

**Abstract**

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Ionians and Carians in an Aramaic Letter from Saqqâra: Notes for a Tentative Interpretation of *NSaqPap 26*

This paper aims to present preliminary textual and historical observations towards a more comprehensive interpretation of a late 5th-4th cent. BC fragmentary letter of a Persian official from the corpus of Aramaic papyri of Saqqâra (*NSaqPap 26*). The understanding of this document, which deals with some situation of turbulence arisen between the Persian administration at Memphis/Saqqâra and the Ionians and Carians who lived and worked on the spot, is rendered complicated by the poor conditions of preservation of the papyrus, whose top and right portions are lost. Apart from the *editio princeps* by J.B. Segal (*Aramaic Texts from North Saqqâra*, London 1983, no. 26) and few additional notes in the reviews of it by J. Teixidor (*JAOS*1985) and S. Shaked (*Orientalia*1987), specific contributions on the piece are lacking. More in particular, despite its relevance to the study of the long-established communities of Greeks and Carians in Egypt, the letter has not received yet an adequate treatment from the historical point of view.

Following a lexical and syntactical revision, I provide a new tentative translation of the text, with the aim to reach as thorough and coherent an interpretation of the document as possible, and to shed further light on the living conditions of the communities of Ionians and Carians in Egypt under the Persian rule. By further contextualizing the events described in the letter with the aid of external sources, I argue for a mercenary revolt that affected the storehouses at the port of Memphis as the situation that prompted the response of the local Persian administration.