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PERSIAN PERIOD

العصر الفارسي

David Klotz

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PERSIAN PERIOD

العصر الفارسي

David Klotz

Perserzeit
Périodes perses

In the last two centuries before the arrival of Alexander the Great, Persia invaded Egypt twice and administered it as a satrapy of the Achaemenid Empire. Although the Ptolemies later demonized the Persians, and most traces of their rule were systematically removed, the history of this fascinating period can be reconstructed thanks to written sources from different languages (hieroglyphic, Demotic, Aramaic, Old Persian, Greek) and the multicultural archaeological record. These periods of foreign domination helped solidify Egypt's national identity during the intervening Late Period (Dynasties 28-30) and set the stage for subsequent centuries of Greek and Roman rule.

قبل وصول الإسكندر الأكبر وتحديدا في آخر قرنين، غزت فارس مصر مرتين وتم إدارتها كونها واحدة من مقاطعات الإمبراطورية الأخمينية. على الرغم من انه في وقت لاحق قام البطالمة بتشويه سمعة الفرس، ومعظم آثار حكمهم أزيلت بشكل ممنهج، إن تاريخ هذه الفترة الرائعة من الممكن اعادة بناؤه بفضل المصادر المكتوبة من لغات مختلفة (الهيروغليفية، الديموطيقية، الآرامية، الفارسية القديمة، اليونانية) وبفضل السجلات الأثرية متعددة الثقافات. حيث ساعدت هذه الفترات من الهيمنة الأجنبية على ترسيخ الهوية الوطنية في مصر خلال فترة العصر المتأخر الاسرات 28-30، ومهدت الطريق لعدة قرون لاحقة من الحكم اليوناني والروماني.

Scholars divide the Persian Period in Egypt into two separate eras, the First Domination (Dynasty 27, 525-402 BCE) and the brief Second Domination that ended with the arrival of Alexander the Great (Dynasty 31, 343-332 BCE; for the problematic category of Dynasty 31, see Lloyd 1988; for the chronology, see

Depuydt 2006). To distinguish from other stages of Iranian history, this era is also called Achaemenid, named after the eponymous founder of the dynasty, Achaemenes (Egyptian: *jšmjnš*). In both periods, Egypt was governed by a Persian satrap (Egyptian: *hštrpn*; Klinkott 2005).

Political History

Dynasty 27 (Persian)	Cambyses	525-522
	Darius I	521-486
	Xerxes I	486-466
	Artaxerxes I	465-424
	Xerxes II	424
	Sogdianos	424
	Darius II	424-404
	Artaxerxes II	404-402
Dynasty 28	Amyrtaios	404-399
Dynasty 29	Nepherites I	399-393
	Psammuthis	393
	Hakoris	393-380
	Nepherites II	380
Dynasty 30	Nectanebo I	380-363
	Teos	362-361
	Nectanebo II	360-343
Second Persian Period	Artaxerxes III	343-338
	Arses	338-336
	Darius III	335-332
(Indigenous ruler)	Khababash	337/6-

Table 1. Chronology

Cambyses

Herodotus (III, 1-37; translation by Grene 1987) provides the most coherent account of the Persian invasion of Egypt, a theme elaborated upon much later in the Coptic *Cambyses Romance*, and the Ethiopic *Chronicle* of John Nikiou (cf. Schwartz 1949; Lloyd 1994; Jansen-Winkel 2002). Cambyses reputedly attacked Egypt out of anger towards Amasis, who insulted Cyrus by sending Nitêtis, a daughter of Apries and not his own child, to wed the Persian king (Herodotus III, 1-3; Athenaeus XIII, 560d-f; Polyaeus VIII, 29; cf. Briant 2002: 49, 885; Ladynin 2006). Yet his foreign policy was a logical extension of his father's campaigns, especially since Amasis had pledged Egypt into an alliance with Lydia, Babylon, and Sparta (Herodotus I, 177). With the logistical support of Arabian chiefs, Cambyses led his army through northern Sinai, from Gaza (Kadytis; Quaegebeur 1995) to Pelusium (Verreth 2006: 34-35; Kahn and Tammuz 2008). After a short battle, Amasis's heir, the short-lived Psammetichus III, and his mercenary army retreated to Memphis, only to

surrender after a heavy siege. Libya and Cyrenaica quickly followed suit, and preemptively sent tribute to the Persian king.

Cambyses humiliated Psammetichus III before the army in Memphis, and when the latter king refused to accept the Persian authority, he was condemned to death by drinking bull's blood (Pétigny 2010). Despite his ephemeral reign, Psammetichus III completed a temple to Osiris in Karnak (Traunecker 2010) and was posthumously commemorated by Udjahorresnet on his statue (Posener 1936: 6), and thus he was more than a "nebulous figure" (Cruz-Urbe 2003: 46). The Egyptian campaign began roughly in the winter of 526 BCE, and Cambyses was crowned by the summer of 525 BCE at the latest (Depuydt 1996; von Beckerath 2002; Kahn 2007: 104-105; Quack 2011).

