



# POLITICAL MEMORY IN AND AFTER THE PERSIAN EMPIRE

Edited by  
Jason M. Silverman and  
Caroline Waerzeggers

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AFTER THE PERSIAN EMPIRE



Ancient Near East Monographs

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## ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations of the works and names of classical authors, of editions of ancient texts, and of reference works generally follow the conventions of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. The standard *siglum* for Old Persian royal inscriptions is by initial letter of the king's name, letter for the location, and lowercase letter for the order of its discovery; thus, DN<sub>a</sub> stands for Darius (I), Naqš-e Rostam, first inscription.

ÄA	Ägyptologische Abhandlungen
AB	Anchor Bible
ABC	A. K. Grayson, <i>Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles</i> . Toronto, 1975
AcIr	Acta Iranica
ADOG	Abhandlungen der deutschen Orientgesellschaft
AfO	<i>Archiv für Orientforschung</i>
AHB	<i>Ancient History Bulletin</i>
AJA	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
AJN	<i>American Journal of Numismatics</i>
AJPh	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
AJSL	<i>American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature</i>
AMI	<i>Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran und Turan</i>
AMIE	Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran Ergänzungs- band
AnOr	Analecta Orientalia
ANEM	Ancient Near East Monographs
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AoF	<i>Altorientalische Forschungen</i>
APF	<i>Archiv für Papyrusforschung</i>
APSP	<i>American Philosophical Society Proceedings</i>
ARTA	<i>Achaemenid Research on Texts and Archaeology</i>
ASAE	<i>Annales du service des antiquités de l'Égypte</i>



ASAW	Abhandlungen der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BAI	<i>Bulletin of the Asia Institute</i>
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BCHP	I. L. Finkel and R. J. van der Spek, <i>Babylonian Chronicles of the Hellenistic Period</i> . <a href="http://www.livius.org/sources/about/mesopotamian-chronicles/">http://www.livius.org/sources/about/mesopotamian-chronicles/</a>
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BBR	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BBSt	L. W. King, <i>Babylonian Boundary-Stones and Memorial-Tablets</i> . London, 1912
BCSMS	<i>Bulletin of the Canadian Society for Mesopotamian Studies</i>
BdÉ	Bibliothèque d'Études
BICS	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies</i>
BIFAO	<i>Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale</i>
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BJSUC	Biblical and Judaic Studies from the University of California
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament
BM	<i>siglum</i> of cuneiform tablets in the British Museum
BN	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
BNJ	<i>Brill's New Jacoby</i> . Edited by Ian Worthington. Leiden, 2006–
BO	<i>Bibliotheca Orientalis</i>
BSOAS	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CA	<i>Classical Antiquity</i>
CDAFI	<i>Cahiers de la Délégation Archéologique Française en Iran</i>
CDOG	Colloquien der deutschen Orientgesellschaft
CHANE	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East
ChrEg	<i>Chronique d'Égypte</i>
CIS	<i>Corpus inscriptionum semiticarum</i>
CJ	<i>The Classical Journal</i>
CLeO	Classica et Orientalia
CMG	<i>Corpus Medicorum Graecorum</i>

<i>Corp. paroem. gr.</i>	E. L. von Leutsch and F. G. Scheidewin, <i>Corpus Paroemiographorum Graecorum</i> . Göttingen, 1839–1859
COS	<i>The Context of Scripture</i> . Edited by W. W. Hallo. 3 vols. Leiden, 1997–
CQ	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
CR	<i>Classical Review</i>
CRAI	<i>Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres</i>
CT	<i>Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum</i> . London 1896–
CTMMA 2	I. Spar and W. G. Lambert, <i>Cuneiform Texts in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Vol. 2: Literary and Scholastic Texts of the First Millennium B.C.</i> New York, 2005
CW	<i>Classical World</i>
DCLS	Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies
EA	<i>Egyptian Archaeology</i>
EPRO	<i>Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'Empire romain</i>
GR	<i>Greece and Rome</i>
HBT	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HThKAT	Herders Theologisches Kommentar zum Alten Testament
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
IG <sup>3</sup> I	<i>Inscriptiones Atticae Euclidis anno anteriores. Fasc. 1. Decreta et tabulae magistratuum. Volumen I. Editio tertia</i> . Edited by David Lewis. Berlin, 1981
IOS	<i>Israel Oriental Studies</i>
<i>IrAnt</i>	<i>Iranica Antiqua</i>
JA	<i>Journal Asiatique</i>
JAAR	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
JAJSup	Journal of Ancient Judaism Supplement Series
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JCSMS	<i>Journal of the Canadian Society for Mesopotamian Studies</i>
JEA	<i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i>
JEOL	<i>Jaarbericht van het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Genootschap Ex Oriente Lux</i>
JHebS	<i>Journal of Hebrew Scriptures</i>

<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
<i>JJP</i>	<i>Journal of Juristic Papyrology</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JRA</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Archaeology</i>
<i>JRAS</i>	<i>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period</i>
<i>JSJS</i>	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>JSOTSup</i>	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
<i>JSPSup</i>	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series
<i>JSRC</i>	Jerusalem Studies in Religion and Culture
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
<i>JSSEA</i>	<i>Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities</i>
<i>JSSSup</i>	Journal of Semitic Studies Supplement Series
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>LBAT</i>	T. G. Pinches and J. N. Strassmaier, <i>Late Babylonian Astronomical and Related Texts</i> . Edited by A. J. Sachs. Brown University Studies 18. Providence, RI, 1955
<i>LCL</i>	Loeb Classical Library
<i>LGG</i>	<i>Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen</i> . Edited by Christian Leitz. Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 110–116, 129. 8 vols. Leuven, 2002–2003
<i>LGPN</i>	<i>Lexicon of Greek Personal Names</i> . Edited by P. M. Fraser and E. Matthews. Vols. 1–5a. Oxford, 1987–2010
<i>LHBOTS</i>	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
<i>LSJ</i>	Liddell, H. G., R. Scott, H. S. Jones, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> . 9th ed. with revised supplement. Oxford, 1996
<i>LSTS</i>	Library of Second Temple Studies
<i>MDAI</i>	<i>Mitteilungen des Deutschen archäologischen Instituts</i>
<i>MDAIK</i>	<i>Mitteilungen des Deutschen archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo</i>

MDP	<i>Mémoires de la Délégation en Perse</i>
Nbn.	<i>Inschriften von Nabonidus, König von Babylon</i> . J. N. Strassmaier. Babylonische Texte 1–4. Leipzig, 1889
NINO	Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version of the Bible
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
OBO SA	Orbis biblicus et orientalis. Series archeologica
OGIS	<i>Orientalis graeci inscriptiones selectae</i> . Edited by W. Dittenberger. 2 vols. Leipzig, 1903–1905
OIP	Oriental Institute Publications
OIS	Oriental Institute Seminars
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta
OLZ	<i>Orientalistische Literaturzeitung</i>
Or	<i>Orientalia</i> (NS)
PBA	<i>Proceedings of the British Academy</i>
PDÄ	Probleme der Ägyptologie
PEQ	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
PF	<i>siglum</i> of tablets of the Persepolis Fortification archive
PIHANS	Publications de l'Institut historique-archéologique néerlandais de Stamboul
PMMA	Publications of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Egyptian Expedition
RA	<i>Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale</i>
RBPH	<i>Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire</i>
RE	Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft
RÉA	<i>Revue des Études Anciennes</i>
REg	<i>Revue d'Égyptologie</i>
REG	<i>Revue des Études Grecques</i>
RevPhil	<i>Revue de philologie, de littérature et d'histoire anciennes</i>
RGRW	Religions in the Graeco-Roman World
RIMB	The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Babylonian Periods
RINAP	The Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period
RLA	<i>Reallexikon der Assyriologie</i> . Edited by Erich Ebeling et al. Berlin, 1928–
RT	<i>Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie</i>
SAA 8	H. Hunger, <i>Astrological Reports to Assyrian Kings</i> . State Archives of Assyria 8. Helsinki, 1992

SAOC	Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization
<i>Sardis</i> , VII, 1	<i>Sardis</i> , VII, 1: <i>Greek and Latin Inscriptions</i> . Edited by W. H. Buckler and D. M. Robinson. Leiden, 1932
SBLWAW	Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Ancient World
SCO	<i>Studi Classici e Orientali</i>
<i>SecCent</i>	<i>Second Century: A Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
SEG	Supplementum epigraphicum graecum
SJ	Studia Judaica
SNG Cop.	<i>Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum. The Royal Collection of Coins and Medals, Danish National Museum</i> . Copenhagen, 1942–1979
SNG von Aulock	<i>Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum. Sammlung Hans von Aulock</i> . Berlin, 1957–1968
SpTU	Spätbabylonische Texte aus Uruk
StudDem	Studia Demotica
TAM V 1–2	<i>Tituli Asiae Minoris. Volumen V: Tituli. Lydiae, linguis graeca et latina conscripti. Fasc. 1–2</i> . Edited by Peter Herrmann. Vienna, 1981, 1989
TCL 12	G. Contenau, <i>Contrats néo-babyloniens, vol. 1: De Téglath-Pileser III à Nabonide</i> . Textes cunéiformes du Musée du Louvre 12. Paris, 1927
TCS	Texts from Cuneiform Sources
Tod II	Marcus N. Tod, <i>A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions. Volume II</i> . Oxford, 1948
<i>Transeu</i>	<i>Transeuphratène</i>
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
Wb	<i>Wörterbuch der ägyptische Sprache</i> . 6 vols. Edited by Adolf Erman and Hermann Grapow. 4th ed. Berlin, 1982
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
WZKM	<i>Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes</i>
YBC	siglum of cuneiform tablets in Yale Babylonian Collection
YNER	Yale Near Eastern Researches
ZA	<i>Zeitschrift für Assyriologie</i>
ZÄS	<i>Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde</i>

ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZDPV	<i>Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i>
ZPE	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>



# ASSESSING PERSIAN KINGSHIP IN THE NEAR EAST: AN INTRODUCTION

Jason M. Silverman and Caroline Waerzeggers

This volume results from an international symposium of the same name held in Leiden, the Netherlands, on 18–20 June 2014. The symposium grew out of a recognition that the various disciplines which deal with Achaemenid hegemony offer starkly different assessments of Persian kingship. While Assyriologists treat Cyrus's heirs as legitimate successors of the Babylonian kings, biblical scholars often speak of a "kingless era" in which the priesthood took over the function of the Davidic monarch. Egyptologists see their land as uniquely independently minded despite conquests, while Hellenistic scholarship tends to evaluate the interface between Hellenism and native traditions without reference to the previous two centuries of Persian rule. This discrepancy prompted us to seek a broader context for assessing interactions with the experience of Persian kingship, and to discover how much these differing assessments were due to diversity within the empire and how much they were due to disciplinary assumptions.

The issue of Persian kingship in fact highlights how sequestered the various specialists who deal with the Achaemenid Empire often remain. Though the value of comparative perspectives for the Persian Empire and the ancient Near East more broadly is widely recognized,<sup>1</sup> real cross-pollination between the specializations is difficult. The symposium and this volume attempted to bring together in dialogue as broad an array of scholars as possible. A deliberate emphasis on representing the major sub-disciplines as well as more peripheral or less commonly discussed regions

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1. Especially thanks to the active effort at promoting integrative approaches to the Persian Empire by the *Achaemenid History* workshops (Leiden: NINO) and the conferences published in the *Persika* (Paris: de Boccard) and *Classica et Orientalia* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz) series.



and cultures guided the initial invitations and the call for papers. The fields of Assyriology, Egyptology, Iranology, Classics, and Biblical Studies were represented. It is to be regretted that despite our best efforts neither Eastern Iran nor India were able to be included, nor were the Arsacids. The structure of the three days of the conference was by geographical area, and this remains in the volume. We hope the variety here will encourage increased cooperative work within Achaemenid studies.

Kingship is as much cultural and social as it is political. In practical terms this means any interactions between rulers and the ruled must always negotiate historical and cultural legacies as much as expedencies of *realpolitik*. It follows from this that any assessment of the impact of a political system—in this case that of the Persian kings—requires both an understanding of previous systems and the resulting legacy among subsequent systems. While political allegiance or rebellion are of course important elements, the real impact on society is much broader. The questions we hoped to address therefore included such ones as how did recollection of past experiences of kingship inform positions vis-à-vis the reigning (and later the defunct) Persian monarchy? How did the experience of Persian kingship affect discourse on “native” kingship in the Hellenistic successor states? What were responses in terms of memory and the conceptualization of “ideal” kingship as it was informed by cultural expectations?

