to a literary work. However, modern authors use this introductory formula to relate the words *of other speakers*. It is difficult to imagine a modern author introducing their own words in the third person like the ancient authors do in the texts analyzed here. The point that I hope to make here is that the strict concatenation of all these elements in the works that I will analyze demonstrate a cross-cultural exchange of genre conventions that persisted for several hundred years in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Phoenician royal inscriptions (late second millennium BCE) in the genre of dedicatory inscriptions have a standard introductory formula: [50]

'rn zp'l ['']tb'l bn 'ḥrm mlk gbl l'ḥrm 'bh kšth b'lm
The coffin that [I]ttobaal, son of Ahiram, king of Byblos, made for Ahiram, his father, when he laid him away in the house of eternity. (*KAI* 1).

bt zbny yḥmlk mlk gbl
The temple that Yehimilk, king of Byblos, made. (*KAI* 4).

mš zyb' tbb'l mlk [gbl …]
The statue that Abibaal, king of [Byblos], made. (*KAI* 5).

48. A.R. Millard developed the typology used today to divide the documents found in Northwest Semitic languages into genres: *monumental, professional,* and *occasional* (Millard 1972). Max Miller further refined monumental inscriptions into the two subcategories *memorial* and *dedicatory* inscriptions (Miller 1974), while Joel Drinkard provided the most exhaustive definition of the standard format of the dedicatory inscriptions (see *infra*). For an extensive and recent analysis of the genres of many of the most important Northwest Semitic monumental inscriptions see Green 2010.

49. For example, while all (extant) post-5th century works of Greek historiography follow Herodotus' and Thucydides' usage of the authorial first- and third-persons, none of them use the same standard *incipit* analyzed here. The only exception is the so-called *Herodotean Life of Homer*, which is a pseudepigraphic biography of Homer that assiduously models itself after Herodotus. Note also that the conventions of Greek historiography discussed here are completely absent from Roman historiography (cf. Marincola 1997), so we cannot simply reduce these generic conventions to nebulous ancient writing conventions.

50. Cf. Drinkard 1989, who analyzes the standard conventions of this genre. My own analysis largely follows his.

Examples could be multiplied *ad nauseam*, but these should suffice to make my point. Each *incipit* begins by naming the object on which the inscription is incised, followed by a relative clause in which the king who commissioned the object is named in the third person, followed by his city-identity/lineage. The king's further acts (after the *incipit*) are also related in the third person. With small modifications this format will be followed down into the fifth century BC, and I will trace its development across cultures and languages.

This literary convention is found in other regions, languages, and genres. For example, the sacrificial commemorative *stelae* set up within the Carthaginian sphere begin with the same introductory formula:

> *nṣb mlk b'l 'š šm nḥm lb'l ḥmn*
> The stele of human sacrifice which Nahum set up for Baal Hamon. (*KAI* 61).

This format could also be used in the genre of the *adê*, the so-called treaty-oath genre:[51]

> *'dy brg'yh mlk ktk 'm mt''l br 'trsmk mlk 'rpd*
> The adê of Bargaya, king of KTK, with Matiel, son of Atarsamak, king of Arpad. (KAI 222).

On account of the great number of Arameans that were deported from the Levant into Assyria proper, Aramaic began to displace Akkadian as the vernacular.[52] Consequently, the *adê* was adopted into Akkadian.[53] Along with the word and concept of the *adê* came the genre's literary conventions into Akkadian.[54] The most famous of these treaty-oaths, the so-called Vassal Treaty of Esarhaddon (VTE) begins:

> *a-de-e ša* ^{m}*aš-šur*-PAB-AŠ (MAN ŠÚ) MAN KUR-*aš-šur.*(KI)
> DUMU ^{md}30-PAB.MEŠ-SU (MAN ŠÚ) MAN KUR-*aš-šur-(ma)*
> TA* ^{m}hum-ba-re-eš LÚ.EN-URU URU.*na-ah-ši-mar-ti*
>
> The *adê* which Esarhaddon, king of the world, king of Assyria,
> son of Sennacherib, king of the world, king of Assyria,
> made with Humbaresh, mayor of Nahshimarti... (VTE 1-3).

51. For my purposes, it is immaterial whether the *adê* was a treaty, oath, or something else. For convenience, I will refer to the genre as a treaty.

52. For the Assyrian practice of deportations, see Oded 1979.

53. Sometimes scholars argue that the Sefire Treaties (KAI 222) are an Aramaic version of the Assyrian treaty made with Matiel (SAA II, 4) and that, consequently, the *adê* was originally an Assyrian genre rather than Aramean (as Watanabe and Parpola do in their edition of the text in SAA II). However, Amnon Altman notes that the Sefire Treaties certainly belong to a different treaty category (Altman 2008), and I have to agree with Carly Crouch that the argument does not really make any sense that Aššur-nerari would be called Bargaya in the Sefire Treaties (Crouch 2012, 96-108). More recently, Jacob Lauinger has proposed that *adê* is actually derived from the native Akkadian term *adû,* "work, duty," rather than an Aramaic term (Lauinger 2013, 115). However, this suggestion leaves unexplained then why the Aramaic cognate has an *ayn* as its first letter. Moreover, *adê* appears almost universally as an indeclinable form in Akkadian, a fact which is most easily explained by the form עדי, "'*adēy,*" the masculine plural construct form of the noun in Aramaic. Since this word would always appear as a bound form at the beginning of treaties, "The *ade* of such-and-such," the Assyrians borrowed the word in this form. A more likely explanation for the affinities that Lauinger convincingly demonstrates between *adê* and *adû* is that *adê* attracted the senses of *adû* because of their homophonous qualities.