Cambyses then advanced with his army to Sais, capital of the preceding 26th Dynasty, where he disinterred the mummy of Amasis and abused his corpse (Herodotus III, 16). The posthumous attacks upon Amasis are further evidenced by the systematic erasure of his cartouches on both royal and private monuments throughout Egypt (fig. 1; Bolshakov 2010; Klotz 2010: 131-32), and possible attacks specifically targeting his temples (Coulon and Defernez 2004: 141-142; *TAD* A4.7-8, see Porten and Yardeni 1986-1999; Porten 1996: 142, 146; but cf. Burkard 1994b and 1995; von Pilgrim 2003). While Amasis approved major temple construction projects throughout Egypt (Jélinková-Reymond 1957; Graefe 2011), none of his monuments stand today, but survive only as fragmentary blocks.

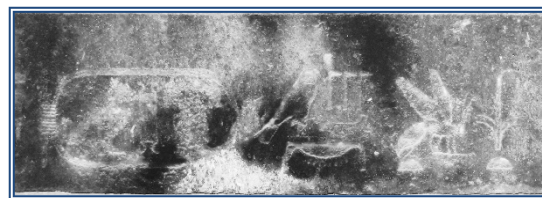


Figure 1. Carefully erased cartouche of Amasis. White Monastery Church, Sohag.

Nonetheless, the *damnatio memoriae* did not last long, as the statue of Udjahorresnet, carved under Darius I, once again mentions Amasis, and his son Henat served in Amasis's posthumous royal cult (Cruz-Urbe 2003: 39).

It was this Udjahorresnet, high priest and overseer of maritime shipping (*jmj-rs kbnwt*)—not a military admiral as is often claimed (cf. Darnell 1992: 81-84)—under the reign of Amasis, who halted the imminent destruction of Sais. On his oft-discussed statue in the Vatican, Udjahorresnet recounts how he personally interceded with Cambyses during his visit to Sais (Posener 1936: 1-26; Lloyd 1982; Baines 1996). Udjahorresnet explained the theological significance of Sais and the local goddess Neith, provided the Great King with an Egyptian titulary (Posener 1936: 161; Serrano Delgado 2001; Blöbaum 2006: 392), and persuaded him to banish foreign soldiers from the sacred precinct (Thiers 1995: 498-500, 513-514). Remarkably, he even claims to have initiated Cambyses into the local temple services (Posener 1936: 17; cf. Serrano Delgado 2004):

“His Majesty himself went to the temple of Neith, and kissed the ground for her Majesty, very greatly, like all kings have done. He made a great offering of all good things for Neith, the Mother of God, and the great gods within Sais, like all good kings have done. That his Majesty did this, was because I had made him understand the greatness of her (Neith's) Majesty: she is the very mother of Ra himself?”

To label Udjahorresnet a “collaborator” (e.g., Lloyd 1982; Huß 1994) may be unfair. As a prominent member of the indigenous and learned elite, he was perhaps one of the few Egyptians capable of rescuing the temple of Sais from the invading army (Wessetzky 1991; Bareš 1999: 31-43). Aside from recognizing Cambyses as the new legitimate king—the same way Egyptians had accepted the usurper Amasis a few decades earlier—there is no evidence that Udjahorresnet acted against his fellow Egyptians for personal gain. Instead, he enjoyed a respectable reputation among

indigenous Egyptians: he received an impressive tomb in Abusir (Bareš 1999; Stammers 2009: 27-30)—work apparently began on this uncompleted sepulture in years 41/42 of Amasis (Bareš 2002)—even though he may have been buried abroad (Verner 1989; against Bareš 1999: 79-86). Furthermore, almost two centuries later, a priest from Sais restored one of his statues in the Ptah temple at Memphis specifically in order to “keep his name alive,” perhaps to honor his rescue of the Neith temple (Anthes 1965: 98-100; Bareš 1999: 41-42; Kuhrt 2007 a: 415-416; for the post-Persian renewal of another Saite monument, see Jansen-Winkel 1997).

After the interlude at Sais, Cambyses headed south to campaign against Nubia (Herodotus III, 17-25). Kahn (2007) recently assumed Cambyses marched entirely on foot, but Herodotus only employed the neutral Greek verb *polemein* to describe this campaign. While this expedition ended in disaster, he apparently captured at least part of Lower Nubia (Herodotus III, 97), and official Achaemenid monuments record Kush in their list of subjects beginning with Darius I (Morkot 1991). The installation of Persian garrisons at Elephantine and Syene reflects the continued engagement with Egypt's southern frontier during this period. However, the pottery from the Second Cataract fort at Doginarti, previously ascribed to the Saite-Persian Period (Heidorn 1991, 1992), has more recently been dated to Dynasties 25-26 (Heidorn 2013), and thus no longer confirms Achaemenid domination south of Elephantine.