To provide a framework for these questions around Persian kingship we chose the anthropological concept of political memory. “Memory” carries important contemporary methodological and ethical implications, in terms of historiography and public commemoration.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, a few biblical scholars working in the “Persian Period” have already appealed to “memory” as a concept, mostly spearheaded by Ehud Ben Zvi and Diana V. Edelman. In these studies, the concern has largely been the texts of the Hebrew Bible, often with an eye towards questions of Judaeon identity.<sup>3</sup> Our concern in this book, however, is with “memory” as a concept

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2. See, e.g., Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (trans. K. Blamey and D. Pellauer; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

3. E.g., Ehud Ben Zvi, “On Social Memory and Identity Formation in Late Persian Yehud: A Historian’s Viewpoint with a Focus on Prophetic Literature, Chronicles, and the Deuteronomistic Historical Collection,” in *Texts, Contexts and Readings in Postexilic Literature: Explorations into Historiography and Identity Negotiation in Hebrew Bible and Related Texts* (ed. L. Jonker; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 95–148; Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin, eds., *Remembering and Forgetting in Early Second*

useful for social history. The idea of collective memory as a sociological concept is often credited to Halbwachs,<sup>4</sup> who closely linked group identity and collective memory. Memory is an important element in cultural identity, but its social implications cannot be restricted to identity per se.<sup>5</sup> More modern approaches to collective memory, which Barbara A. Misztal has called “dynamics of memory” approaches, rather emphasize the complex interactions between historical events, power ideologies, and social values represented in memory.<sup>6</sup> This means the past is indeed shaped by the needs of the present, but within the constraints of historical givens and a variety of social realities. For investigations into the Achaemenid Empire, therefore, social memory provides an angle to view long-term, dynamic interactions between the ancient cultures of the ancient Near East and their Persian overlords. These are not restricted merely to issues of “ethnicity” or instrumental politics—both of course important—but to the shaping of social values and worldviews as well, both present politics and the sort of politics deemed possible. Moreover, Paul Ricœur’s distinction between memories which are of singular events and those which are “paradigmatic” is particularly useful for this volume’s theme.<sup>7</sup> The import of political memory is not restricted to the recollection of particular events remembered for changing what is deemed normal, but also the memory of the very concept of what is typical or normative. The issue is, in this context, not merely one of historical reconstructions of single events, but how the past was used socially to shape society and its understanding of its past, in the past.

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*Temple Judah* (FAT 85; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012); Diana V. Edelman and Ehud Ben Zvi, eds., *Remembering Biblical Figures in the Late Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods: Social Memory and Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Diana V. Edelman and Ehud Ben Zvi, eds., *The City in Biblical Memory* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, forthcoming).

4. Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (trans. L. A. Coser; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1992); Jan Assmann and John Czaplicka, “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity,” *New German Critique* 65 (1995): 125; Barbara A. Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering* (Maidenhead: Open University, 2003), 51; Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 120; Anne Whitehead, *Memory: the New Critical Idiom* (London: Routledge, 2009), 123.

5. Though it is still closely linked in some scholarship, e.g., Assmann and Czaplicka, “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity.”

6. Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering*, 67–74.

7. Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 23.

This volume comprises revised presentations from the 2014 symposium plus an additional contribution by Melanie Wasmuth, this introduction, and an overall critical assessment by R. J. van der Spek, who was also present at the symposium. We regret that not all of the participants of the symposium were able to contribute to this publication, especially with the resulting loss of discussion of certain areas of the empire (sadly even the heartland itself), but we trust the ones collected here profitably explore the issues from a variety of perspectives.

The collection begins with a discussion of the Kingdom-cum-Satrapy of Lydia. Eduard Rung considers the notable lack of Lydian independence efforts through two topics; two early appointments by Cyrus the Great (Tabalus and Pactyes) and the early (and only attested) Lydian revolt by Pactyes. In his analysis, native elites were totally replaced from the Lydian administration following the revolt leading to the memory of Croesus's kingdom losing any local political effectiveness.

Björn Anderson discusses the problematic issue of Persian Arabia. Noting the difficulties in assessing Arabia as it existed under the Achaemenids, Anderson instead turns towards later memory of the Persians among the Nabatean elite. He sees the imperial artistic program of the Achaemenids recalled in several motifs and designs in Petra. Even in this much later era, he sees the Achaemenids as providing some of the tools whereby the new rulers could assert their claims to legitimacy.

Three contributors discuss memory within Babylonia. John P. Nielsen surveys how the reign of Nebuchadnezzar I played a role in elite Babylonia's engagement with the Persian rulers, in particular, his campaign against Elam. This memory was flexible enough to reflect their changing fortunes and perspectives, even as the role of Marduk grew through time. Geert de Breucker reads the Babylonian tradition of historiography as part of an elitist Babylonian attempt to define their identity in the wake of the loss of political independence. In a similar vein, Caroline Waerzeggers uses memory as a framework to offer a new interpretation of the *Nabonidus Chronicle* as a literary text about the past addressing concerns in a post-Persian, Hellenistic present.

The two periods of domination in Egypt are addressed by four scholars. Olaf E. Kaper presents new evidence for Petubasis III from the Dakhla Oasis, analyzing it as the background for Cambyses's "lost" army from Herodotus and as the reason for Darius I's intense interest in the Oasis. Květa Smoláriková discusses Udjahorresnet as a key mediator between the Egyptian past and the Persian present, with reference to the necropolis in

which he was buried. Melanie Wasmuth argues that the use of iconography evinces differing strategies of political representation between Egypt and the heartland under Darius I, and finds echoes of his strategy under Artaxerxes III. Colburn takes up the period of the second Persian domination, noting that much of the received memory of this period has been filtered through Ptolemaic eyes. He thus seeks to nuance the negative portrayal through discussion of the tomb of Petosiris.

Seth Bledsoe deals with the Aramaic literature found at Elephantine. He reads both the story and the proverbs in *Ahiqar*, which discuss the Assyrian king and kingship, in the context of a Persian military colony. He argues this provides evidence for some of these mercenaries' complex views on the Persian king.

Two contributors deal with the use of the Achaemenids in Hellenistic and Roman discourse. Benedikt Eckhardt analyzes four post-Achaemenid dynasties: the Fratarakā of Fars, Antiochus of Commagene, the Mithridatids of Pontus, and the Hasmoneans. He argues that while all four used constructions of Achaemenid policy as self-justifications, they were fabricated for their immediate usage rather than being surviving memories. Alesandr V. Makhlaiuk narrates the Roman inheritance of Greek Orientalizing perspectives on the Persians, and their myriad uses within Roman attempts at justification and self-definition.

Yehud's interaction with the Persians is the focus of five contributions. Ian Douglas Wilson reads the competing visions of kingship within the Hebrew Bible within an Achaemenid context: seeing at least three strands of thought vis-à-vis foreign (Persian) kings, amongst other debated perspectives. For him, this is not a matter of schools, but of debates within a narrow set of Yehud elites. Christine Mitchell reads Chronicles' depiction of kingship in the context of Darius I's model of kingship. Positing a connection with Aramaic scribal training, Mitchell finds thematic and terminological affinities between the visions of kingship found in both, though the two visions are not identical. Lisbeth Fried compares the intermarriage ban in Ezra-Nehemiah with the Law of Pericles in Athens to argue the reasons were primarily fiscal, and were imposed by the Persians to maintain monetary control. Kiyān Foroutan objects to recent attempts to read Neh 2 as evidence concerning Zoroastrianism, and instead focuses on what it says about Judaeon views on the Achaemenid kings. Jason M. Silverman argues that the development of Messianic expectations in later Second Temple Judaism reflects the influence of Persian ideas of kingship, rather than the ideology of the Iron Age monarchy.

The volume closes with a synthesis and evaluation of the symposium and this collection by van der Spek. He is particularly struck by the varied uses of memory, ones which defy a broad pattern due to the contingent nature of their deployment. The Persian Empire nevertheless has had a powerful impact on the course of history, and will continue to challenge scholarship.

Though this volume focuses on a seemingly narrow topic—the memory of Persian kingship—it traverses a rich terrain of material, and it highlights the benefits to more regional specializations of taking the broader imperial context seriously. We hope this volume will help spur on even more collaborative work on the Persian Empire.

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## THE END OF THE LYDIAN KINGDOM AND THE LYDIANS AFTER CROESUS\*

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The collapse of the Mermnad dynasty was final. Over the centuries no other Lydian dynasty appeared that sought to re-establish the Lydian kingdom, and there were no noble Lydians who intended to take control of Lydia again.<sup>1</sup> At first glance, this was due to the process of Persian colonization (and *Iranization*) of Lydia.<sup>2</sup> The Greek narrative is very scanty about native Lydians who were involved in the government of the Lydian satrapy. As we can judge from classical sources, all key offices were in the hands of the Median-Persian nobility. But why did this happen? The aim of this paper is to consider the transition from the Lydian kingdom to the Lydian satrapy. I will pay attention to two important aspects of this topic: (1) the

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1. The situation was unlike that in Caria, Lycia, Babylonia, Egypt and some other countries where the local elites participated with the Persians in the government of their own region. On Caria see, for example, Simon Hornblower, *Mausolus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982); Stephen Ruzicka, *Politics of a Persian Dynasty: The Hecatomnids in the Fourth Century B.C.* (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992). On Lycia, see Antony Keen, *Dynastic Lycia: A Political History of the Lycians and Their Relations with Foreign Powers, c. 545–362 B.C.* (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

2. On the Persian colonization of Lydia, see Nicholas Sekunda, “Achaemenid Colonization of Lydia,” *REA* 87 (1985): 7–30.

administration of Tabalus and Pactyes, and (2) the rebellion of Pactyes and its influence on Lydian history.

#### THE ADMINISTRATION OF TABALUS AND PACTYES IN LYDIA

Herodotus (1.153) says that after the conquest of the Lydian Kingdom, Cyrus the Great appointed two officials in Lydia: one was a Persian (Tabalus) and the other one a Lydian (Pactyes):

Presently, entrusting Sardis to a Persian called Tabalus, and instructing Pactyes, a Lydian, to take charge of the gold of Croesus and the Lydians, he himself marched away to Ecbatana.<sup>3</sup> (*Hist.* 1.153 [Godley, LCL])

Probably Pactyes was subordinate to Tabalus as we can infer from Herodotus's statement (1.154) that later he made the Lydians revolt against Tabalus and Cyrus. However, the Persian ethnicity of Tabalus in Herodotus's account raises some doubts. On the one hand, the name *Τάβαλος* does not occur again in Persian onomastics.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, some evi-

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3. Meanwhile, these events may be reported by the famous *Nabonidus Chronicle* (ABC 7 ii: 16), which, according to a recent reading by Robartus J. van der Spek ("Cyrus the Great, Exiles, and Foreign Gods: A Comparison of Assyrian and Persian Policies on Subject Nations," in *Extraction and Control: Studies in Honor of Matthew W. Stolper* [SAOC 68; ed. M. Kozuh et al.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014], 256 n. 184) states: "in the month iyyar (Cyrus) [mar]ched to Ly[dia]. He killed its king, he took its valuables (and) a garrison of his own he stationed in it! Afterwards he had his garrison and the royal treasury! (*bīt šarri*) in it." It may be very attractive to consider that the Persian garrison, mentioned by the chronicle, was commanded by Tabalus, and that Croesus's valuables and the royal treasury were supervised by Pactyes. But there is disagreement among specialists whether the Nabonidus Chronicle mentions Cyrus's conquest of Lydia at all; it has been suggested that the passage in question refers to the conquest of Urartu (Robert Rollinger, "The Median 'Empire, the End of Urartu and Cyrus the Great's Campaign in 547 B.C. [Nabonidus Chronicle ii.16]," *Ancient East and West* 7 [2008]: 51–65), though the collation by a group of Assyriologists reported by van der Spek, "Cyrus the Great," 256 (n. 184) seems to render Rollinger's proposal untenable. See also Xen., *Cyr.* 7.4.12.