54. Second millennium treaties and oaths follow a different format in the major diplomatic languages of Akkadian and Hittite, and in general the *adê* is unattested in Aramaic as well as Akkadian. See Beckman 2006 for second millennium treaties.

Though slightly longer on account of the more bloated royal titulary of Assyrian emperors, the formula is clearly identical to the Aramaic *adê* quoted above.

The Tyrian colonization of Carthage brought the *adê* treaty to the West.[55] We have a translation of an *adê* into Greek, which Polybius records as the oath sworn between Hannibal and Philip V of Macedon (late 3rd century BC):

> ὅρκος, ὃν ἔθετο Ἀννίβας ὁ στρατηγός, Μάγωνος, Μύρκανος, Βαρμόκαρος, καὶ πάντες γερουσιασταὶ Καρχηδονίων οἱ μετ' αὐτοῦ καὶ πάντες Καρχηδόνιοι στρατευόμενοι μετ' αὐτοῦ πρὸς Ξενοφάνη Κλεομάχου Ἀθηναῖον πρεσβευτήν, ὃν ἀπέστειλε πρὸς ἡμᾶς Φίλιππος ὁ βασιλεὺς Δημητρίου ὑπὲρ αὑτοῦ καὶ Μακεδόνων καὶ τῶν συμμάχων.
>
> The oath, which Hannibal the general, Mago, Myrcanus, Barmocarus and all the senators of the Carthaginians with him and all the Carthaginians marching with him made with the Athenian ambassador Xenophanes, son of Cleomachus, whom King Philip, son of Demetrias, sent to us in place of himself and the Macedonians and the allies (Pol. 7.8.9.1).

This oath's *incipit* clearly follows the *adê*'s introductory formula, so we have an example again of not only the *concept* of an *adê* but also of the genre's literary structure passing across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Finally, it is surely no coincidence then that the Book of Deuteronomy, which is frequently (and controversially) argued to be modeled on the VTE,[56] begins:

> אלה הדברים אשר דבר משה אל כל ישראל בעבר הירדן
> These are the words which Moses said to all of Israel on the other side of the Jordan (Deut. 1:1).

While the document is not explicitly called an *adê*, it obviously follows the same introductory formula given that it names the terms of the covenant between Israel and Yahweh rather than the terms of a treaty between two states.

This introductory formula can be found in a number of other texts in Greek, several of them strongly associated with Northwest Semitic speakers. The *Periplus Hannonis*, purportedly a translation of a Carthaginian document into Greek,[57] begins:

> Ἄννωνος Καρχηδονίων βασιλέως περίπλους τῶν ὑπὲρ τὰς Ἡρακλέους στήλας Λιβυκῶν τῆς γῆς μερῶν, ὃν καὶ ἀνέθηκεν ἐν τῷ τοῦ Κρόνου τεμένει δηλοῦντα τάδε...ὡς δ' ἀναχθέντες τὰς στήλας παρημείψαμεν καὶ ἔξω πλοῦν δυοῖν ἡμερῶν ἐπλεύσαμεν, ἐκτίσαμεν πρώτην πόλιν ἥντινα ὠνομάσαμεν Θυμιατήριον.
>
> The voyage of Hanno, king of the Carthaginians, to the parts of Lybia beyond the Pillars of Hercules, which he set up in the *temenos* of Kronos showing these things ... then we set sail and went past the Pillars and we sailed for two days beyond, we founded the first city which we called Thumiaterios (*Periplus Hannonis* 1-2).

55. SAA II no. 4 is an *adê* between Esarhaddon and the king of Tyre.

56. See Crouch 2012 for a recent assessment of the various theories that link Deuteronomy to the VTE.

57. See Blomqvist (1979) for the authenticity of the document.

The *incipit* works as we would expect it to in the other Phoenician and Northwest Semitic texts. For the moment, I will not comment on the switch to the first person narration beyond noting that we will see it in all of the remaining documents that I will examine.

The next text that I will examine is a short excerpt that the second century CE theologian Clement of Alexandria attributes to Democritus, the fifth century BCE philosopher. He also claims that Democritus stole the work from Ahiqar.

> τάδε λέγει Δημόκριτος. ἐγὼ δὲ τῶν κατ᾽ ἐμαυτὸν ἀνθρώπων γῆν πλείστην ἐπεπλανησάμην, ἱστορέων τὰ μήκιστα, καὶ ἀέρας τε καὶ γέας πλείστας εἶδον, καὶ λογίων ἀνθρώπων πλείστων ἐπήκουσα
>
> These are the things Democritus says. I traveled over the most of the earth of anyone of my time to investigate the furthest things, and I saw the most airs and lands, and I listened to the greatest number of learned men (Cl. Al. *Str.* 1.15.69.4-5).