Frustrated in Nubia, Cambyses returned north, dispatching an expedition against the Oases, apparently via the desert roads linking Thebes to Kharga, only to perish in an unexpected sandstorm (Herodotus III, 26). Here, Cambyses was maintaining the foreign policies of the preceding Saite dynasty, who had already begun endowing large settlements and temples in the Egyptian Oases (Kuhlmann 1988; Colin 1998; Labrique 2008; Kaper 2013; Darnell et al. 2012: 16-20), while simultaneously forging diplomatic ties with the nascent Hellenistic colony of Cyrene in northern Libya (Chamoux 1953: 135-150;

Leahy 1988: 191-192). Libya was nominally under Persian control, and the Western Desert underwent significant development under Darius I and his successors.

Much like the Roman Emperor Caracalla centuries later, Cambyses seems to have entered Egypt with good intentions, respecting local temples and religious customs. Yet after his failed campaigns, Cambyses stormed back to Memphis, reportedly leaving behind a trail of looting, destruction, and impiety that gave him one of the worst reputations in the ancient world (Jansen-Winkeln 2002). Many classical authors report that Cambyses stole precious objects from the temples, and the careful damage to the cartouches of Amasis throughout Egypt suggests attacks were primarily directed against his structures during this time. Upon his return to Memphis, the testy Cambyses could not bear to witness celebrations for the newly crowned Apis and he reportedly murdered the sacred calf. Scholars frequently debate the fragmentary evidence from the Serapeum, but the extant records do not entirely disprove the accusations Herodotus recorded (Depuydt 1995). Even if Cambyses granted an official Apis burial early in his reign, this does not mean he could not have killed another during a fit of rage.

Whether the charges of impiety leveled against Cambyses are exaggerations or ideologically charged fabrications of anti-Persian propaganda, documentary evidence indicates that he significantly reduced the fiscal resources of most temples in Egypt. Dillery (2005) argued that Herodotus's native Egyptian informants did not objectively narrate their history, but instead resorted to literary tropes (*Königsnovelle*, *Chaosbeschreibung*) to frame recent events within their mythological worldview. If anything, native accounts of Cambyses recall legends surrounding Seth, the god of chaos, charged with committing numerous impieties in Egypt during the Late Period (Altmann 2010). A decree of Cambyses is preserved on a Demotic papyrus (Devauchelle 1995a: 74-75; Agut-Labordère 2005a, 2005b) limiting resources to all temples in Egypt, exempting only Memphis, Heliopolis,

and Wenkhem (near Abusir; not identical with Letopolis [contra Bresciani 1983], but closer to Abusir; see Yoyotte 1972 a; Ryholt 2002: 229-230). Although Cambyses may have simply intended to boost the Egyptian economy (Agut-Labordère 2005b), the clergy remembered this period as a regrettable hiatus in temple donations, falling between the more beneficent reigns of Amasis and Darius I (Agut-Labordère 2009-2010; Thiers 2011).

Darius I

Cambyses left Egypt in 522 BCE and died *en route* to Persia (Agut-Labordère 2009-2010: 355; Quack 2011: 234-235, n. 27). His brother, Bardiya/Smerdis — or the impostor Gaumata — succeeded him briefly until Darius led a coup and assassinated him in the same year. Darius (fig. 2) assumed the throne, reorganized the Empire, and spent much of his time stamping out regional uprisings, including one in Egypt (Darius I, Behistun inscription §21 [DB §21], see Schmitt 2009: 51). Various evidence points to the brief reign of an Egyptian named Petubastis IV (previously called Petubastis III) during this time, although the chronology is still not certain (Yoyotte 1972 b). Recently discovered temple inscriptions from Amheida (Dakhla Oasis) reveal the extent of his rebellion (Kaper *fc.*). Furthermore, Aryandes, the first Egyptian satrap, may have tried to break away from the Empire; Darius had him executed for introducing his own coinage (Herodotus IV, 166; but see Tuplin 1989: 76-77); a different tradition maintains that Egyptians revolted against Aryandes and his oppressive policies (Polyaenus VII, 11, 7).



Figure 2. Darius Cylinder, from Luxor. British Museum 89.132.

Darius certainly took an active interest in the administration of the country, and he reportedly codified the laws of Egypt (Lippert *fc.*). His most notable accomplishment was the excavation of a canal system at Suez, a feat commemorated by several enormous stelae inscribed in both hieroglyphs and cuneiform (Posener 1936: 48-87; Tuplin 1991; Lloyd 2007a; Kuhrt 2007a: 485-486). According to the Egyptian versions, Darius consulted with Egyptian officials in his palace at Susa (called “[E]lam”; Posener 1936: 55, line 7, 58, n. i; for the restoration, see a similar passage on the Vatican statue: *ibid.*, 21, column 43) and ordered them to excavate a canal in the Bitter Lakes region. After its completion, numerous cargo ships set sail in the Red Sea, circumnavigated the Arabian Peninsula, reportedly in cooperation with the Sabaeans of Southern Arabia (Egyptian *šbꜣ*; Klotz *fc.*), and ultimately arrived in Persia.

This maritime route was preferable to the arduous land journey. Statues and other large stone objects likely took a similar course from the Wadi Hammamat to Persia via the Red Sea (Yoyotte 2013: 257-259), as well as the thousands of Egyptian workmen shipped to Persepolis, Susa, and other building sites. A Persian Period Demotic papyrus from Saqqara mentions the toponym *twnrk* (P. Cairo 50067; Vittmann 2012: 1082), perhaps to be identified with the coastal city of Tamukkan (var. Taokê, Takh(u)makka) near the Persian Gulf, frequently mentioned in Persepolis Fortification Tablets in connection with Egyptian laborers (Henkelman 2008: 304-309).