4. Ferdinand Justi, *Iranisches Namenbuch* (Marburg: Elwert, 1895), 318 had no comments on the origin of this name. Jack M. Balcer, *A Prosopographical Study of the Ancient Persians Royal and Noble, c. 550–450 B.C.* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen, 1993), 66 completely accepts Herodotus's view of Tabalus as a Persian. Rüdiger Schmitt, *Iranisches Personennamenbuch*, vol. 5A: *Iranische Personennamen in der griechischen Literatur vor Alexander d. Gr.* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichische Akademie der Wis-



dence strongly suggests a Lydian origin of Τάβαλος. The country of Tabal was situated on the valley of the Halys river and is known from Assyrian sources of the first millennium B.C.E.<sup>5</sup> Τάβαλα was a Lydian town near the river Hermus, known from coins dating to the second and third centuries C.E.<sup>6</sup> There is an inscription from Lydia that refers to a dedication to Θεοῖς Ταβαλῆνοῖς (TAM V 1–2. 9.2). Another inscription reports of ἡ Ταβαλέων γερουσία (140/1 C.E.: TAM V 1–2. 194). Stephanus Byzantinus (s.v. Τάβαι)

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senschaften, 2011), 355 notes: “Iranische Herkunft des Namens ist trotz der ausdrücklichen Ethnos-Angabe schon wegen des -λ- recht unwahrscheinlich.” However, he does not conclude clearly that Tabalus was a Lydian. Alvin H. M. Stonecipher, *Graeco-Persian Names* (New York: American Book Company, 1918), 63 deduced the name of Τάβαλος from Ταβούλης, a name that does not occur in Greek sources but that could be composed perhaps of Old Persian *tavah* (“power”) and *\*ula* (“desire”). Roland G. Kent, *Old Persian: Grammar, Text, Lexicon* (New Haven, Conn.: American Oriental Society, 1950), 186 translates *tav-* as “be strong” and Rüdiger Schmitt, *Wörterbuch der altpersischen Königsinschriften* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2014), 252–53 refers to a verb *tav-* as “be strong/be able” (stark/imstande sein) and to an adjective *taviyah* as “stronger” (stärker). However, no known personal names in Old Persian derive from *tav-* (such names are absent in Justi, *Iranisches Namenbuch* and Manfred Mayerhofer, *Iranisches Personennamenbuch*, vol. 1: *Die altiranischen Namen* [Vienna: Verlag der Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1979]). However, it is proposed that the Elamite personal name *Tu-mamar-re-me-a* (PF 1829: 2–3) is a loanword from *\*Tavarēvaya-* (a hypocorism of *Tava-raiva*, “who he is strong and rich”), the Babylonian personal names *Tu-ū-tu<sub>4</sub>* (PF 85: 3) from *\*Tavāta-* (-āta- extension of *tav-*, “he is strong”) and *Tu-me-e-a* from *\*Tavaya* (-ya extension of *tav-*). An alternative might be to assume that a genuine Persian name *\*Tapara-* (“axe”, in New Persian *-tabār*, “origin”) was misreported, perhaps because of the influence of Anatolian names (Jan Tavernier, *Iranica in the Achaemenid Period (ca. 550–330 B.C.): Lexicon of Old Iranian Proper Names and Loanwords Attested in Non-Iranian Texts* [OLA 158; Leuven: Peeters, 2007], 322–23).

5. Assyrian Tabal, biblical Tubal, Greek Τιβαρηνοί: Trevor Bryce, *The Routledge Handbook of The Peoples and Places of Ancient Western Asia: The Near East from the Early Bronze Age to the Fall of the Persian Empire* (London: Routledge, 2009), 682–85.

6. SNG Cop. 563, 565, 566, 567; SNG von Aulock 566, 3190, 3192, 3193. William H. Buckler and David M. Robinson, “Greek Inscriptions from Sardes I,” *AJA* 16 (1912): 49–51 refer to the Lydian town of Τοβαλμουρα and consider its name as a compound “from the Semitic Tobal and the ending -moura, Tobal-moura.” The scholars further conclude: “The Tubal or Tobal (cf. Tobal-Cain) or Tabali of Assyrian inscriptions are identified with the Tibareni who lived beyond the Thermodon, on the southern shore of the Black Sea.... With the Tubal or Tobal might be connected not only Tobal-moura but also the Lydian Tabala ..., and the Persian name Tabalus” (these scholars accept that the name of Tabalus was Persian).



mentions also a city named Τάβαι in Lydia (Τάβαι, πόλις Λυδίας).<sup>7</sup> He gives different versions of the origin of the name of this city: Τάβαι was named after Τάβος, a local hero; the city was founded on the rocks and the Greeks translated τάβα as rock; its name comes from Ταβηγός the Argive (i.e., from the probable founder of the city). Finally, a woman Ταβαλίσ, who lived in Sardis, is also mentioned in one inscription (third–early fourth century C.E.).<sup>8</sup> It is interesting to note that the Greek suffix –αλ, which we find in the name of Τάβαλος, may be a Lydian genitive suffix –li and thereby may form the personal name *Tabalis* (originated from Τάβος/Tabas, the name of a local hero, or son of Τάβος/Tabas).<sup>9</sup>

As for Pactyes, his Lydian ethnicity is beyond doubt. People with the name Pactyes lived in Sardis, Iasos, Lagina, Mylasa, Idyma, according to the epigraphic record.<sup>10</sup> The inscription from Ephesus dated to ca. 340–320 B.C.E. (SEG 36 1011) records the punishment of citizens of Sardis

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7. Stephanus Byzantinus, s.v. Tabai: “Tabai, the town of Lydia. An oracle to the Pisidians says about it that ‘there was the famous free town of Tabai to be colonized.’ Apollonius in the ninth book [wrote] that ‘it was necessary to lead them in Tabai.’ It was named after Tabos. Tabos is a hero. Some people say that two brothers, Kabyras and Marsyas, founded the town of Kabyra and called it Taba because it was situated on rocks: the Greeks translate taba as rock. Others say that it was named after Tabenos the Argive.” Ladislav Zgusta, *Kleinasiatische Orstnamen* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1984), 592–95 has listed four neighbouring towns of Lydia which include *Tab-* in their names, Τάβα, Τάβαλα, Ταβαρνις, and Ταβειρα.

8. *Sardis*, VII, 1, 165: Ταβαλίσ κατοικοῦσα ἐν Σάρδεσι. LGPN V, 422 gives also a Lydian female name Τάβιλλα which probably also could well fit into this case.

9. Roberto Gusmani, *Lydisches Wörterbuch mit grammatischer Skizze und Inschriftensammlung* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1964), 35–36; John M. Kearns, “A Greek Genitive from Lydia,” *Glotta* 72 (1994): 5–14; Mark H. Munn, *The Mother of the Gods, Athens, and the Tyranny of Asia: A Study of Sovereignty in Ancient Religion* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2006), 123. Ladislav Zgusta, *Kleinasiatische Personennamen* (Prag: Verlag der Tschechoslowakischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1964), 481–82 finds the personal names on *Tab-* in Lycaonia: Τάβεις, Τάβιν, and Τάβης.

10. Ephesus: SEG 36 1011: Πακτύης τοῦ Καρουδος, Πακτύης τ[οῦ] Ἀτι[δ]ος, Πακτύης τοῦ Μάνεω. Iasos: Donald F. McCabe, *Iasos Inscriptions: Texts and List* (Princeton, N.J.: The Institute for Advanced Study, 1991), 195: Πακτύης Δάμω[νος—]. Lagina in Caria: SEG 35 1092, ca. 350 B.C.E.: Πακτύης Μάνεω. Mylasa: Tod II no. 138, ll. 32–50, 355/54 B.C.E.: Μάνιτα τοῦ Πακτώ ἐπιβουλεύσαντος Μαυσσώλλωι τῷ Ἑκατόμνω. See Wolfgang Blümel, “Einheimische Personennamen in griechischen Inschriften aus Karien,” *Epigraphica Anatolica* 20 (1992): 17; Zgusta, *Kleinasiatische Personennamen*, 403–4.

for sacrilege committed against Ephesian sacred envoys. The inscription mentions forty-six Sardians, often along with their profession and their fathers' and grandfathers' name.<sup>11</sup> The list includes some persons named Πακτύης. Another Pactyes was a ruler of Idyma and is mentioned in the Athenian Tribute Lists as Πακτύες Ἰδυμ[εύς] (IG<sup>3</sup> 1–2 260A. col.1.16; 262A. col. IV.20). Moreover, Manitas, son of Pactyes, plotted against Mausolus in 355 B.C.E. It is evident that the name Pactyes was common in Asia Minor.

Thus, both Tabalus and Pactyes, appointed by Cyrus as his officials at Sardis, were probably Lydians by descent. T. Cuyler Young considers this event as an example of Cyrus developing a policy of trust in conquered people and individuals in order to bring them into partnership in government with the Persians.<sup>12</sup> J. M. Balcer speaks of the administration of Sardis directed by Tabalus in the same way (suggesting that Tabalus was a satrap):<sup>13</sup>

The administration of the satrap Tabalos, consequently, continued the liberal policy of tolerance and conciliation, which Cyrus fostered among the other various ethnic groups within the rapidly emerging empire. Tabalos, therefore, directed a largely Lydian bureaucratic system from his acropolitian palace, in which the Lydian Paktyes directed the financial affairs of Sparda, affairs which Herodotus notes as “in charge of the gold of Croesus and the other Lydians.” (1.153)

Meanwhile, the exact titles of both functionaries in Herodotus's account are not determined at all. There are three alternative propositions in the

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11. Olivier Masson, “L’inscription d’Éphèse relative aux condamnés à mort de Sardes,” *REG* 100 (1987): 236; Kostas Vlassopoulos, *Greeks and Barbarians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 252; Elspeth R. M. Dusinberre, *Aspects of Empire in Achaemenid Sardis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 120–22; Dusinberre, *Empire, Authority, and Autonomy in Achaemenid Anatolia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 227–29.

12. Theodore Cuyler Young Jr., “The Early History of the Medes and the Persians and the Achaemenid Empire to the Death of Cambyses,” in *The Cambridge Ancient History Volume IV: Persia, Greece and the Western Mediterranean, c. 525–479 B.C.* (ed. J. Boardman et al.; 2nd ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 1–52 (35).

13. Jack M. Balcer, *Sparda by the Bitter Sea: Imperial Interaction in Western Anatolia* (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1984), 101.

literature for the exact position of Tabalus: (1) satrap of Sardis;<sup>14</sup> (2) governor of the city of Sardis;<sup>15</sup> (3) garrison commander in Sardis.<sup>16</sup>

However, Herodotus's phrasing here is ἐπιτρέψας τὰς μὲν Σάρδις Ταβάλῳ ἀνδρὶ Πέρσῃ. This supposes a title ἐπίτροπος for Tabalus. Therefore, in my opinion, there is no need to postulate that this word inevitably meant a satrap. In Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon we find that the verb ἐπιτρέπω is to be translated as "commit, entrust to another as trustee, guardian or viceregent," and the noun ἐπίτροπος means one to whom the charge of anything is entrusted, steward, trustee, administrator.<sup>17</sup> Herodotus uses ἐπίτροπος and its derivate words in several meanings, mostly to describe a trustee as well as a governor in the country or in a city,<sup>18</sup> and only once he speaks of Achaemenes, thereby possibly pointing

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14. Balcer, *Sparda by the Bitter Sea*, 101; David Asheri, Alan B. Lloyd and Aldo Corcella, *A Commentary on Herodotus Books I–IV* (ed. O. Murray and A. Moreno; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 181; Christopher J. Tuplin, "The Administration of the Achaemenid Empire," in *Coinage and Administration in the Athenian and Persian Empires* (ed. I. Carradice; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 114 n. 22; Dusinger, *Aspects of Empire in Achaemenid Sardis*, 35; Dusinger, *Empire, Authority, and Autonomy in Achaemenid Anatolia*, 43; Josef Wiesehöfer, "Greeks and Persians," in *A Companion to Archaic Greece* (ed. K. A. Raaflaub and H. van Wees; Oxford: Blackwell, 2009), 170–71.

15. Andrew B. Burn, *Persia and the Greeks: The Defence of the West, c. 546–478 B.C.* (repr.; Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1984), 45; Raphael Sealey, *A History of the Greek City States, ca. 700–338 B.C.* (Berkeley, Calif.: California University Press, 1976), 172; Young, "The Early History of the Medes and the Persians," 35. J. Miller, "Paktyes," *RE* 18.2 (1942): 2440 names Tabalus as the "Statthalter in Sardes".

16. Andrew B. Burn, "Persia and the Greeks," in *The Cambridge History of Iran* (ed. I. Gershevitch; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 2:293; Truesdell S. Brown, "Aristodicus of Cyme and the Branchidae," *AJPh* 99 (1978): 65; Simon Hornblower, *Mausolus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 150; Thierry Petit, *Satrapes et satrapies dans l'empire achéménide de Cyrus le Grand à Xerxès Ier* (Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres de l'Université de Liège 254; Paris: Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres," 1990), 35; Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire* (tr. P. T. Daniels; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 36, 66.

17. *LSJ* s.v. ἐπίτροπος; ἐπιτρέπω.