Our normal introductory formula is a little shortened, Democritus only says "these things" and does not mention his ethnicity, but we still see the same essential pattern of introducing the work in the third-person while naming oneself. Moreover, the word order of τάδε λέγει Δημόκριτος, "object-verb-subject," is stylistically marked. We also see again the switch to the first-person. As we will continue to see the switch to the first-person in these types of texts will be used when the author wants to signal his source of authority for his pronouncements, whether these are statements about how he performed his research, his thoughts on the reliability of his information, the source of his information, or stating his methodology.[58] For now, the *Periplus Hannonis* will seem like an exception to what I just said, but when we return to it again at the end, we will see that it is not.

The sixth century geographer and genealogist Hecataeus of Miletus also uses our introductory formula.

> ῾Εκαταῖος Μιλήσιος ὧδε μυθεῖται· τάδε γράφω, ὥς μοι δοκεῖ ἀληθέα εἶναι· οἱ γὰρ ῾Ελλήνων λόγοι πολλοί τε καὶ γελοῖοι, ὡς ἐμοὶ φαίνονται, εἰσίν
>
> Thus speaks Hecataeus of Miletus: I write these things as they seem true to me. For the *logoi* of the Greeks are many and laughable, as they seem to me. (BNJ 1 F1a).

The *incipit* differs slightly in the wording, but all of the same dynamics are present that we have already seen in our other works. Furthermore, we know that the Greeks considered Hecataeus' *incipit* to follow this formula because in the 3rd century BCE Pseudo-Demetrius' *On Elocution* (12-14) Hecataeus' *incipit* is categorized with Herodotus' (for Herodotus, see *infra*).[59] We also see again the switch to the first person for Hecataeus' statement of his own opinions and the grounding of his own work.

I will turn now to the major literary works that will represent the culmination of this literary convention: the Hebrew prophets and the fifth century Greek historians. Because of the great number of passages that could be used to support my argument, I will confine myself to representative samples in order to keep this paper at a manageable length.

58 Cf. Marincola 1997, 184-5, n. 52, for similar comments on the use of the first-person in Thucydides.

59 Cf. commentary on BNJ 1 T 19.

Herodotus begins his work with our formula:

> Ἡροδότου Ἁλικαρνησσέος ἱστορίης ἀπόδεξις ἥδε, ὡς μήτε τὰ γενόμενα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων τῷ χρόνῳ ἐξίτηλα γένηται, μήτε ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά, τὰ μὲν Ἕλλησι, τὰ δὲ βαρβάροισι ἀποδεχθέντα, ἀκλεᾶ γένηται, τά τε ἄλλα καὶ <δὴ καὶ> δι' ἣν αἰτίην ἐπολέμησαν ἀλλήλοισι.
>
> This is the exposition of the investigation of Herodotus of Halicarnassus, so that the deeds of men do not become forgotten in time, and so that the great and wonderful deeds, some by the Greeks, and others by the barbarians, do not go without *kleos*, and also for what reason they went to war with one another (Her. 1.proem).

As we would expect, Herodotus introduces his work in the third-person, naming himself and his city-identity, marks the object of his study in the nominative (ἱστορίης ἀπόδεξις ἥδε), and gives more information about his subject in subordinate clauses.

Herodotus also switches to the first-person, as we saw in our last few examples, when he wants to talk about his own opinions, methodologies, and source of authority. For example, after he has provided the reasons why the Persians and Phoenicians believe that the Greeks and barbarians have gone to war, Herodotus asserts his own conclusions:

> ταῦτα μέν νυν Πέρσαι τε καὶ Φοίνικες λέγουσι. ἐγὼ δὲ περὶ μὲν τούτων οὐκ ἔρχομαι ἐρέων ὡς οὕτως ἢ ἄλλως κως ταῦτα ἐγένετο, τὸν δὲ οἶδα αὐτὸς πρῶτον ὑπάρξαντα ἀδίκων ἔργων ἐς τοὺς Ἕλληνας ...
>
> The Persians and Phoenicians say these things. But I will not say about these things whether they happened in one way or perhaps another, but I myself know who first committed unjust deeds against the Greeks ... (Her. 1.5.3).

Here Herodotus singles out his own opinion about what caused the Greeks and barbarians to go to war as more authoritative than what the Persians and Phoenicians have to say on the matter.