In dedicatory texts from Susa, Darius I boasted of assembling an international crew of skilled artisans to construct his palaces (Darius I, Susa inscription F in Old Persian (*DSf*), see Kent 1953: 143-144; Darius I, Susa inscription Z in Elamite (*DSz*), see Vallat 1970; Kuhrt 2007a: 492-497). While Babylonians were charged with clearing rubble and making bricks, Egyptian recruits worked the gold, wood, and decorated the walls. Egyptian style is evident in Achaemenid architecture and reliefs (Arnold 1999: 69), although the cosmopolitan iconographic program interwove artistic traditions from across the

Persian Empire (Root 1979). As mentioned above, numerous administrative tablets from Iran record the movements of these Egyptian workers (Wasmuth 2009; Henkelmann 2008); an Elamite tablet even mentions rations delivered to a local “scribe of the Egyptians, Harkipi” (< Harkhebi; Jones and Stolper 1986: 249-252). Egyptian artifacts were discovered at Susa and Persepolis, including amulets, scarabs, and even a Horus *ciꜣꜣus* (*PM VII*: 397-398; Abdi 2002b; Wasmuth 2009; Qahéri 2012: 318); various administrative seals from Iran bear short hieroglyphic texts (Giovino 2006; Garrison and Ritner 2010), and numerous stone vessels feature Egyptian cartouches of Persian kings (Westenholz and Stolper 2002; Qahéri 2012). Artisans and laborers were not the only Egyptians imported to Persia. Cyrus reputedly employed an Egyptian doctor, and Udjahorresnet advised Darius within “Elam,” most likely at the royal court at Susa (Burkard 1994a; Lloyd 2007b: 37-39).

The mass transport of skilled artisans and advisors to Persia may have led to a minor “brain drain” in Egypt. Compared to the Saite Period, temple inscriptions, as well as private stelae and statues, became relatively scarce and of lesser quality (Sternberg-El Hotabi 2000: 155-157). Yet unlike Cambyses, Darius I devoted significant resources to Egyptian temples, earning a positive reputation for religious tolerance (Klotz 2006: 7; Kuhrt 2007b). Darius reportedly studied Egyptian theology along with priests (Diodorus Siculus I, 95.5), and when he ordered Udjahorresnet to restore the House of Life in Sais, it was because the king “knew the efficacy of the craft of healing the sick, of establishing the name of every god, their temples, their offerings, and conducting their festivals” (Posener 1936: 21-22). As mentioned above, Darius renewed Amasis’s donations of temple lands, and he earned the unique Golden Horus name: “beloved of all the gods and goddesses of Egypt” (Posener 1936: 176, n. 7; Davies 1953: pls. 48-49).

Although there is only limited evidence for temple construction within the Nile Valley, with fragmentary reliefs from Karnak, Busiris, and Elkab (Traunecker 1980), this

phenomenon may result from post-Persian *damnatio memoriae*. In Kharga Oasis, Darius I rebuilt the large temple of Hibis (the theory advanced by Cruz-Urbe [1987] that Saite kings and Darius II were responsible for most of the construction and decoration is highly speculative, cf. Kaper 2013: 174; Ismail 2009), and the smaller sanctuary at Qasr el-Ghueita (Darnell 2007; Darnell et al. 2012). In Dakhla Oasis, blocks with similar decoration, almost certainly attributable to Darius I, were reused in the Roman Period temple of Thoth at Amheida (Kaper 2013: 171-172). Nonetheless, assorted votive objects from his reign have been found across Egypt, including faience and bronze objects from Karnak (Traunecker 1980: 210) and Dendera (Loeben 2011: 215, 247), as well as decorated naoi at Tuna el-Gebel (Myśliwiec 1991, 2000: pls. 5-6; Mahran 2008) and an unspecified temple of Anubis and Isis (BM 37496; fig. 3), most likely Cynopolis (El-Qeis) in Upper Egypt (BM 37496; Yoyotte 1972b: pl. 19a; Curtis and Tallis 2005: 172-173, no. 266).



Figure 3. Wooden shrine. Darius I offering to Anubis and Isis. British Museum, EA 37496.



Figure 4. Apis Stela of the General Amasis. Louvre IM 4017.

At Memphis, three Apis bulls were interred in regnal years 4, 31, and 34 (*PM* III: 799-801; Devauchelle 1994: 103-104). If the burial ceremony under Cambyses had been a modest affair, the first embalming ritual for Darius was celebrated with much fanfare under the direction of the General Amasis, who aimed to create respect for the Apis “in the heart of all people and all foreigners who were in Egypt” (Posener 1936: 43-44; Vercoutter 1962: 60-61; fig. 4). He sent messengers across Egypt summoning all local governors to bring tribute to Memphis and perform a lavish burial. Around the same time, the Treasurer and Chief of Works under Darius I, Ptahhotep, took credit for “guarding over the temples” of Memphis, multiplying offerings, increasing the clergy, and “reintroducing sacred images, putting all writings (back) in their proper place” (Jansen-Winkeln 1998: 164-165, cols. 2-3, 167-168). Cambyses had mocked the divine effigy of Ptah in Memphis, but Darius wished to erect his own statue before the same temple (Herodotus II, 110; III, 37).