18. See ἐπιτρέπω (twenty-three occurrences in Herodotus). E.g., (1) 5.126: τὴν μὲν δὴ Μίλητον ἐπιτρέπει Πυθαγόρῃ ("[Aristagoras] accordingly entrusted Miletus to Pythagoras"); (2) 6.26: τὰ μὲν δὴ περὶ Ἑλλήσποντον ἔχοντα πρήγματα ἐπιτρέπει Βισάλτῃ Ἀπολλοφάνεος ("[Histiaeus of Miletus] leaving all matters concerning the Hellespont in charge of Bisaltes son of Apollophanus"); (3) 7.7: ἐπιτρέπει Ἀχαιμένει, ἀδελφεῷ μὲν ἑωυτοῦ, Δαρείου δὲ παιδί ("[Xerxes] handed it (Egypt) over to Achaemenes, his

to his function as satrap, as ἐπιτροπεύοντα Αἰγύπτου (7.7). However, a more usual Herodotean word for satrap was ὑπαρχος. The historian described Oroetes as ὑπὸ Κύρου κατασταθείς Σαρδίων ὑπαρχος (3.120) and regularly referred to Artaphernes, Darius's satrap of Sardis, as ὑπαρχος Σαρδίων (5.25, 73, 123; 6.1, 30, 42).

One cannot be sure that Tabalus was the first satrap of Sardis. Possibly, Tabalus in 545 B.C.E. governed the city of Sardis only, though it is impossible to be certain whether Tabalus had military functions as a garrison commander or only an administrative one.<sup>19</sup> Herodotus (1.154) says only that Pactyes marching to Sardis, penned Tabalus in the acropolis and besieged him there, but it is difficult to deduce anything about the exact position of Tabalus from this report.<sup>20</sup> I can clarify this question by relying on two propositions. On the one hand, the Lydian ethnicity of Tabalus may support the suggestion that he was of a lower rank than a satrap of

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own brother and Darius' son"); (4) 7.7: Ἀχαιμένεα μὲν νυν ἐπιτροπεύοντα Αἰγύπτου χρόνῳ μετέπειτα ἐφόνευσε Ἰνάρωσ ὁ Ψαμμητίχου ἀνὴρ Λίβυς ("while governing Egypt, this Achaemenes was at a later time slain by a Libyan, Inaros son of Psammetichus"). See ἐπίτροπος/ἐπιτροπαίη (twenty-one occurrences in Herodotus). E.g., (1) 3.27: ἐκάλεε τοὺς ἐπιτρόπους τῆς Μέμφιος ("[Cambyzus] summoned the rulers of Memphis"); (2) 3.142: τῆς δὲ Σάμου Μαιάνδριος ὁ Μαιανδρίου εἶχε τὸ κράτος, ἐπιτροπαίην παρὰ Πολυκράτεος λαβὼν τὴν ἀρχήν ("now Samos was ruled by Maeandrius, son of Maeandrius, who had authority delegated by Polycrates"); (3) 5.30: τῆς δὲ Μιλήτου ἐτύγχανε ἐπίτροπος ἔων Ἀρισταγόρης ὁ Μολπαγόρεω ("now it chanced that the deputy ruling Miletus was Aristagoras son of Molpagoras"); (4) 5.106: Ἰστιαῖε, ἐπίτροπον ... τῷ σὺ Μίλητον ἐπέτρεψας ("Histiaeus ... the viceregent whom you put in charge of Miletus"); (5) 7.62: Μεγάπανον τὸν Βαβυλῶνος ὕστερον τούτων ἐπιτροπεύσαντα ("Megapanus who was afterwards the governor of Babylon"); (6) 7.170: Ὁ δὲ Μίκυθος ... ἐπίτροπος Ῥηγίου κατελέλειπτο ("Micythus ... had been left in charge of Rhegium"); (7) 8.127: τὴν δὲ πόλιν παραδίδοι Κριτοβούλῳ Τορωναίῳ ἐπιτροπεύειν ("[Artabazus] delivered their city [Olynthus] over to the charge of Critobulus of Torone").

19. Dusinberre, *Empire, Authority, and Autonomy in Achaemenid Anatolia*, 43 notes that Tabalus "directed an administration that apparently included many Lydians." Petit, *Satrapes et satrapies*, 35 equated the office of Tabalus to *phourachos* since he later defended the acropolis of Sardis against Pactyes. Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 36, 66 considered that Tabalus was the garrison commander, responsible directly to the king and not to the satrap.

20. Xenophon (*Cyr.* 7.4.12) says that Cyrus, leaving behind a large garrison of foot soldiers, started from Sardis in company with Croesus; and he took with him many wagons loaded with valuables of every sort. So, the historian confirms that there was a Persian garrison in Sardis. But the name of the garrison commander is missing and nothing suggests that it was Tabalus.

Sardis. On the other hand, one needs to remember that the verb ἐπιτρέπω, as well as the noun ἐπίτροπος, in most cases cited by Herodotus, referred to the individuals who played administrative roles. Thus, Tabalus was probably the official who headed the administration of Sardis, having Pactyes as his subordinate financial officer.

The position of Pactyes also deserves our attention. Herodotus (1.153) states that Pactyes took charge of the gold of Croesus and the Lydians (τὸν δὲ χρυσὸν τὸν τε Κροίσου καὶ τὸν τῶν ἄλλων Λυδῶν Πακτύη ἀνδρὶ Λυδῶ κομίζειν). The word κομίζειν is treated controversially in the literature. Some scholars postulate that Pactyes had been ordered by Cyrus to transport the riches of Croesus and the Lydians to Babylon or Ecbatana;<sup>21</sup> but, as Pierre Briant notes, the term κομίζειν used by Herodotus may also refer to the action of “looking after” as well as “transporting,” since Pactyes remained in Sardis after Cyrus left.<sup>22</sup>

Pierre Briant and some other scholars propose that at Sardis the Lydian Pactyes was entrusted with levying tribute,<sup>23</sup> but Herodotus does not say so clearly. Diodorus (9.33.4) reports that Cyrus took the possessions of the inhabitants of Sardis for the Royal Treasury, and this report may clarify Herodotus’s note (1.153) that Pactyes took charge of the gold of Croesus and the Lydians (but not only Croesus’s treasure). These accounts enable us to conclude that Pactyes was appointed treasurer in Sardis by Cyrus under the governor Tabalus.<sup>24</sup> One can propose that Pactyes was a

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21. Gerold Walser, *Hellas und Iran: Studien zu den griechisch-persischen Beziehungen vor Alexander* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 1984), 13; Pierre Debord, *L’Asie Mineure au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle (412–323 a.C.): Pouvoirs et jeux politiques* (Bordeaux: Ausonius, 1999), 168. Xenophon in *Cyropaedia* (7.4.12) reports that Cyrus, after the capture of Sardis, set out many wagons full of every kind of treasure to transport them elsewhere (possibly Babylon). There is a possibility that Pactyes indeed was instructed by Cyrus to collect the treasure and then to transport it to one of the Persian capitals.

22. Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 882.

23. Ibid., 70, 80; Lisbeth S. Fried, *The Priest and the Great King: Temple-Palace Relations in the Persian Empire* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 118; Matthew W. Waters, *Ancient Persia: A Concise History of the Achaemenid Empire, 550–330 BCE* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 41.

24. Pactyes was appointed by Cyrus a treasurer in Sardis, guardian of the state treasury (Muhammad A. Dandamayev, *A Political History of the Achaemenid Empire* [Leiden: Brill, 1989], 28; Maria Brosius, *The Persians: An Introduction* [New York: Routledge, 2006], 11, 47).

financial official in the Achaemenid Empire, known by the title of *ταμίης*/ *θησαυροφύλαξ* in Greek and of *\*ganzabara* in Old Persian.<sup>25</sup>

The fact that Cyrus appointed some Lydian officials in Sardis after the conquest of Lydia enables us to make some important observations. Firstly, we are not forced to separate an administrative from a financial system in Lydia since one Persian official had another as his subordinate. Secondly, the appointments of Tabalus and Pactyes demonstrate that the Achaemenid policy of cooperation with the local elites was conducted for the first time in the territory of the former Lydian Kingdom immediately after its conquest by Cyrus (as it would later happen in Babylonia, Egypt, and other conquered countries). This last conclusion is supported by Herodotus's own report. The historian (1.155) reflects the Persian political propaganda while telling a story of conversations between Cyrus and Croesus on the possible punishment of the Lydians.

So, according to Cyrus, he handed the city over to the Lydians themselves (*αὐτοῖσι δὲ Λυδοῖσι τὴν πόλιν παρέδωκα*), and, according to Croesus, Pactyes was a wrongdoer in whose charge the King left Sardis (*Πακτύης γάρ ἐστι ὁ ἀδικέων, τῷ σὺ ἐπέτρεψας Σάρδεις*). But this information actually intends to present Pactyes (not Tabalus) as governor of Sardis<sup>26</sup> and the Lydians as autonomous under Persian rule. As we can infer from the fact of their promotion to administrative posts, both persons, Tabalus and Pactyes, might have been considered by Cyrus the Great as loyal philo-Persian Lydians. Why was Herodotus misled about Tabalus's descent? We can only speculate on this subject. One may admit that the historian was influenced by a local Lydian tradition presenting the conflict in Lydia in the time of Cyrus as one between the Persians and the Lydians only, not among the Lydians themselves. This tradition may have reflected on an erroneous belief that one of the leaders of the conflicting parties at Sardis was a Persian (Tabalus), the other one a Lydian (Pactyes).

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25. The Persian financial administration has been well investigated in the literature. A brief overview of the title of *\*ganzabara* is provided by Matthew W. Stolper, "Ganzabara," *Encyclopaedia Iranica* 10.3 (2000): 286–89. On *\*ganzabara*- see Tavernier, *Iranica in the Achaemenid Period*, 422–23; Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 428–29. Some Latin and Greek translations of treasurer/*\*ganzabara*- are *arcis et regiae pecuniae custos* (Curt. 5.1.20); *θησαυροφύλαξ* (Diod. Sic. 19.17.3; 18.1); *ταμίης* (Diod. Sic. 14.81.6); *γαζοφύλαξ* (Joseph, *A.J.* 6.390; 11.11, 13, 14, 92, 119; 13, 429; 20.194; 15.408); see also *γαζοφυλακεῖον* = treasury (Diod. Sic. 9.12.2; Joseph, *A.J.* 11.119, 126).

26. See Brown, "Aristodicus of Cyme," 65, who states that Pactyes was appointed by Cyrus as head of the civic administration.



## PACTYES'S REBELLION IN LYDIA AND ITS AFTERMATH

Herodotus's description of Pactyes's rebellion (1.154) is briefer than his detailed explanation of Pactyes's attempts to get a refuge for himself in some Greek cities of Asia Minor (1.157–161). Herodotus (1.154) describes Pactyes's rebellion as follows:

But no sooner had Cyrus marched away from Sardis than Pactyes made the Lydians revolt from Tabalus and Cyrus; and he went down to the sea, where, as he had all the gold of Sardis, he hired soldiers and persuaded the men of the coast to join his undertaking. Then, marching to Sardis, he penned Tabalus in the acropolis and besieged him there. (*Hist.* 1.154 [Godley, LCL])

Thus, Herodotus evidently represents Pactyes as the leader of the revolt of the Lydians: Pactyes made the Lydians revolt against Tabalus and Cyrus (τοὺς Λυδοὺς ἀπέστησε ὁ Πακτύης ἀπὸ τε Ταβάλου καὶ Κύρου) (1.154). From the historian's report it is also clear that Cyrus blamed the Lydians for the revolt (1.155):

It seems that the Lydians will never stop making trouble for me and for themselves. It occurs to me that it may be best to make slaves of them; for it seems I have acted like one who slays the father and spares the children. (*Hist.* 1.155 [Godley, LCL])

Finally, according to Herodotus (1.157), Mazares the Mede came to Sardis with the section that he had of Cyrus's army and found Pactyes's followers no longer there (οὐκ εὔρε ἔτι ἐόντας τοὺς ἀμφὶ Πακτύην ἐν Σάρδισι). Certainly, Pactyes's followers from among the Lydians were not very numerous. That is why Pactyes immediately sought to obtain the Greeks' support. Besides, Pactyes and some other noble Lydians could have resisted not only the Persians but also Tabalus's supporters who had remained loyal to the Persians and gathered at Sardis's acropolis.