Thucydides similarly opens his work:

> Θουκυδίδης Ἀθηναῖος ξυνέγραψε τὸν πόλεμον τῶν Πελοποννησίων καὶ Ἀθηναίων, ὡς ἐπολέμησαν πρὸς ἀλλήλους, ἀρξάμενος εὐθὺς καθισταμένου καὶ ἐλπίσας μέγαν τε ἔσεσθαι καὶ ἀξιολογώτατον τῶν προγεγενημένων, τεκμαιρόμενος ὅτι ἀκμάζοντές τε ἦσαν ἐς αὐτὸν ἀμφότεροι παρασκευῇ τῇ πάσῃ καὶ τὸ ἄλλο Ἑλληνικὸν ὁρῶν ξυνιστάμενον πρὸς ἑκατέρους, τὸ μὲν εὐθύς, τὸ δὲ καὶ διανοούμενον.
>
> Thucydides the Athenian composed a work on the war of the Peloponnesians and Athenians, how they went to war with one another, starting straight away when it began and expecting that it would be great and the most worthy of writing about of any that had come before, judging that they both were at their peak in all their preparations for it and seeing that the rest of the Hellenic world went over to one of the two, some of them straight away, and others after consideration (Thuc. 1.1).

He also consistently switches to the first-person when he wants to discuss his opinions, methodologies, and sources of authority:

> τὰ γὰρ πρὸ αὐτῶν καὶ τὰ ἔτι παλαίτερα σαφῶς μὲν εὑρεῖν διὰ χρόνου πλῆθος ἀδύνατα ἦν, ἐκ δὲ τεκμηρίων ὧν ἐπὶ μακρότατον σκοποῦντί μοι πιστεῦσαι ξυμβαίνει οὐ μεγάλα νομίζω γενέσθαι οὔτε κατὰ τοὺς πολέμους οὔτε ἐς τὰ ἄλλα.
>
> The things which happened before these event and the things it is impossible to find out anything exactly about the things still more ancient because of the great gulf of time, but from the evidence which happened as far back as I could trust through my searching, I do not think that there will be any as great either in wars or in other affairs (Thuc. 1.1).

However, something different happens in this work that we have not seen before. Thucydides is able to take part in his own history since he was briefly a general for the Athenians during the Peloponnesian War. When he enters his own history, his authorial voice remains in the third-person to describe his own actions, even though we have seen him speak in the first-person about himself. For example:

> ἐν τούτῳ δὲ ὁ Βρασίδας δεδιὼς καὶ τὴν ἀπὸ τῆς Θάσου τῶν νεῶν βοήθειαν καὶ πυνθανόμενος τὸν Θουκυδίδην κτῆσίν τε ἔχειν τῶν χρυσείων μετάλλων ἐργασίας ἐν τῇ περὶ ταῦτα Θρᾴκῃ καὶ ἀπ᾽ αὐτοῦ δύνασθαι ἐν τοῖς πρώτοις τῶν ἠπειρωτῶν, ἠπείγετο προκατασχεῖν, εἰ δύναιτο, τὴν πόλιν, μὴ ἀφικνουμένου αὐτοῦ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν Ἀμφιπολιτῶν, ἐλπίσαν ἐκ θαλάσσης ξυμμαχικὸν καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς Θρᾴκης ἀγείραντα αὐτὸν περιποιήσειν σφᾶς, οὐκέτι προσχωροίη.
>
> In this Brasidas, fearing also help from the islands of Thasos and learning that Thucydides also had gold mines in Thrace around these things and on account of this would have a lot of power among the mainlanders, hurried to gain possession of the city, if he could, lest when he arrived the majority of the Amphipolitans would not come out anymore, since they hoped for an alliance at sea and that he gathering them from Thrace would protect them (Thuc. 1.5.1).

Is this a unique occurrence or can we see it at work somewhere else?

In fact, we can see the same dynamic in the Book of Jeremiah. He introduces his work with our standard formula:[60]

> דברי ירמיהו בן חלקיהו מן הכהנים אשר בענתות בארץ בנימן אשר היה דבר יהוה אליו בימי יאשיהו בן אמון מלך יהודה בשלש עשרה שנה למלכו ויהי בימי יהויקים בן יאשיהו מלך יהודה עד תם עשתי עשרה שנה לצדקיהו בן יאשיהו מלך יהודה עד גלות ירושלם בחדש החמישי
>
> The words of Jeremiah son of Hilqiah from the priests in Anathoth which is in the land of Benjamin, which Yahweh said to him in the days of Josiah, son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign, and what he said to him in the days of Jehoiakim, son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the end of the thirteen years of Zedeqiah, son of Josiah, king of Judah until the exile of Jerusalem in the fifth month (Jer. 1:1-3).

60. As should be clear, I reject the argument (e.g. van der Toorn 2007, 182-204) that the prophetic books were composed by scribes assembling disparate prophecies, but I do not have the space here to offer a point-by-point rebuttal. Note also that the same conventions are used by the other Hebrew prophets (as well as Balaam in the Deir Alla Inscription). Unfortunately, the beginning of most of the Assyrian prophecies collected in SAA IX are broken, so it is difficult to assess their relationship to the Hebrew prophets on this point.

However, immediately after the introductory formula, Jeremiah describes in the first person Yahweh's consecration of him as a prophet:

> ויהי דבר יהוה אלי לאמר בטרם אצורך בבטן ידעתיך ובטרם תצא מרחם הקדשתיך נביא גוים נתתיך ואמר אהה אדני יהוה הנה לא ידעתי דבר כי נער אנכי
>
> And Yahweh said to me, "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, and before you came out from the womb, I consecrated you as a prophet, and I gave you to the nations." And I said, "Alas, my lord Yahweh, I do not know how to speak for I am a boy." (Jer. 1:5-6).