It is uncertain whether Darius ever visited Egypt, or if he mainly corresponded with the satrap and conferred with Egyptian officials residing in Susa and Persepolis (Gropp 1990; Tuplin 1991: 264-267, 2013: 232). Nonetheless, there is no reason to assume the Great King was somehow oblivious to the Suez Canal excavation or the various temple construction projects going on throughout Egypt (contra Lloyd 2007a), as these enterprises must have required significant resources, manpower, and organization. The Pherendates correspondence reveals how closely the satrap micro-managed seemingly trivial questions involving sacerdotal appointments at Elephantine during this reign (Martin 1996: 289-295; Chauveau 1999).

Xerxes-Artaxerxes II

Shortly after the Persian defeat at Marathon in 490 BCE, and the death of Darius I in 486, Egypt seized the chance to revolt again (Herodotus VII, 1, 4; Stolper 1998; Rottpeter 2007). Documents from this time mention a native Egyptian king named Psammetichus IV, instead of Darius I or Xerxes (Cruz-Uribe 1980; Pestman 1984; Vleeming 1991: 3-4). Yet the new king Xerxes quickly regained control, installed his brother Achaemenes as satrap, ended the benefactions granted by Darius, and placed higher demands on the Egyptian population, most likely to fund his massive yet ill-fated campaign against Greece.

No evidence survives for Egyptian temple construction, and the usually copious records for the Apis bulls at Memphis suddenly fall silent precisely during this reign, only resuming about a century later in Dynasty 29 (Vercoutter 1958: 343-345; Vittmann 2011: 414). A single posthumous record may allude to a Mother of Apis buried under Artaxerxes I, but the text is very fragmentary (Smith et al. 2011: 16, line x +13, 18, n. 25). A previous suggestion to identify one Apis from the reign of Darius II (Devauchelle 1994: 104-106, 111) has been retracted (Vittmann 2011: 404-405, with n. 198).

According to the Satrap Stela of Ptolemy I, Xerxes confiscated temple lands in Buto, and

was duly punished by Horus for this impiety (Klinkott 2007; Schäfer 2009, 2011: 133-134, 146-151). Despite the clear hieroglyphic spelling of his name, some scholars still identify the Persian king mentioned on the Satrap Stela as (Arta)xerxes III (e.g., Ladynin 2005: 98-103). Among other problems, this theory assumes the Egyptians had already forgotten the name of the Achaemenid ruler who so brutally invaded their country only thirty years before the composition of the Ptolemaic decree.

Xerxes famously railed against all gods besides Ahura Mazda in the so-called “Daiva-inscription” (Xerxes, Persepolis inscription H in Old Persian (XPh), see Kent 1953: 150-152; Kuhrt 2007a: 304-306), so it is possible that decreased temple revenues in Egypt, as well as the reorganized sacerdotal administration in Babylon (Herodotus I, 183; cf. Kuhrt 2014), may have had both financial and ideological motivations.

After this point, traditional historical sources such as biographical or royal inscriptions disappear from the epigraphic record. For most Egyptians, life continued more or less as usual, at least according to administrative records. In sharp contrast to Darius I, subsequent kings no longer bothered with benefactions to Egyptian monuments. Darius II did allow Edfu’s clergy to retain some of its agricultural holdings (Meeks 1972: 52; the actual amount is in lacuna), but the decoration phase of Hibis Temple sometimes attributed to his reign is not supported by the epigraphic evidence. The minor differences in Darius’s prenomen at Hibis Temple (Vittmann 2011: 401-403) signify little, since such forms varied throughout Pharaonic history (e.g., Spalinger 2008).

Xerxes failed in his Greek campaign, most famously at the battle of Thermopylae (480 BCE). He was subsequently murdered (464), his eldest sons killed in the ensuing dynastic struggle, until Artaxerxes I eventually took the throne. Around this time, Inaros, an ethnically Libyan chief (Colin 2000: 93, n. 252) with an Egyptian name, emerged from the Western Delta and led a revolt in league with Athens (Kahn 2008). Inaros successfully took Memphis and controlled at least part of Egypt

for a full decade. Although some documents from Elephantine refer to Artaxerxes in 460 BCE, a Demotic ostrakon from Ain Manawir is dated to regnal year 2 of “Inaros [without cartouche], Chief of the Rebels” (Chauveau 2004a) or “Chief of the Bakaloi (Libyans)” (Winnicki 2006). Artaxerxes I sent repeated expeditions to recapture Egypt and eventually regained power in 454 BCE, famously destroying the Athenian fleet and crucifying Inaros in the process.