Herodotus stresses several of Pactyes's actions during the rebellion: (1) he hired soldiers (ἐπικούρους τε ἐμισθοῦτο);<sup>27</sup> (2) he persuaded the men of the coast to join his undertaking (τοὺς ἐπιθαλασσίους ἀνθρώπους ἔπειθε

27. The word ἐπικούροι seems to have been related to the mercenaries. See Her-mipp. F. 63.18 (Kock I. 243): ἀπὸ δ' Ἀρκαδίας ἐπικούρους. Matthew F. Trundle, *Greek Mercenaries: From the Late Archaic Period to Alexander* (London: Routledge, 2004),

σὺν ἑωυτῷ στρατεύεσθαι);<sup>28</sup> (3) marching to Sardis, he penned Tabalus in the acropolis and besieged him there (ἐλάσας δὲ ἐπὶ τὰς Σάρδεις ἐπολιόρκει Τάβαλον ἀπεργγμένον ἐν τῇ ἀκροπόλει). Generally, the historian describes Pactyes's forces as including two groups of soldiers: mercenaries and troops from coastal cities. Both groups of soldiers may have included the Greeks from those cities that later provided Pactyes with refuge.

Herodotus (1.161) stresses that after Pactyes had been surrendered by the Chians to the Persians, Mazares led his army against those who had helped to besiege Tabalus (ἐστρατεύετο ἐπὶ τοὺς συμπολιορκήσαντας Τάβαλον), enslaved the people of Priene, and overran the plain of the Maeandrus, giving it, as well as Magnesia, to his army for pillaging. It is not reported what happened to Tabalus in the aftermath of Pactyes's rebellion.

Meanwhile, Pausanias (7.2.10) records an episode in which the people of Priene suffered much at the hands of Tabutus the Persian (Πριηνεῖς μὲν δὴ ὑπὸ Ταβούτου τε τοῦ Πέρσου ... κακωθέντες). There is no other Tabutus known from the sources.<sup>29</sup> That is why one may need to emendate the name of Τάβουτος into the name of Τάβαλος. This emendation is the most likely for historical reasons. Herodotus (1.161) confirms that the Prienians were attacked by the Persians because of their participation in the besiegement of Tabalus in Sardis; this was a good pretext for Tabalus's punishment of Priene. Anyway, Tabalus probably safely escaped the siege in Sardis, and joined Mazares's campaign against Pactyes.

13, notes: "The earliest of the terms used of mercenary infantry was *epikouros*. *Epikouros*, literally fighter-alongside, might be a helper, a companion or an assistant."

28. The term *ἐπιθαλάσσιοι ἄνθρωποι* might have related not only to the citizens of the Greeks of Asia Minor, but also to the non-Greek population of the Asian coastline. A number of ancient authors speak of prominent Persians as commanders or satraps of the coastal peoples and regions of Asia. Herodotus uses this definition three times: στρατηγὸς τῶν παραθαλασσίων ἀνδρῶν (Otanēs: 5.25); τῶν δ' ἐπιθαλασσίων τῶν ἐν τῇ Ἀσίῃ ἄρχει πάντων (Artaphernes: 5.30); στρατηγὸς δὲ τῶν παραθαλασσίων ἀνθρώπων τῶν ἐν τῇ Ἀσίῃ (Hydarnēs: 7.135). The reference here will be to people in Western Asia Minor, and the terms in question can also be linked with an Old Persian phrase occurring in the royal inscriptions (*dahyāva*) *tayai drayahyā*—"the people who are on/ by the sea" (DPe § 2L; DSe § 4I; XPh § 3Q).

29. The name of Τάβουτος does not occur in the Persian prosopography at all; see, for example, Justi, *Iranisches Namenbuch*; Balcer, *A Prosopographical Study of the Ancient Persians*; Schmitt, *Iranisches Personennamenbuch*. Surely this name might have been corrupted.



The defeat of Pactyes changed the administrative system of Lydia. The Lydians probably were removed from the key posts in the Lydian administration and replaced by Persians.<sup>30</sup> At that time, Oroetes was appointed satrap of Lydia by Cyrus and governed it until the reign of Darius I.<sup>31</sup> There are only a few references in the sources to Lydians after Pactyes's rebellion. Diodorus (10.16.4) probably reports about the flight of Pactyes's followers from Lydia to Samos:

Certain Lydians, who were fleeing from the domineering rule of the satrap Oroetes, took ship to Samos, bringing with them many possessions, and became suppliants of Polycrates. And at first he received them kindly, but after a little time he put them all to the sword and confiscated their possessions. (Diod. Sic. 10.16.4 [Oldfather, LCL])

This episode may suggest that Oroetes became satrap immediately after the defeat of Pactyes. Herodotus (3.122) however leads us to conclude that some noble Lydians still could work in the administration of Oroetes. Myrsus, son of Gyges, a Lydian from the Mermnad line, was sent by Oroetes as envoy to Polycrates of Samos (*Hist.* 3.122) and later was killed in the battle fought against the rebellious Ionians (*Hist.* 5.121). Both the name and the patronymic of Myrsus were prominent in Lydian history. The father of the Lydian king Candaules was a certain Myrsus (*Hist.* 1.7), and the founder of the Mermnad dynasty was named Gyges.

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30. See Arrian I.17.5: Σαρδιανούς δὲ καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους Λυδοὺς τοῖς νόμοις τε τοῖς πάλαι Λυδῶν χρῆσθαι ἔδωκεν καὶ ἐλευθέρους εἶναι ἀφῆκεν. It is uncertain from this report if Alexander has retained the autonomy of the Lydians under the Persians or re-established autonomy after they had lost it to the Persians. Ernst Badian, "Alexander the Great and the Greeks of Asia," in *Ancient Society and Institutions: Studies Presented to Victor Ehrenberg* (ed. E. Badian: Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), 37–69 (44) interpreted this passage as that the Lydians had never lost their ancient laws under Persian administration. Alan B. Bosworth, *A Historical Commentary on Arrian's History of Alexander*, vol. 1: *Books I–III* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 129 more convincingly argued that "Alexander presumably wished to represent himself as the polar opposite of the Persian conquerors and therefore promised to restore the customs abolished by Cyrus." I am most grateful to Professor R. J. van der Spek (VU University Amsterdam) who has attracted my attention to this passage from Arrian.

31. On Oroetes, see especially K. Fiehn, "Oroites," *RE* 18.1 (1939): 1143; Peter Vargyas, "Darius and Oroites," *AHB* 14 (2000): 155–61; Pierre Briant, "Oroites," *Der Neue Pauly* 9 (2000): 48.

Herodotus relates the changes in the lifestyle of the Lydians due to Croesus's advice given to Cyrus in the time of Pactyes's rebellion. Croesus advised Cyrus to prohibit Lydians from possessing weapons of war and instead to wear tunics under their cloaks and knee-boots on their feet. Croesus also recommended teaching the Lydians's sons the lyre, singing, dancing and shop-keeping. Thereby, according to Croesus, they would quickly become women instead of men. Cyrus was pleased by this counsel. He said he would follow Croesus's advice. After having called Mazares, the Mede, he ordered him to give to the Lydians the commands that Croesus had advised.

There are some reasons to consider this Herodotean story unreliable. (1) Croesus's presence at Cyrus's royal court as well as Croesus's role as Cyrus's wise councilor probably reflect a novelistic tradition and might be placed among other similar stories in Herodotus's work (the meeting between Croesus and Solon; the wondrous saving of Croesus on the pyre).<sup>32</sup> (2) Lydians were reputed for their luxurious life-style and for their songs and lyre-playing long before the Persian conquest of Lydia;<sup>33</sup> thus, Herodotus's story may reflect the traditional Greek perception of Lydians.<sup>34</sup>

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32. The topic of Croesus at Cyrus's royal court has a historical as well as a literary aspect. From the historical viewpoint, scholars discuss whether Croesus indeed survived after the fall of Sardis in 546 B.C.E. Some historians prefer to credit Herodotus that Croesus has become the prisoner of war of Cyrus, but others refer to Bacchylides's poem (Ode 3) and the Nabonidus Chronicle (*ABC* 7, ii: 16) as indicating Croesus's death (on the evaluation of the evidence see, for example, Jack Cargill, "The Nabonidus Chronicle and the Fall of Lydia," *American Journal of Ancient History* 2 [1977]: 97–116; Stephanie West, "Croesus' Second Reprieve and Other Tales of the Persian Court," *CQ* 53 [2003]: 416–37). Recently, R. J. van der Spek, "Cyrus the Great, Exiles, and Foreign Gods," 256 n. 184 concluded that the *Nabonidus Chronicle* more certainly reports that Cyrus executed Croesus. The literary aspect deals with the treatment of Croesus by Herodotus (see, for example: Christopher Pelling, "Educating Croesus: Talking and Learning in Herodotus' Lydian *Logos*," *CA* 25 [2006]: 141–77).

33. On the Lydian contribution to the music culture of the Near East in the Pre-Persian period, see John C. Franklin, "A Feat of Music: The Greco-Lydian Musical Movement on the Assyrian Periphery," in *Anatolian Interfaces: Hittites, Greeks and Their Neighbors* (ed. B. J. Collins, M. Bachvarova, and I. Rutherford; Oxford: Oxbow, 2007), 193–203.

34. Christoph Michels, "Cyrus' II Campaigns against the Medes and the Lydians," in *Herodot und das Persische Weltreich/Herodotus and the Persian Empire* (ed. R. Rollinger, B. Truschnegg and J. Wiesehöfer; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011), 699 rightly stresses that Lydians's new style of life is the opposite of the Lydian culture presented

(3) Croesus's advice is hard to be implemented on the whole Lydian population in the manner described by Herodotus (1.157):

Mazares the Mede, when he came to Sardis ... first of all compelled the Lydians to carry out Cyrus's commands; and by his order they changed their whole way of life. (*Hist.* 1.157 [Godley, LCL])

Of course, Herodotus's belief that it was possible for all the people of the country to change their whole way of life by those orders looks very naïve. (4) There is some evidence that the Lydians formed troops under the leadership of Persian commanders, which clearly contradicts Herodotus's statement that all Lydian men had been disarmed by Mazares's orders.

The source hints at the Lydians' involvement in Persian military activity in the fifth and fourth century B.C.E. Herodotus (7.27–30, 38–39) reports that Pythius, son of Atys, the richest of the Lydians (possibly from the Mermnad line also),<sup>35</sup> who had sponsored Xerxes's expedition against Greece, requested this Persian King to exempt his five sons from military service in return for his hospitality. Herodotus (7.74) also considers that the Lydians who were included in the invasion force of Xerxes in 480 B.C.E. were armored most similarly to the Greeks and were commanded by Artaphernes the son of Artaphernes (though the archeological evidence supposes that Lydian equipment was unlike Greek and similar to Persian equipment in some details).<sup>36</sup>

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by Herodotus (1.79) who states that no other people of Asia was “more valiant or warlike than the Lydians”; but this stands in contrast to the earliest Greek comments on Lydian culture which show that the military might of the Lydians was closely linked to an image of luxury and decadence. On the perception of the Lydians in Archaic Greece, see Leslie Kurke, “The politics of ἀβροσύνη in Archaic Greece,” *CA* 11 (1992): 91–120; Christoph Michels, “Königliche Geschenke aus Lydien,” in *Tryphe und Kultritual im archaischen Kleinasien—Ex oriente luxuria?* (ed. L.-M. Günther; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012), 74–76; Elizabeth P. Baughan, *Couched in Death: Klinai and Identity in Anatolia and Beyond* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 2013), 220–22. The sources on Greek perception of Lydian customs in the pre-Persian period have been collected by John G. Pedley, *Ancient Literary Sources on Sardis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), 42–45.

35. Sian Lewis, “Who Is Pythius the Lydian? A Note on Herodotus 7.27–39,” *Histos* 2 (1998): 185–91 argues for Mermnad ancestry of Pythius (he may be seen as the grandson of Croesus).