Throughout the work Jeremiah will continue to describe his interactions with Yahweh in the first-person. As I suggested before, the author uses the first person to describe his source of authority for his pronouncements, and here Jeremiah informs us that Yahweh himself gives him the authority to speak.

However, Jeremiah also describes his own actions in "history," most famously his imprisonment and subsequent flight to Daphnae after the assassination of Gedaliah.[61] Whenever he does, just like Thucydides he describes his own actions in history in the third person:

> וירמיהו בא ויצא בתוך העם ולא נתנו אתו בית הכליא וחיל פרעה יצא ממצרים
>
> And Jeremiah went and went out among the people and they did not put him in prison. And the Pharaoh's army went out from Egypt (Jer. 37:4-6).

This practice goes back to the dedicatory inscriptions that I investigated at the beginning of this section. In these texts, the actions of the king are all described in the third person, e.g.:

> *mš zyb' 'bʿl mlk [gbl …]*
> *[mlk] gbl bmṣrym lbʿl[t gbl 'dtw t'rk bʿlt gbl ymt 'bʿl wšntw] 'l gbl*
>
> The statue which Abibaal king of [Byblos] made [...] [king] of Byblos from Egypt for the Lad[y of Byblos, his mistress. May the Lady of Byblos lengthen the days of Abibaal and his years] over Byblos. (*KAI* 5).

Over time, this literary convention was borrowed into discursive, literary texts. The convention of describing oneself in the third person was preserved even though the initial impetus for using the third person (a public monument) had been lost.[62]

61. The same convention is present in First Isaiah, most obviously in the Call Narrative (ch. 6-8). Chapters 6 and 8 (the Throne Vision and the selection of Maher-shalal-hash-baz) present Isaiah interacting only with Yahweh and are consequently related in the first person. Chapter 7, however, is narrated in the third person (following the conventional replacement in verse 10 of Yahweh's name with Isaiah's). In this chapter, Isaiah interacts with other humans and, importantly, transmits a different oracle to Ahaz in vv. 10ff. than Yahweh told to Isaiah in vv. 2-9.

62. Cf. Marincola 1997, 189-192, who notes that this practice was standard throughout Greek historiography, and Polybius makes this practice explicit at 36.12.1-5 when he apologizes for using the first person to describe his own actions in history. Again, even though Roman historiography was largely indebted to the Greek genre, it initially grew out of a different genre and so does not follow the Greek conventions analyzed here (see note *supra*).

The first distinguishing mark of this convention is that the *incipit* introduces the author and usually his city-identity and/or lineage in the third-person. In the earliest attestations, the object on which the inscription was incised is also named in the *incipit,* since the texts are giving context to an object that has been dedicated (frequently in a temple), hence the name given to this genre: "dedicatory." However, in later attested literary works written on papyrus/vellum, the *incipit* names the type of text or the subject. It seems likely that these literary works were directly descended from the dedicatory inscriptions. Treaties were works performed before the gods as witnesses and generally deposited in temples.[63] The geographic work the *Periplus Hannonis* explicitly states that it was dedicated in the Temple of Kronos in its opening line. This fact also probably explains why works of Greek historiography follow this convention. The *Periplus* implies that geographic explorations were commissioned by gods and the reports of those explorations were dedicated in temples.[64] Hecataeus, who composed a *periegesis*, sailed around the Mediterranean and described the peoples he found around the sea's rim, thereby creating the Greek ethnographic genre. Therefore, since Herodotus' *Histories* was generically descended from Hecataeus, the conventions of dedicatory inscriptions were passed on into Greek historiography.[65] I do not think any explanation is needed for why the Hebrew prophets' works drew on the conventions of dedicatory inscriptions.[66]

The second distinguishing mark of our convention is that a subordinate clause is used to give more detail for the projected scope of the work. Following the *incipit*, the authors of literary works typically switch to the first person to describe their methodologies, aims, opinions, and source of authority. I suggest that this is why the author of the *Periplus Hannonis* uses the first-person to describe the author's actions in history: he has sailed into uncharted territory, so he is the sole authority for all of the things he does and describes on the west coast of Africa. All other authors who have the opportunity to describe actions that they took in the main course of their historical narrative, such as Thucydides and Jeremiah, describe their own actions in the third-person.

As I have shown throughout this paper, there was a standard literary convention for certain discursive texts that extended across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Mercenaries appear to have had literary texts that often combined tropes and conventions from several cultures. Moreover, we know that several literary figures who used our convention journeyed to major mercenary communities, namely Herodotus (Daphnae, Memphis, Elephantine) and Jeremiah (Daphnae).

63. Lauinger 2013, 108-114. Note also that the text "discovered" in the Temple in II Kings 22:5-23:4 is near universally believed to be Deuteronomy, a text widely believed to be based on Assyrian *adê*-treaties (see *supra*). Moreover, Polybius paraphrases several treaties written in Archaic Latin that he personally inspected in the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus (3.26). Unfortunately, because of the fact that they are written in Archaic Latin, Polybius admits that he has trouble understanding them and needs help (3.22), so he is unable to give a literal translation of the texts into Greek. Consequently, it is difficult to tell whether these treaties might be in the form of *adê*'s or not.