From the reign of Darius II (423-405 BCE) are preserved the multilingual archives of the satrap Arsames (Tuplin and Ma 2013), offering valuable insight into the administration of Egypt at the end of Dynasty 27. Notably, Egyptian priests of Khnum reportedly destroyed a Jewish temple of Yahwe at Elephantine in 410 BCE, with the approval of the Persian governor Vidranga (Briant 1996; Pilgrim 2003; Tuplin and Ma 2013, vol. 3: 136-151).

At the end of the fifth century, another dynastic war erupted in Persia, this time between Artaxerxes II and his younger brother Cyrus. Once again, an Egyptian rebel from the Western Delta, Amyrtaeus (Amenirdis), also called Psammetichus V, expelled the Persians from Memphis around 405 BCE, employing mercenaries from Crete (Perdrizet and Lefebvre 1919: ix, 75, no. 405; Yoyotte 2011: 26); the full revolution may have taken several years to complete (Lemaire 1995). The only king of Dynasty 28, Amyrtaeus is briefly mentioned by Manetho and Diodorus Siculus (XIV, 35), and confirmed by a few documentary texts (Chauveau 1996a: 43-47). After a few years, he was overthrown by Nepherites I, founder of the Mendesian Dynasty 29, thus ushering in the Late Dynastic Period.

Second Persian Domination (Dynasty 31)

After almost fifty years of independence, prosperity, and hegemony in the Eastern Mediterranean, Egypt succumbed once again to the invading Persian army of Artaxerxes III in 343 BCE, and the native king Nectanebo II fled to Ethiopia for refuge (Ladynin 2010). The second Persian domination lasted only nine

years, finally ending when Alexander the Great captured Heliopolis in 332.

The Egyptian chronology of this period is further complicated by the mysterious king Khababash (or “Khabash”; cf. Moje 2010). His precise origins remain obscure, and scholars have alternately proposed he might be a Persian official, Libyan rebel, or Ethiopian chief (Huß 1994). The latter option may be the most likely, as his name resonates with regional ethnonyms (e.g., Egyptian: *ḥbst.w*, “Puntites”; Habeshat/Habashi, “Abyssinian”), and he could have allied with Nectanebo II after the latter fled to the south. Little is known of his brief reign, but he buried an Apis bull in Memphis, and the Satrap Stela credits him with restoring temple lands to Buto.

Artaxerxes III left no historical records in Egypt, besides coins inscribed with his name in Demotic (Vleeming 2001: nos. 1-11). Various biographical texts have been dated to this period (Chauveau and Thiers 2006: 388-389; Vittmann 2011: 405-409), but with two major exceptions—Tjaihapimu, son and heir to Nectanebo II, and the Sakhmet priest Somtutefnakht from Herakleopolis (Clère 1951; Perdu 1985; Meyrat 2014: 309-312)—the undated inscriptions could belong to various periods after Darius I (cf. also Devauchelle 1995 b).

Social History

Like the period of Hyksos rule in the Second Intermediate Period, the Persian Dominations inflicted perpetual trauma upon the cultural memory of Egypt (Lloyd 2014). For several centuries, Egyptians continued to blame Cambyses for disfiguring or robbing Egyptian monuments such as the Colossus of Memnon, and other Persian kings were reputed to have committed equally blasphemous deeds against Egyptian gods (Schwartz 1949). In Demotic literature from the Roman Period, Assyrians are blamed for stealing the divine images (Ryholt 2004, 2009: 308-310), although some texts anachronistically conflate Assyrians and Achaemenid Persians (Ryholt 2004: 492-494). An echo may even be found in the Bentresh Stela (Broze 1989; Sternberg-El Hotabi 2013), in which the ruler of a distant country, Bakhtan



Figure 5a. Egyptian official wearing baggy tunics, wraparound robes, and distinctly Achaemenid jewelry. Brooklyn Museum, 37.353.

(< Bactria or Ecbatana?), refuses to return the cult statue of Chonsu-*p3-jr-shrw* to Egypt (Posener 1934: 77).

This reputation may have some basis in reality. The first few Ptolemies repeatedly claimed to have recovered lost Egyptian divine statues in Syro-Palestine, supposedly stolen by the Persians (Winnicki 1994). These sources are often dismissed as a mere anti-Persian topos or Ptolemaic propaganda, but surprisingly detailed accounts of such discoveries are recounted in the Pithom Stela of Ptolemy II (Thiers 2007: 45-49, 100-106) and the recently discovered decree of Ptolemy III from Akhmim (Altenmüller 2009; el-Masry et al. 2012: 97-102, 164-167). Moreover, certain 30th Dynasty texts refer to such temple destruction prior to the invasion by Artaxerxes III, and the systematic *damnatio memoriae* against Amasis's monuments can only be attributed to