36. Margaret Miller, “Cloth and Identity: The Case of Greeks of Ionia c. 400 B.C.,” *Antichthon* 47 (2013): 18–38 (22) notes that “a stele from Salihli just east of Sardis

The Lydians were mobilized by the Persians also during the Peloponnesian War. So, according to Xenophon's *Hellenica* (1.2.4), the Athenian *strategus* Thrasyllus invaded Lydia in 409 B.C.E. and burned many villages, and seized money, slaves, and other booty in great quantities. The Persian commander Stagus successfully repelled this Athenian raid into Lydian territory (*Hell.* 1.2.5). It is unclear only whether Stagus's army included Lydians. But, when Thrasyllus was going to attack Ephesus, Tissaphernes raised a large army and sent out horsemen to carry word to everybody to rally at Ephesus for the protection of Artemis (*Hell.* 1. 2.6: εἰς Ἐφεσον βοηθεῖν τῇ Ἀρτέμιδι). This call evidently was addressed to those inhabitants of Lydia who worshiped Ephesian Artemis as the goddess Anaitis. A fragment of the Oxyrhynchus Historian records that the people from the Kilbian plain (ἐ[ν τῷ Κιλ]βί[ω] πεδίω κατοικοῦντων) participated in the defense of Ephesus (*Hellenica Oxyrhynchia* 1). Strabo (13.4.13) says that the Kilbian plain (Κιλβιανὸν πεδίον) in Lydia lies between the Mesogis and the Tmolus mounts. So, surely, the soldiers from the Kilbian plain included Lydians.<sup>37</sup>

## CONCLUSION

To summarize my observations on the period of transition from the Lydian Kingdom to the Lydian satrapy: On the one hand, the government of Lydia was originally headed by native Lydians, Tabalus, and Pactyes. This was in accordance with the Persian policy of including native aristocrats into the power structures of the recently conquered countries, a policy that had been initiated by Cyrus the Great. This policy was also conducted in other regions of Asia Minor (Caria, Lycia, Cilicia, Paphlagonia) and elsewhere in the Near East (in Judah-Palestine, Egypt, Babylonia). But the Lydian experiment evidently came first and proved unsuccessful for the Persians. As a result, Lydia went under the direct rule of satraps, generals, and their subordinate officials who evidently were Median or Persian by descent.

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shows a warrior with Lydian equipment (including a crested helmet) riding a Persian horse (with the characteristic knotted tail, rectilinear riding cloth, mane, Persian headstall)." For this image, see Christopher H. Roosevelt, *The Archeology of Lydia, from Gyges to Alexander* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 162, fig. 6.27.

37. Sekunda, "Achaemenid colonization of Lydia," 14 considered that the soldiers from the Kilbian plain were the Persian colonists.

No Lydian personal names that occur in the narrative sources and inscriptions of the fifth and fourth century B.C.E. have been found identifying the people of the administration of Lydia: they all had Persian names.

However, the revolt of Pactyes shows that at least some noble Lydians refused to collaborate with the Persians and instead decided to struggle for the independence of their country. This may have been a reflection of their political memory as well as nostalgia for the glorious past of Lydia. It is unknown whether the Lydians once again attempted to liberate themselves from Persian rule after the defeat of Pactyes (though the events of the revolt do not clearly prove that the Lydians intended to restore the Lydian kingdom as well). As a result, it could be argued that the memory of Lydia's political independence ceased to be a significant factor in the Lydian consciousness and many people in Greece and Persia remembered the Lydian kingdom only as the realm of Croesus. This was mainly due to the noninvolvement of the Lydians in the governance of the Lydian satrapy.

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## PERSIAN MEMORIES AND THE PROGRAMMATIC NATURE OF NABATAEAN FUNERARY ARCHITECTURE\*

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The Achaemenid Persian Empire, at its greatest extent, stretched from modern-day Afghanistan to Egypt. It was a vast empire composed of numerous subject lands, among which was Arabâya, or Arabia. The nature and extent of Persian rule in Arabia remains unclear, however. While there are clues in Herodotus and the Persian royal inscriptions as to how Arabia may have fit into the Achaemenid administrative structure, these sources seem to be at odds with one another and raise more questions than they answer. Furthermore, there is considerable inconsistency regarding who the Arabians were and where Arabia was located; Arabâya and the Arabian Peninsula were not one and the same. This makes it very difficult to measure any sort of cultural impact that the Empire may have had on the Arabians, and the archaeological record is nearly silent. However, post-Achaemenid Arabia is much more accessible, and the Nabataean kingdom centered at Petra in Jordan boasts several important connections to royal Persian art. In this paper, I will explore the degree to which these Nabataean monuments may give insight into the way that Persia may have been remembered by the Arabians and will address the continued relevancy of Persia in the centuries after its decline.

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## SOURCES AND THEIR PROBLEMS

According to both Greek and Persian Sources, Arabia was included in the administrative structure of the Achaemenid Empire.<sup>1</sup> Herodotus is particularly descriptive about Arabia in his *Histories*, and indeed has a certain fascination with the strange and exciting people, animals, and practices rumored there.<sup>2</sup>

Xenophon also offers a few important notes in the *Anabasis* and the *Cyropaedia*, including the appointment of a Persian satrap in Arabia and the observation that Arabia borders the Euphrates river, but it is Herodotus who is the most expansive in his coverage of the Arabians.<sup>3</sup> Amongst his observations on Achaemenid satrapal tribute, Herodotus twice mentions the Arabians, first noting that the Arabians enjoyed a tax-exempt status, then stating that they “gifted” the king a staggering one thousand talents (!) of frankincense annually.

## Herodotus

In the course of listing the Achaemenid Empire’s regular silver tribute (3.89–96), Herodotus outlines the fifth satrapy, which includes “all of Phoenicia, Palestinian Syria, and Cyprus,” being careful to note that he is “always omitting the Arabians, who were not subject to tax” (3.91, tr.

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1. For a full discussion of the sources, both Greek and Persian, that document Achaemenid Arabia, see Björn Anderson, “Lines in the Sand: Horizons of Real and Imagined Power in Persian Arabia,” in *The Art of Empire in Achaemenid Persia: Festschrift in Honor of Margaret Cool Root* (ed. E. R. M. Dusinberre and M. Garrison; Leiden: NINO, Forthcoming). See also David F. Graf, “Arabia during Achaemenid Times,” in *Centre and Periphery* (ed. H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg and A. Kuhrt; Achaemenid History 4; Leiden: NINO, 1990), 131–48, Ernst A. Knauf, “The Persian Administration in Arabia,” *Transeu* 2 (1990): 201–17, Israel Eph’al, *The Ancient Arabs: Nomads on the Borders of the Fertile Crescent, Ninth–Fifth Centuries B.C.* (Jerusalem: Magnes, Hebrew University, 1982), 206–10, Lester L. Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period*, vol 1: *Yehud: A History of the Persian Province of Judah* (LSTS 47; London: T & T Clark, 2004), 163.

2. E.g., *Hist.* 3.107, which describes the flying snakes that attack those who attempt to gather frankincense.

3. The Persian satrap’s name is Megabyzus (*Cyr.* 8.6.7). In *Anab.* 1.5.5, Xenophon notes that he “marched through Arabia, keeping the Euphrates on the right.”

Grene).<sup>4</sup> Herodotus follows his account of the regular silver tribute with a description of “irregular” taxation, which he frames as gifts. Thus the Colchians render one hundred boys and girls each year; the Ethiopians gift the king gold, ebony, boys, and elephant tusks; the Indians render gold. Importantly, he includes the Arabians in this list, stating that, “The Arabians contributed a thousand talents of frankincense every year. These, then, were the gifts that these peoples to the King, apart from the tribute” (3.97, tr. Grene). Apparently, the Arabians were simultaneously exempted from taxation and yet offered a thousand talents of frankincense on an annual basis as a gift.<sup>5</sup>

The “thousand talents” is surely a fantasy. Even if Herodotus’s account were otherwise trustworthy, a question considered below, the annual gifting of some 25,000 kilos of frankincense would be completely impossible. Yet the account is probably correct on a very simple point: the Arabians did produce and transport frankincense, and some of this must have somehow arrived at Persepolis. Luxury aromatics were highly valued commodities in the ancient world, and the wealth of the incense trade was considerable.<sup>6</sup> Frankincense, *boswellia sacra*, has a very limited habitat, produced only in (modern) Yemen and Somalia. Already in the Neo-Babylonian period the control of the overland trade route linking Yemen to the ports and roads of the Mediterranean coast was seen as crucial, and probably contributed to Nabonidus’s residency at the Arabian oasis of

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4. Herodotus, *The History* (trans. David Grene; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

5. These gifts were surely not freewill offerings. There is no reason to assume that they were anything but honorific and ceremonial taxes, although it remains questionable whether they ever really existed.

6. Indeed, the legendary wealth of Nabataea (see Strabo, *Geog.* 16.4.21–26) resulted from its control of the incense routes from south Arabia. For overview and discussion of the incense trade, see Nigel Groom, *Frankincense and Myrrh: A Study of the Arabian Incense Trade* (London: Longman, 1981); Alessandro de Maigret, “The Frankincense Road from Najran to Ma’an: a Hypothetical Itinerary,” in *Profumi d’Arabia: Atti del Convegno* (ed. A. Avanzini; Rome: “L’Erma” di Bretschneider, 1997), 315–32; G. W. Van Beek, “Frankincense and Myrrh,” *BA* 23(1960): 70–95; Z. al-Salameen, “Frankincense and the Nabataeans: Historical and Archaeological Evidence,” *Journal of King Saud University* 21(2009): 1–6; Juris Zarins, “Persia and Dhofar: Aspects of Iron Age International Politics and Trade,” in *Crossing Boundaries and Linking Horizons: Studies in Honor of Michael C. Astour on His 80th Birthday* (ed. G. D. Young et al.; Bethesda: CDL, 1997), 637–39.

Taymā ca. 553–543 B.C.E.<sup>7</sup> Even if the landscape of Arabia was remote and difficult to access, the wealth that passed through it nevertheless invested it with considerable strategic importance. Thus the “thousand talents” gives a motive, at the very least, for Achaemenid involvement in the Arabian Peninsula.

On the basis of Herodotus’s treatment of Arabian taxation, Graf has proposed that there were actually two distinct Arabian populations: the northern Qedarites and the southern Hagarites.<sup>8</sup> This resolves the question of differential tax status, as the Hagarites would likely have been involved in the incense trade whereas the Qedarites, perhaps serving as agents of the king (desert police, if you will) were exempted from taxation so long as they maintained order on the frontier. However, it should be noted that Herodotus’s account of Persia has come under increasing fire in the past few decades. Scholars have rightly identified the problems in verifying his source material as well as the inherent biases and assumptions that color his account.<sup>9</sup> The presentation of the Persian tax structure in *Hist.* 3.89–96 differs sharply from the organizational structure of the Persian *dahyāva* lists, discussed below, lists which Jacobs claims to represent the true administrative divisions of the empire.<sup>10</sup> The current consensus is that

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7. The reasons for Nabonidus’s stay at Taymā remain unclear, although it is suggested that exerting control over the lucrative trade routes may have been as important, if not more so, as the religious reforms outlined in *The Verse Account of Nabonidus*. G. Bawden, et al., “The Archaeological Resources of Ancient Tayma: Preliminary Investigations at Tayma,” *Atlat* 4 (1980): 71–72.

8. Graf, “Arabia during Achaemenid Times,” 138–39.

9. For summary discussion of Herodotus as a source on Persia, see Robert Rollinger, “Herodotus,” *Encyclopedia Iranica* 12 (2004): 275–27, also Bruno Jacobs, “Die altpersischen Länder-Listen und Herodots sogenannte Satrapienliste (Historien III 89–94): Eine Gegenüberstellung und ein Überblick über die jüngere Forschung,” in *Altertumswissenschaften im Dialog: Festschrift für Wolfram Nagel zur Vollendung des 80. Lebensjahres* (AOAT 306; ed. R. Dittmann et al.; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2003), 301–43; Bruno Jacobs, “Achaemenid Satrapies: The Administrative Units of the Achaemenid Empire,” *Encyclopedia Iranica* Online, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/achaemenid-satrapies>; Margaret Cool Root, “Defining the Divine in Achaemenid Persian Kingship: The View from Bisitun,” in *Every Inch a King: Comparative Studies on Kings and Kingship in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds* (ed. L. Mitchell and C. Melville; Leiden: Brill, 2013), 24–25.

10. Jacobs, “Achaemenid Satrapies,” n.p.; Jacobs, *Die Satrapienverwaltung im Perserreich zur Zeit Darius’ III.* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1994), 166–68; cf. Jacobs, “Die altpersischen Länder-Listen,” 323–32; Jacobs, “‘Freie’ Völker im Achämenidenreich:

attempts to reconcile the Herodotean account with actual Persian practice are largely futile, and that the *Histories* rather represent the imagined Persia of the Greek mind, intermixing diverse source material, including rumors and invention. The taxation summary may therefore have little bearing on actual organizational practice.<sup>11</sup> Thus even if Graf's assessment is probably a correct reading of the Herodotean account, as it makes the most sense of the discrepancies within the *Histories*, it may be just that; there is no Persian evidence that attests to such a division.