64. Cf. Darshan 2014 on the commonality of divinely commissioned foundations in Greece and Israel.

65. It is significant that Greek historiography adheres to this convention given the strong affinity (generic, rhetorical, and intellectual) Herodotus' work has with the intellectual works of the Ionian and Athenian Renaissances (cf. Thomas 2001). This convention, outside of Hecataeus and the *Periplus*, is entirely unknown in the works on which Herodotus otherwise modeled his own work so strongly.

66. At least some Assyrian prophecies were dedicated at a temple:

> *an-ni-u* (sup.ras) *šul-mu ša ina* IGI ^{d}EN-TÙR
> *ina* IGI DINGIR.MEŠ-*ni šá-ki-nu-u-ni*
> This is the well-being oracle which was placed before Bel-Tarbaṣi
> and before the (other) gods. (SAA IX 3.2.8-9).

Therefore, I have suggested that mercenary communities were a major factor in the distribution of our literary convention.[67] Though I have focused primarily on Egypt, I see no reason that we should not expect that such texts existed also in the other kingdoms of the Near East – Egypt's climate is uniquely amenable to the preservation of papyrus, therefore its literary culture falsely appears more intense.[68]

4. *The* Tale of Ahiqar

Before concluding the paper, I want to turn back to the *Tale of Ahiqar,* since the text unites all of the threads that I have been discussing.[69] As noted above, the papyrus fragments containing this literary text were discovered at the Judean mercenary colony at Elephantine. The text follows our formulaic *incipit*:

[אלה]מלי אחיקר שמה ספר חכים ומהיר זי חכם ל ברה ו[...]
[ו]אמר ברא לם יהוה לי קדמת מלוהי [ר]בה אחיקר וי[...]
[וצ]בית עזקתה זי שנחאריב מלך אתו[ר ואמר] אנה לם בנן לא[...]
ומלי הוה שנחאריב מלך אתור א[חר מית ש]החאריב מל[ך אתור
] אסרחאדן {שמה} ברה והוה מלך באתור חל[ף שנחאריב] אבוהי ח[...]
שב[]ל[][] לבר אחת[י/ה ...]מותה [...]
ל[...]ה לאסר[האדן ...]
מלך אתור אחר אנ[ה ...]ברי[...]
(TAD C1.1-8).[70]

> [These] are the words of Ahiqar the wise and skilled scribe, which he taught to his son. *He did not have a son of his own,* [but] he said, "I will have a son!" Prior to these matters, Ahiqar was a [great man]. *He was counselor over all of Assyria and* was seal-[bea]rer to Sennachrib, king of Assy[ria. He said], "I do not have sons *but my counsel and* word is followed by Sennacherib, king of Assyria." Af[ter the death of S]ennacherib, ki[ng of Assyria,] and Esarhaddon his son *arose* and was then king in Assyria in pla[ce of Sennacherib], his father, *then I said to myself, "I am* growing old*" and I sent for my nephew, so that he might succeed me at* my death *and become scribe and keeper of the seal for Esarhaddon just as I was for Sennacherib,* king of Assyria. Then I *adopted Nadin, my nephew,* as my son.

After a few lines of background information about Ahiqar in the third person, the tale switches to the a first person account from the perspective of Ahiqar.[71] Stephanie Dalley has already pointed out (noted *supra*) that this first person account draws on the Egyptian genre of funerary autobiographies, but I think that this argument can be pushed further.

67. Cf. Lane Fox 2009, 253, who suggests that Daphnae is a place where Phoenicians and Jews could exchange ideas.

68. Bagnall (2011), 139. Moreover, other types of transnational communities (such as trading communities like Naucratis) probably played a similar role.

69. Cf. comments on the global role of *Ahiqar* at Vlassopoulos 2013, 243.

70. Note that I follow Lindenberger 1985's translation in filling the lacunae in the TAD text. There is no space here for an in-depth discussion of these textual matters, and my argument does not hinge on any specific restoration.

71. NB: because of the lacunose nature of the papyrus, we are not sure whether this switch occurs in the 8th line or the 11th. This problem, however, is immaterial to my argument – the only important factor here is that there is a switch from the third to the first person.