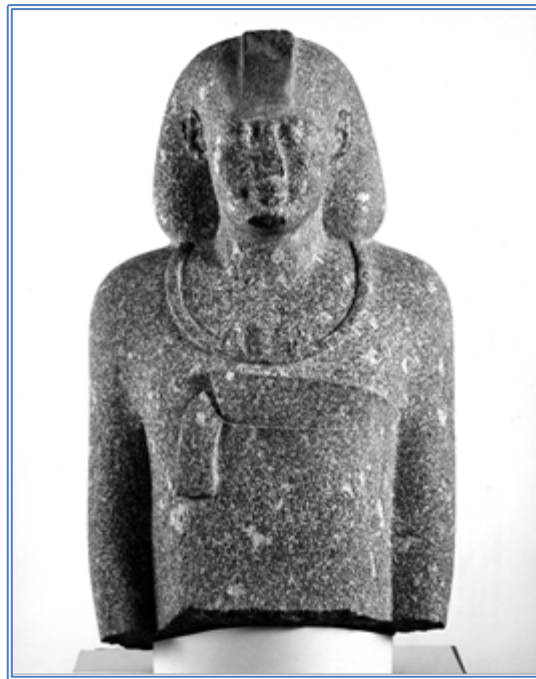


Figure 5b. Brooklyn Museum, 71.139.

Cambyses (Klotz 2010: 152-154). Archaeological evidence in some cases is inconclusive (Burkard 1994b and 1995; von Pilgrim 2003), but various evidence suggests major disruptions, if not destruction, precisely in the late sixth century BCE (e.g., Coulon and Defernez 2004: 141-142; Masson 2011: 269-270).

While the Ptolemies later emphasized the impieties and abuses of their predecessors, the Persian Period was not all repression and exploitation, and in fact there is evidence for acculturation and international contact during this era. Egyptian elite officials donned Persian garments and jewelry (figs. 5a and b; Cooney 1965; Mathieson, et al. 1995), just as indigenous officials later wore the Hellenizing *mitra* on their statues in the late Ptolemaic Period (Moyer 2011); in this way privileged native officials distinguished themselves as what Pierre Briant dubbed the “ethno-classe dominante” (Briant 1988; Vittmann 2009). Meanwhile, Persian dignitaries composed hieroglyphic dedications for Egyptian deities in the Wadi Hammamat (Klotz 2008). Religious

syncretism is evident on the Suez Canal stelae, where the Egyptian winged sun disk on one side is replaced by the Zoroastrian winged figure on the reverse; Atum, the original Egyptian creator god, was sometimes likened to Ahura Mazda (Posener 1936: 75-76; Traunecker 1995: 115-117; Krebsbach 2011). Kákósy (1977) suggested fire became more important in Late Period Egyptian religion and magic resulting from Zoroastrian influences at this time, but this natural element was important in all periods.

This hybrid style is most apparent with Darius's statue from Susa, although it is uncertain if it ever stood in Egypt. The hieroglyphic inscription mentions that Darius commissioned the effigy "so his name might be commemorated beside Atum, Lord of the Lands of Heliopolis, and Ra-Horakhty" (Yoyotte 2013: 261-262), suggesting it was originally erected in a temple of Atum in Heliopolis or Pithom, near the Red Sea canal (Bresciani 1998: 110; Yoyotte 2013: 256), but for some reason taken back to Persia and installed in the palace of Darius I at Susa (Ladynin 2011). However, Atum and Ra-Horakhty may simply represent the closest Egyptian equivalents to Ahura Mazda, the god mentioned in the statue's Cuneiform texts. As a similar example of an Egyptian monument commissioned abroad, one may compare the obelisk of Domitian now in Benevento; although erected in Rome, the hieroglyphic inscriptions dedicate that monument to Ra-Horakhty (Grenier 1987: 939-940).

Several Achaemenid-style royal heads with full, curly beards have been discovered in Egypt (Traunecker 1995; Perdu and Meffre 2012: 194-195, no. 96), but Darius I is depicted in traditional Egyptian poses at Hibis and Ghueita. Curiously, similar images of the bearded Egyptian god Bes were popular throughout the Achaemenid Empire (Abdi 1999, 2002 a), notably on the widespread theomorphic "Bes jars" (Defernez 2009, 2011b).

While Persian cultural influence may not have been great, this period witnessed intensified interactions with Greek states,

especially Athens, culminating in the Athenian support of the rebel Inaros, and continued military and political alliances during Dynasties 29-30 (Salmon 1981). Indeed, the increasing Hellenization of the Delta is confirmed in its material culture, which shows a wide diffusion of Aegean imports, but few properly Iranian forms (Carrez-Maratray 2000; Smoláriková 2002; Pfeiffer 2010; Defernez 2012; Carrez-Maratray and Defernez 2012). Notably, the earliest coin in Egypt, the "Ionian stater," is first mentioned in a Demotic text from the reign of Artaxerxes I (412-411 BCE: see Chauveau 2000; Agut-Labordère 2014).