### Persian Sources

There are no comparable Persian sources to Herodotus, neither in substance nor style; however the royal Achaemenid lists of the *dahyāva*, or subject lands, regularly include Arabia (Arabāya) amongst the territories claimed by the king.<sup>12</sup> These lists are included in larger dedicatory or commemorative inscriptions, and form part of the king's overall claim to legitimacy, following statements of Ahuramazda's favor and lists of distinguished ancestors. They are therefore certainly ceremonial and ideologically charged. Even so, the ordering of the *dahyāva* in the lists seems to reveal an underlying structural arrangement, which Jacobs has argued represents the satrapal divisions and subdivisions of the empire.<sup>13</sup>

The subject lands are also represented in the Achaemenid visual corpus, personified in sculpted relief as visitors to the king or bearers of

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Zu einem Topos in der antiken Überlieferung zur persischen Reichsverwaltung," in *I. Uluslararası Kilikia Arkeolojisi Sempozyumu Bildirileri* (Olba 2; ed. S. Durugönül and M. Durukan; Mersin: Kilikia Arkeolojisi Araştırma Yayınları, 1999), 41–55; cf. Michael Roaf, "The Subject Peoples on the Base of the Statue of Darius," *CDAFI* 4 (1974): 78.

11. In addition to the unreliability of Herodotus's source material (see n. 9 above), it must also be emphasized that his portrait of Arabia is characterized by the sorts of fantasies about desert landscapes that are frequently encountered in classical literature. For discussion, see Anderson, "Lines in the Sand."

12. Darius's inscription at Bisitun (DB) is a good example of these *dahyāva* lists. Rüdiger Schmitt, *Die altpersischen Inschriften der Achaimeniden: Editio minor mit deutscher Übersetzung* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2009), 102. For discussion of these lists, see esp. Jacobs, "Achaemenid Satrapies," n.p.; Jacobs, *Die Satrapienverwaltung*, 166–68; cf. Jacobs, "Die altpersischen Länder-Listen," 323–32; Jacobs, "Freie Völker im Achämenidenreich," 41–55; cf. Roaf, "The Subject Peoples," 78.

13. Jacobs, "Achaemenid Satrapies," n.p.

his dais. Where these *dahyāva* can be securely identified by accompanying inscriptions, as is the case with the tomb of Artaxerxes III at Persepolis and the base of the statue of Darius from Susa, Arabians are included.<sup>14</sup> The Persepolis Fortification Tablets illustrate that the inclusion of Arabia was not solely ceremonial; seven texts mention Arabians: there were servant boys, workmen, and two groups of travelers who “went to the King.”<sup>15</sup>

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14. Many of the rich sculptured ceremonial reliefs that decorate the jambs and staircases of Persepolis depict personifications of the *dahyāva*, and the Arabians were doubtless among the file of figures bearing gifts to the king. The reliefs at Persepolis do not have associated labels that identify the figures, but both the tomb of Darius I at Naqš-e Rostam and the tomb of Artaxerxes III at Persepolis have inscriptions which specify the identities of the bearers of the Great King's dais. Unfortunately, the inscription (DNe) on Darius's tomb is damaged and incomplete, lacking several of the identifying labels, and “Arabia” is not preserved there. Only the tomb of Artaxerxes III bears a completely preserved identification (A<sup>3</sup>Pb) of the subject peoples. DNe: Schmitt, *Die altpersischen Inschriften*, 112–14; A<sup>3</sup>Pb, 198–99. On the base of the statue of Darius from Susa, the Arabians are those whose cartouche reads “HGR” in Egyptian hieroglyphs. For discussion of the statue and its inscriptions, see Jean Yoyotte, “The Egyptian Statue of Darius,” in *The Palace of Darius at Susa: The Great Royal Residence of Achaemenid Persia* (ed. J. Perrot; London: Tauris, 2013), 262–71; Jean Yoyotte, “Peoples and Countries of the Empire,” in *The Palace of Darius at Susa: The Great Royal Residence of Achaemenid Persia* (ed. J. Perrot; London: Tauris, 2013), 272–79. Peter Calmeyer, “Ägyptischer Stil und reichsachaimenidische Inhalte auf dem Sockel der Dareios-Statue aus Susa/Heliopolis,” in *Asia Minor and Egypt: Old Cultures in a New Empire* (ed. H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg and A. Kuhrt; Achaemenid History 6; Leiden: NINO, 1991), 285–303; Heinz Luschey, “Die Darius-Statuen aus Susa und ihre Rekonstruktion. Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran Ergänzungsband 10,” in *Kunst, Kultur und Geschichte der Achämenidenzeit und ihr Fortleben* (ed. H. Koch and D. MacKenzie; Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1983), 191–206; Sharokh Razmjou, “Assessing the Damage: Notes on the Life and Demise of the Statue of Darius from Susa,” in *Medes and Persians: Reflections on Elusive Empires* (ed. M. Root; Ars Orientalis 32; Washington, DC: Freer Gallery of Art, 2002), 85; Jean Yoyotte, “Une statue de Darius découverte à Suse: Les Inscriptions Hiéroglyphiques. Darius et L'Égypte,” *JA* 260 (1972): 252–66; Michael Roaf, “The Subject Peoples on the Base of the Statue of Darius,” 135–36; Colburn, “Art of the Achaemenid Empire, and Art in the Achaemenid Empire,” in *Critical Approaches to Ancient Near Eastern Art* (ed. B. A. Brown and M. H. Feldman; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014), 784–88; Colburn, “The Archaeology of Achaemenid Rule in Egypt” (Ph.D. diss., The University of Michigan, 2014), 245–52; Margaret Cool Root, *The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art* (AcIr 19; Leiden: Brill, 1979), 68–72.

15. PF 1439, PF 1477, PF 1507, and PF 1534 record the two groups of Arabian envoys (Hallock, *Persepolis Fortification Tablets* [Chicago: University of Chicago

That Arabia was squarely a part of the Achaemenid Empire is thus clear, both in the King's eye and in the everyday interactions of the Empire.

### Locating Arabia

While the general point that Arabia was a part of the Achaemenid Empire seems therefore secure, there is significant inconsistency within and between the sources when it comes to specifics. The tax status of the Arabians is, as discussed above, at best confusing and at worst fabrication. But there is an even more fundamental problem: the location and extent of Arabāya are uncertain. It is unclear just what the Persians meant when they used this term, and the assumption that it corresponded with the entirety of the Arabian Peninsula does not stand up to scrutiny. Indeed, the contemporary understanding of the location of Arabia moved around quite a bit throughout antiquity; textual sources ranging from the Neo-Assyrian period into the Byzantine period reveal an Arabia diversely engaged and fluidly defined. Sometimes Arabia was in Syria, sometimes in the Negev, sometimes in the Arabian Peninsula. The *ʿarab* were likewise inconsistently described; at times the name was used for (varying) specific groups inhabiting specific places or sharing specific cultural or ethnic traits, and at times it was much more generally applied to desert dwellers or nomads.<sup>16</sup>

By and large, the Arabia of Persian experience seems to have been the Arabia which immediately neighbored the more populous territories of the Empire: Jordan, Syria, the Negev desert, and southern Iraq.<sup>17</sup> This

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Press, 1969], 405, 415, 422, 429). PF 1011 (Hallock, *Persepolis Fortification Tablets*, 293) mentions 11 Arabian servant boys. Pfa, PFa 17, and PFa 29 (Hallock, "Selected Fortification Texts," *CDAFI* 8 [1978]: 122, 127–30) document an Arabian workforce.

16. Jan Retsö, *The Arabs in Antiquity: Their History from the Assyrians to the Umayyads* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003), 579, has argued that there were at least eleven differently defined "Arabias" in the ancient literary corpus. For discussion of the *ʿarab* and the general problems connecting them with the Arabians, see Eph'al, *Ancient Arabs*, 4–9, 192–214; Jan Retsö, "The Earliest Arabs," *Orientalia Suecana* 37–39 (1989/90): 131–39; Retsö, *The Arabs in Antiquity*, 578–83; cf. David F. Graf, "The Origin of the Nabataeans," *Aram* 2 (1990): 45–75; David F. Graf, "Arabia during Achaemenid Times," 137–38; Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs: From the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam* (London: Routledge, 2001), 8.

17. Maka (Old Persian m-c-i-y-a) was a separate satrapy, and seems to have included Oman and the northern coast of the Arabian Peninsula; it was not a part



can be traced to a limited degree in the sources. Xenophon mentions that it bordered the Euphrates to the south (*Anab.* 1.5.5); Herodotus mentions “Arabia, not far from Egypt” (*Hist.* 2.11). The Persians appear to have had some presence within the Arabian Peninsula as well, but it is difficult to determine the extent. A Lihyanite inscription from Dedan (near Taymā) may bear witness to an official Achaemenid presence in the Arabian heartland: the inscription is dated “at the time Gušam bin Šahr and of ‘Abd, *fh*t of Dedan, *br*’[y...]”<sup>18</sup> The word *fh*t is most likely a variation of the Aramaic *ph*t (“governor”).<sup>19</sup> The inscription has been dated to the Achaemenid period, and given the specialized terminology of the title, it likely represents an outsider, possibly a Persian tasked with overseeing the frankincense trade. If this were indeed the case, such an official would certainly have been accompanied by a retinue as well as a contingent of troops, giving some exposure to Achaemenid dress, ceremony, language, and practice. This “governor” would also likely have been compelled by necessity to work with local nomadic agents who knew the locations of wells and were able to operate in the desert environment.<sup>20</sup>

This brief summary of the evidence related to Achaemenid Arabia raises four main points. First, Arabia was a definitely part of the Achaemenid Empire, and there is evidence attesting to both Arabians in Persia and Persians in Arabia. Second, the written sources that reference Arabia are the product of specific programmatic (in the case of the Persian royal

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of Persian Arabāya. For discussion, see Daniel L. Potts, *The Arabian Gulf in Antiquity Volume I: From Prehistory to the Fall of the Achaemenid Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 393–400.

18. The full text is *nrrn/bn/hḏrw/tqt/b’y m/gśm/bn/šhr/w’bd/fhṭ/ddn/b-r’[y PN mlk lhyn]*. Translation from Knauf, “Persian Administration in Arabia,” 205. F. V. Winnett and W. H. Reed, *Ancient Records from North Arabia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 116 n.17; Eph’al, *Ancient Arabs*, 204 n.691; Grabbe, *History of the Jews and Judaism*, 1:163.

19. Another inscription from Taymā may also reference this governor, although the attribution is disputed because of the fragmentary nature of the text. See Knauf, “Persian Administration in Arabia,” 210–11, Grabbe, *History of the Jews and Judaism*, 1:163.

20. There have been several proposals for how this interaction would have worked, see Anderson, “Lines in the Sand”; Eph’al, *Ancient Arabs*, 204; Knauf, “Persian Administration in Arabia,” 202; John Bartlett, “From Edomites to Nabataeans: The Problem of Continuity,” *Aram* 2 (1990): 29–30; Graf, “Origin of the Nabataeans”; Graf, “Arabia during Achaemenid Times,” 144–45; Grabbe, *History of the Jews and Judaism*, 1:163.

inscriptions) and literary (in the case of Herodotus) agendas, and often contradict one another. Third, there was considerable fluidity in regard to the location and identity of the Arabians, and the sources which reference them are likely, in fact, to be discussing several (sometimes unrelated) groups.<sup>21</sup> Fourth, there is almost no information from Arabia itself that can assist in assessing the cultural impact of Persian interaction within Arabia during the Achaemenid period; at best it can be argued that some small contingents of Arabian administrators took up residence at key oases in order to oversee the overland trade route.

For these reasons, it is simply impossible to make more than cursory (and probably errant) judgments about how the Arabians of the Achaemenid period responded to Persia and Persianness. The evidence is insufficient, and what we have is suspect. However, post-Achaemenid north Arabia (especially Jordan) is rich in material and visual culture, and may offer some important perspective on how the empire was remembered in subsequent centuries. The Kingdom of Nabataea, centered at Petra in southern Jordan, boasts a particularly intriguing connection to Persia, for not only do the tombs and monuments at the site show the persistence of Achaemenid forms and symbols, but they also suggest the continuity of certain thematic priorities that characterized Achaemenid art.

#### NABATAEAN ART AND THE ACHAEMENID LEGACY

The formative process that led to the emergence of Nabataea is the subject of considerable debate. Most likely it was the result of the integration of nomadic tribes or confederacies (such as the Qedarites) with the sedentary remnant of Edom, perhaps the result of a local power vacuum that occurred following Alexander's conquest of Persia.<sup>22</sup> Most of the remains

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21. Strabo (*Geog.* 16.4.24–26), for example, divides the Arabians into several local groups on the basis of information gathered during the campaign of Aelius Gallus in 25 B.C.E. For discussion of Strabo and his portrayal of Gallus's campaign, see Björn Anderson, "Double-Crossing Jordan: Strabo's Portrait of Syllaeus and the Imagining of Nabataea," *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* 10 (2009): 391–97.