Because typically only royal courtiers could afford funerary autobiographies, this genre of texts tends to emphasize closeness to the Pharaoh as the most important facet of a person's identity.[72] Ahiqar's relationship and service to the Assyrian emperors is likewise stressed in our tale, apparent in the lines quoted above. However, I would propose that *Ahiqar* is not modeled on the autobiographical genre generally but is specifically modeled on the *Tale of Sinuhe*, a fictional, literary tale cast in the form of a funerary autobiography.[73] The broad strokes of the two stories are essentially the same. After Pharaoh Ammenemes dies, the royal courtier Sinuhe is terrified and goes into self-imposed exile in the Levant (Retjenu). Many years later Sinuhe returns to Egypt and is reconciled with the new Pharaoh Senwosret, son of Ammenemes. Ahiqar's situation is remarkably similar. He is an important scribe to King Sennacherib, but his fortunes change after Sennacherib's death. His adopted son Nadin libels him to the new king Esarhaddon and Ahiqar escapes, eventually traveling to Egypt. Later, he returns to Assyria where he is reconciled with Esarhaddon and his nephew gets his come-uppance.[74]

Sinuhe was the preeminent and most popular example of Egyptian high literature, and its most important themes dealt with Egyptian identity. As John Baines summarizes:

> Flight from Egypt and Egyptian values is difficult to accomplish and intensely painful. An Egyptian may well succeed in another type of life abroad, but his success is hollow, because the greatest triumph there is nothing to a position of modest esteem in Egypt. Egyptian values supplant others. The king is the centre of Egyptian values.[75]

It is therefore important that "foreign" Judean mercenaries possess a work that clearly draws on the most important Egyptian literary work that deals with Egyptian identity. In fact, we can see that *Ahiqar* actually inverts the plot of *Sinuhe* in a significant way: whereas Sinuhe is exiled from Egypt and thereby finds his identity, Ahiqar goes *to Egypt*! This inversion must point to important questions that the mercenary community asked itself: *who are we? and how do we define ourselves by Egyptian values? are we Egyptians or something entirely different or something in between?*[76]

72. Lichtheim 1988, 5-6, 142-3; Baines 1982, 33-4.

73. Baines 1982.

74. The version of *Ahiqar* preserved at Elephantine does not preserve a journey to Egypt or Ahiqar's reunification with Esarhaddon, but the papyrus is missing immediately after Nadin hides Ahiqar, so it is not unreasonable to believe that both events would have been preserved in the missing portions (cf. Lindenberger 1985, 498). If Kottsiepter's reconstruction of the papyrus is correct, then the last episodes must have been much shorter than the later versions and probably did not include the scenes where Ahiqar solved the King of Egypt's riddles (cf. Kottsiepter 2009, 423). However, if the riddles were already present in this early version, they would serve as a nice parallel to Sinuhe's defeat of the Strong Man of Retjenu in *Sinuhe*. At any rate, a journey to Egypt is likely given that in all of the later versions (including the *Vita Aesopi*) there is a journey to Egypt, and in the Book of Tobit the son of Tobit makes a parallel journey to Media. The only partial exception is the story of Cambyses and Croesus at Herodotus 3.36, which is clearly modelled on *Ahiqar* (cf. S. West 2003). However, in this story, the characters are already in Egypt, so there is no way for Croesus to be ferried away to Egypt! Furthermore, that Herodotus sets his *Ahiqar* influenced story in Egypt perhaps bolsters my contention that the *Tale of Ahiqar* was significantly associated with Egypt. Even if Ahiqar did not originally travel to Egypt in the original, the parallel still works (though not on as strong a level) since Ahiqar and Sinuhe are both exiled from the court.

75. Baines 1982, 37.

76. Cf. Homi Bhabha's explanation of the origin of the stereotype in post-colonial contexts: "The Imaginary is the transformation that takes place in the [post-colonial] subject at the formative mirror phase, when it assumes a *discrete* image which allows it to postulate a series of equivalences, samenesses, identitites, between the objects of the

Ahiqar's genre mirrors the narrative's inversions and questions of identity by interweaving the conventions of Northwest Semitic dedicatory inscriptions, Egyptian funerary autobiographies, and pan-Near Eastern proverb/wisdom collections.

5. *Conclusion*

While I have not dwelt inordinately long on the subject, I think my paper raises the question of how much people were reading works of literature from literary cultures other than their own. It would be quite the coincidence for such a convention, so strongly followed, to arise independently in the several cultures surveyed here and also to disappear at approximately the same time. My paper perhaps points in the direction that we abandon our view of the closed nature of literary cultures of the ancient world and work with a model based more closely on the modern world's where people freely read works of literature from other languages, whether in originals or translations. Indeed, we may consider at this juncture Arjun Appadurai's comments on the role that electronic media has had on the creation of transnational identities.[77] In his view, electronic media have the effect of connecting diasporic communities across national lines, thereby expanding a text's reach and near instantaneously exposing a far flung audience to the same message. The diasporic audience thereby responds and forms its identity responding both to the concerns of the group spread across different nations and locales as well as the respective local problems that condition their daily existence.[78]

Of course, there were no electronics in the ancient world, but written texts could serve the same function, such that a written text could circulate between diasporic audiences relatively quickly in comparison to a purely oral culture. We have already seen this phenomenon in the existence of belletristic literature among the "foreign" mercenary contingents in Egypt. A whole host of ambiguous feelings must have welled up in the Greco-Egyptian mercenaries when they read the opening line of the *Persians:* "Building a great and famous ornament of freedom for Greece (κλεινὸν ἐλευθερίας τεύχων μέγαν Ἑλλάδι κόσμον, frg. 788)." That a poem with such an aggressively Panhellenic outlook was found among these mercenaries surely attests to these Greeks attempting in a decidedly non-Greek land to hang onto whatever they felt was indicative of Greek identity. They did so not by reading/listening to a locally composed poem, but an Athenian one, so we can conclude that a very similar phenomenon to the one Appadurai attributes to the modern globalizing world was occurring in the ancient Mediterranean. Electronic media simply represent a quicker and more intense path toward this phenomenon.