The Persian Period also introduced Egypt to foreign domination, being occupied by alien soldiers and administered in a new language (Aramaic), and thus presented valuable lessons for the subsequent Ptolemaic Dynasty. For example, most native Egyptian revolts against the Persians originated in the Western Delta (Yoyotte 2011), and this is precisely where the early Ptolemies concentrated their administration in Alexandria, while they offered numerous benefactions to Lower Egyptian temples and cities (e.g., Sais, Buto, Mendes, Tanis, Pithom, Sebennytos, Behbeit el-Hagar). Throughout the Ptolemaic Period, enemies were often designated as "Medes" (Tuplin 2013: 237-239), while soldiers and low-status Greeks, who nonetheless enjoyed more privileges than common Egyptians, were mysteriously called "Medes" or "Persians" in administrative texts (Vandorpe 2008). Finally, the renewed settlements in the Western Oases (made possible in part through the introduction of Persian *qanat* technology; cf. Briant 2001), and frequent expeditions into the Eastern Desert and the Red Sea, led directly to the heavy exploitation of both regions under Greek and Roman rule (Klotz 2013).

Bibliographic Notes

For the Achaemenid Period in general, the standard historical treatment is Briant (2002). Most primary sources are translated by Kuhrt (2007a), while Curtis and Tallis (2005) offer an excellent overview of art, architecture, and material culture.

For the relations between Egypt, Persia, and the Greeks during this period, consult Ruzicka (2012). Posener (1936) presented the most important hieroglyphic inscriptions known at the time, with excellent translations, commentary, and general historic overview. More recent, detailed surveys can be found in Vittmann (2003: 120-154, 2011; compare also Perdu 2010: 149-153; Yoyotte 2011, 2013). Additional hieroglyphic texts have been discovered in the interim (e.g., Posener 1986; Mathieson et al. 1995; Jansen-Winkel 1998: 163-168; Wasmuth 2010), most notably the statue of Darius I from Susa (Yoyotte 2013), as well as stone vessels with short, multilingual inscriptions (Ritner 1996; Westenholz and Stolper 2002; Shaw 2010; Qahéri 2012).

While Posener (1936) only translated the hieroglyphic inscriptions, he did refer to other texts in passing. Demotic contracts and other archives survive from this period, primarily from Saqqara, Hermopolis, Thebes, and Elephantine (Cruz-Uribe 1985, 2000; Vleeming 1991; Pestman 1994; Martin 1999; Farid 2002), and even graffiti from the Western Desert (Di Cerbo and Jasnow 1996). Some of these documents shed light on the inner workings of the Achaemenid administration in Egypt (e.g., Martin 1996; Smith and Martin 2009), most notably Papyrus Dem Rylands 9 (Vittmann 1998; Chauveau 1996b, 2004b), and the Pherendates correspondence from Elephantine (Martin 1996: 289-295; Chauveau 1999).

While Demotic remained important for private Egyptian correspondence and contracts, Aramaic was the official language of the administration. The standard edition of texts is Porten and Yardeni (1986-1999), with many translations in Porten (1996) and Kuhrt (2007a); the reference grammar is Muraoka and Porten (2003). Many documents relate specifically to the Jewish community at Elephantine (Vittmann 2003: 84-119; Joisten-Pruschke 2008; Vittmann 2008-2009; Azzoni 2013), particularly regarding the simmering rivalry between the temples of Khnum and Yahwe. Other texts shed light on the Achaemenid administration, including the invaluable archives of the satrap Arshames (Tuplin and Ma 2013), and a register of maritime vessels passing through the Delta to the Mediterranean (Briant and Descat 1998; Pfeiffer 2010).

For the Old Persian language, the standard reference grammar is Kent (1953), but one can also consult Brandenstein and Mayrhofer (1964), and the useful online textbook by Skjærvø (2002); for the inscriptions, the authoritative edition is now Schmitt (2009). While Old Persian inscriptions found in Egypt are scarce (Michaélides 1943, some of dubious authenticity), the Achaemenid rulers introduced numerous technical terms to the Egyptian language, and traces can be found in hieroglyphic, Demotic, and even Coptic texts (Vittmann 2004; Schmitt and Vittmann 2013).

Egyptian pottery from the Persian Period has recently attracted considerable scholarly attention (e.g., Aston 1999a, 1999b; Aston und Aston 2010; Darnell 2000; Defernez 1998, 2009, 2011a, 2011b, 2012; Masson 2011; Colburn 2014). Securely identifying private monuments (e.g., tombs, stelae, coffins, statuary) from Dynasty 27, as opposed to Saite or post-Persian, remains problematic (Aston 1999a; Josephson 1997: 10-14; Bareš 2013). The best preserved sites are on the fringes of Egypt: Kharga Oasis to the west, and numerous forts in northern Sinai to the east (e.g., Valbelle and Defernez 1995).

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- Figure 1. Carefully erased cartouche of Amasis. White Monastery Church, Sohag. Photograph by the author.
Figure 2. Darius Cylinder, from Luxor (see Yoyotte 1952). British Museum 89.132. Photograph courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.
Figure 3. Wooden shrine. Darius I offering to Anubis and Isis. British Museum, EA 37496. Photograph courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.
Figure 4. Apis Stela of the General Amasis. Louvre IM 4017. (After Vercoutter 1962: pl. VIII.)
Figure 5. Egyptian officials wearing baggy tunics, wraparound robes, and distinctly Achaemenid jewelry. Brooklyn Museum, 37.353 (fig. 5a) and 71.139 (fig. 5b). Photographs courtesy of the Brooklyn Museum, Creative Commons.