The global and local forces shaping the lives of these mercenaries in tandem can be seen most explicitly in the famous letter the Judeans at Elephantine sent to Jerusalem asking for help (TADA 4.7-8). This letter describes how the priests of the Egyptian god Khnum bribed the governor

surrounding world. However, this positioning is itself problematic, for the subject finds or recognizes itself through an image which is simultaneously alienating and hence potentially confrontational. This is the basis of the close relation between the two forms of identification complicit with the Imaginary –narcissism and aggressivity. It is precisely these two forms of identification that constitute the dominant strategy of colonial power exercised in relation to the stereotype which, as a form of multiple and contradictory belief, gives knowledge of difference and simultaneously disavows or masks it. Like the mirror phase 'the fullness' of the stereotype –its image *as* identity– is always threatened by 'lack.'" (Bhabha 1994, 110).

77. Appadurai 1996, 49-64.

78. Appadurai 1996, 188-99.

Vidranga to allow them to destroy the Judeans' temple on Elephantine. The Judeans therefore write to Bagavahya, the governor of Judea, to ask for aid in rebuilding the temple (which is granted). The Elephantine Judeans portray their pious response to the destruction, wearing sackcloth and singing lamentations, in other words, they behave as good Judeans should. And here we can see the intersection of local and global concerns on the Elephantine Judeans' identity. Local Egyptians were responsible for the destruction of the temple, and because the local Persian officials were compromised by the bribes, the Elephantine Judeans appealed to their ancestral and transnational connection to the Judeans of Judah proper, highlighting the propriety of their response to the tragedy according to their shared religion. Furthermore, Persian resources and not to mention goodwill from the regional Persian governors of Judah and Samaria went towards solving the problem (assuming the temple actually was rebuilt). In other words, the Elephantine Judeans made use of transnational (Judean-ness) and global (Persian need for stability in the Achaemenid Empire) concerns in order to address their own local problem.

These trasnational and global concerns shaped the everyday lives of our mercenary communities to an extent not seen in more isolated and homogenous communities. As such we ought to expect that our mercenaries had to contend both with the local concerns of their host communities as well as their transnational identities. Because of this intersection of influences from the local and global, mercenaries may have been more interested in reading (and producing?) texts from "foreign" cultures. We have seen this phenomenon especially in *Ahiqar*, which I have argued raises questions of transnational identity through its mixing of generic conventions from different linguistic and literary traditions. This case, moreover, lends credence to not only my archaeology of the generic conventions of Hebrew prophecy and Greek historiography but to the importance of the supposedly peripheral and marginal mercenary communities in the literary history of the ancient world. For *Ahiqar* was not a text that elicited merely local enthusiasm but was rather one of the most important stories across the ancient Mediterranean. This text's influence stretched into Herodotus' *Histories* and the *Vitae* traditions of Aesop. It formed the foundations on which the biblical Book of Tobit was built. Moreover, it survived in translation in Syriac, Armenian, Arabic, Ethiopic, Old Turkish, and Old Church Slavonic. We cannot dismiss therefore the importance of what texts mercenaries found interesting: their favored texts reverberated back into their wider communities.

I think we therefore need to abandon our conception of what amount to national literatures that were essentially closed off to "foreigners." The literary importance of many of the texts and authors surveyed (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Herodotus, Thucydides, *Ahiqar*) and the connections I have arqued that they share point to the ubiquity of consuming texts from foreign literary traditions, since the generic conventions shared by these texts are too strong to have developed independently. My argument does not rely on the idea that all of these writers had read each other (unlikely, of course), but rather that there was an audience in the ancient world for works originally composed in other languages, especially among mercenary (and probably other expatriate) communities. This audience in "peripheral" places allowed then for foreign literature to circulate back towards the "center," whether in its original form or through other works influenced by foreign literature. This wonderful melange resulted in the eternal works of Greece and Israel and represents an important facet of the cultural *koine* of the ancient East Mediterranean.

6. *Abbreviations*

BNJ = *Brill's New Jacoby*.

KAI = Herbert Donner and Wolfgang Röll (2002) *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften*. Wiesbaden.

ML = Russell Meiggs and David Lewis (1989) *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions to the End of the Fifth Century B.C.* Oxford.

SAA II =Simo Parpola and Kazuko Watanabe (1988) *Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths*. Helsinki. (*State Archives of Assyria*).

SAA IX = Simo Parpola (1997) *Assyrian Prophecies*. Helsinki (*State Archives of Assyria*).

TAD = Bezalel Porten and Ada Yardeni (1986-1999) *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt*. Jerusalem.

WAW 14 = James M. Lindenberger (2003) *Ancient Aramaic and Hebrew Letters*. Atlanta. (*Writings from the Ancient World*).

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