22. For discussion of Nabataean origins, see Bartlett, "The Problem of Continuity," 25–34; John Bartlett, "From Edomites to Nabataeans: A Study in Continuity," *PEQ* 111 (1979): 52–66; Peter J. Parr, "The Origins and Emergence of the Nabataeans," in *Petra Rediscovered: Lost City of the Nabataeans* (ed. G. Markoe; New York: Abrams, 2003), 27–36; Jan Retsö, "Nabataean Origins, Once Again," *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 29 (1999): 115–18; Graf, "Origin of the Nabataeans," 45–75;

from Petra date to the Roman or Byzantine periods, although recent work has uncovered hints of Hellenistic occupation.<sup>23</sup> But, as early as 312 B.C.E., they are described in connection with the campaign of Antigonos I Monophthalmus, who “desired to make a campaign against the land of the Arabs who are called Nabataeans.”<sup>24</sup> If this is reliable, then it shows that the Nabataeans had begun to emerge and coalesce concurrently with the collapse of Persian power, although the account of Diodorus Siculus (writing in the first century B.C.E.) may conflate his earlier source material with the contemporary political setting.<sup>25</sup> It is certainly possible that Diodorus added the clarifying τῶν Ἀράβων τῶν καλουμένων Ναβαταίων in order to link the account to his broader discussion of Nabataea. Further references to the Nabataeans occur sporadically in the second and early first centuries B.C.E., but it is not until the reign of Augustus that more substantial discussion of the Nabataeans is encountered, in the writings of Diodorus, Strabo, and (still later, but drawing on sources from the Augustan age) Josephus.<sup>26</sup>

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Ernst Knauf, “Nabataean Origins,” in *Arabian Studies in Honor of Mahmoud Ghul: Symposium at Yarmouk University, December 8–11, 1984* (ed. M. Ibrahim; Weisbaden: Harrassowitz, 1989), 56–61; Józef T. Milik, “Origines des Nabatéens,” *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan I* (1982): 261–65.

23. For an overview of Hellenistic Petra, see David F. Graf, “Petra and the Nabataeans in the Early Hellenistic Period: the Literary and Archaeological Evidence,” in *Men on the Rocks. The Formation of Nabataean Petra* (ed. S. G. Schmid and M. Mouton; Berlin: Logos, 2013), 35–56.

24. Diodorus Siculus, *Bibl.* 19.94

25. Diodorus’s *Bibliotheca Historica*, written sometime between 36 and 30 B.C.E., is a sweeping universal history. Diodorus freely epitomizes a number of now-lost sources, including (for Arabia) the account of Hieronymus of Cardia, a contemporary of the Diadochoi who wrote an account of the Seleucid campaign against the Nabataeans in 312 B.C.E. For a critical discussion of Hieronymus’s agenda, see A. B. Bosworth, *The Legacy of Alexander: Politics, Warfare, and Propaganda Under the Successors* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 187–209.

26. Diod., *Bibl.* 19.94, Strab., *Geog.* 16.4.21–26. The Nabataeans are likely referenced in the book of 2 Maccabees, where in 168/7 B.C.E. Jonathan was accused before a certain Aretas, tyrant of the Arabs. An inscription dated ca. 150 B.C.E. names Aretas מלך נבטו as a crowned king. This name reoccurs with three later Nabataean kings. The inscription’s date is disputed, however, and it may instead refer to Aretas II. The inscription is published in A. Cowley, “The Wilderness of Zin,” in *Palestine Exploration Fund Annual (1914–1915)* (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1914–1915), 145–46; for discussion see Jean Starcky, “The Nabataeans: A Historical Sketch,” *BA* 18 (1955): 89; Jean Cantineau, *Le Nabatéen II* (Paris: Librairie Ernest Leroux, 1932),

Nabataea was a nominally independent kingdom that controlled much of the trade in frankincense and myrrh, growing wealthy as a result. Increasing Roman involvement in the eastern Mediterranean, during the first centuries B.C.E. and C.E. drew in the Nabataean kings, who vied variously with Herod and his successors as well as the Romans themselves. The uneasy relationship with Rome was ultimately terminated in 106, when Trajan annexed Arabia into the Roman provincial structure.<sup>27</sup> In the meantime, Petra experienced a boom in construction from around 30 B.C.E. through the middle of the first century C.E., the reigns of Obodas III (r. 30–9 B.C.E.) and Aretas IV (r. 9/8 B.C.E.–40 C.E.). The rock-cut tombs mainly date to this period, and are the most celebrated and recognizable remains at Petra.<sup>28</sup> Several temples, a monumental pool and garden complex, a colonnaded street, and other urban features were also constructed, although continuing Roman activity at the site makes it difficult to securely

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43–44; Ya'akov Meshorer, *Nabataean Coins* (Jerusalem: Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1975), 2 n.4.

The sources are then silent until ca. 100 B.C.E., when Aretas II (r. ca. 120–196 B.C.E.) emerges in the historical and numismatic record (cf. *CIS* II.349, which commemorates a statue to “Rabbel, son of Aretas”). Aretas II is attested in Josephus (*Ant.* 33.360) in conjunction with the affairs of the Hasmonean ruler Alexander Janneus, and may have been responsible for raids into Syria, depending on the interpretation of “Erotimus, king of the Arabs” in Justin’s epitome of Pompeius Trogus (39.5.5f). For the historical background of early Nabataea, see Starcky, “The Nabataeans: A Historical Sketch,” 84–108; Jean Starcky, “Petra et les Nabatéens,” in *Un royaume aux confins du désert: Pétra et la Nabatène* (ed. F. Baratte; Lyon: Muséum de Lyon, 1979), 13–26; Jean Starcky, “Pétra et la Nabatène,” *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible* 7 (1966): col. 886–1017. The Nabataeans also figure frequently in the works of Josephus, writing a century later but epitomizing earlier works, especially that of Nicolaus of Damascus. For discussion of Strabo, Diodorus, and Josephus in relation to the Nabataeans, see Björn Anderson, “Double-Crossing Jordan,” 391–397; Björn Anderson, “Achaemenid Arabia: A Landscape-Oriented Model of Cultural Interaction,” in *The World of Ancient Persia* (ed. J. Curtis and S. Simpson; London: I. B. Tauris, 2010), 445–55.

27. On the history of the Nabataean kingdom during the Roman period, see Glen W. Bowersock, *Roman Arabia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983).

28. On the chronology of the tombs, see most recently Lucy Wadeson, “Nabataean Façade Tombs: A New Chronology,” *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* 11 (2013): 507–28; Lucy Wadeson, “The Development of Funerary Architecture at Petra: the Case of the Façade Tombs,” in *Men on the Rocks: The Formation of Nabataean Petra* (ed. M. Mouton and S. G. Schmid; Berlin: Logos, 2013), 167–88; Lucy Wadeson, “The Chronology of the Façade Tombs at Petra: A Structural and Metrical Analysis,” *Levant* 42 (2010): 48–69.

separate the Nabataean from the Roman, and certainly many structures continued to be used and modified after the annexation.<sup>29</sup>

The great majority of the tombs are decorated with some variation of the merlon or crenelation, a highly charged Achaemenid visual motif. Rosettes, another powerful symbol in royal Persian art, are also frequently seen in Nabataea.<sup>30</sup> Crenelations and/or rosettes grace hundreds of tombs at Petra as well as dozens of tombs at Meda'in Saleh in Saudi Arabia. And this repetition is crucial, for it suggests that the Nabataeans used these symbols programmatically, as part of a coordinated visual agenda echoing their use in Persepolis.

The chronological gap between the construction of the tombs at Petra and the fall of Persepolis, some three hundred years, may seem prohibitive to this claim, but it should be seen in the wider context of Near Eastern art. Numerous motifs persisted for hundreds, even thousands, of years and

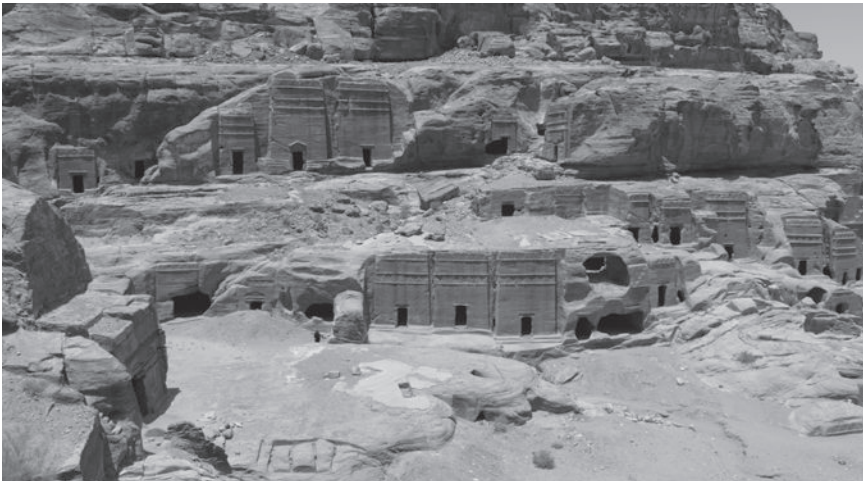


Figure 1: Crenelated tombs near Petra's city center. Photograph by author.

29. Most of the monuments at Petra have evidence of Roman reuse or modification. For an overview, see N. Fiema, "Roman Petra (A.D. 106–363): A Neglected Subject," *ZDPV* 119 (2003): 47–49.

30. On the significance of rosettes and crenelations on Nabataean tombs, see Björn Anderson, "Imperial Legacies, Local Identities: References to Royal Achaemenid Iconography on Crenelated Nabataean Tombs," in *Medes and Persians: Elusive Contexts of Elusive Empires* (ed. M. Root; *Ars Orientalis* 32; Ann Arbor, Mich. University of Michigan, 2002), 163–206.

were often consciously revived. Bull horns as symbols of power and divinity are attested as early as the late Neolithic period and continued in use into the first millennium B.C.E., as did common features such as heraldically posed felines, flowering plants, fantastic or composite creatures, etc. The Persians themselves actively mined Assyrian and Egyptian prototypes (as seen, for example, at Bisitun, as Margaret Root has noted), and at Naqsh-e Rostam they carefully situated their tombs in a space already charged with Old Elamite reliefs.<sup>31</sup> Accessing and recasting the powerful legacies of past empires is an important part of the overall Near Eastern visual narrative, and the decorative scheme of Nabataean tombs is but another example of this deep-seated tradition.<sup>32</sup> Iran remained an important power during the Parthian period, and the monuments of the Achaemenid Empire, even in ruined state, were still visible and evocative reminders of past authority and grandeur.<sup>33</sup>

The Persian legacy was accessible to the Nabataeans, but to what degree was it intelligible? I suggest that the answer may lie in the mass deployment of the crenelation, a highly charged symbol in the Achae-

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31. Root, *King and Kingship*, 202–22; cf. Margaret Cool Root, “Imperial Ideology in Achaemenid Persian Art: Transforming the Mesopotamian Legacy,” *BCSMS* 35 (2000): 19–27; Root, “Defining the Divine in Achaemenid Persian Kingship,” 45. On the Elamite relief, see Margaret Cool Root, “Art and Archaeology of the Achaemenid Empire,” in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East* (ed. J. Sasson; New York: Scribner, 1995), 4:2626.

32. This phenomenon is not restricted to the Near East, of course. The persistent revival of the Doryphoros pose or the *anastole* of Alexander are but a few examples from Roman art, and myriad later kings modeled their portraits on Roman precedents—cf. the equestrian portrait of Charlemagne at the Louvre, the doors and column at St. Michael’s church at Hildesheim, or the so-called Cross of Lothair of Lotharingia. cf. Björn Anderson, “Constructing Nabataea: Identity, Ideology, and Connectivity” (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2005), 193–94, Anderson, “Imperial Legacies, Local Identities,” 190.

33. On the visibility of Achaemenid monuments and Alexander’s destruction of Persepolis, see especially Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg, “Alexander and Persepolis,” in *Alexander the Great: Reality and Myth* (ed. J. Carlsen et al.; Rome: “L’Erma” di Bretschneider, 1993), 177–88; Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg, “Introduction,” in *Through Travellers’ Eyes: European travellers on the Iranian monuments* (ed. H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg and J. M. Drijvers; Achaemenid History 7; Leiden: NINO, 1991), 3; Josef Wiesehöfer, *Ancient Persia from 550 BC to 650 AD* (trans. A. Azodi; London: I. B. Tauris, 1996), 25; Anderson, “Constructing Nabataea,” 189–90; Anderson, “Imperial Legacies, Local Identities,” 194–95.





Figure 2: Varied types of crenelated tombs along Petra's Street of Façades. Photograph by author.

menid Empire. Indeed, its sheer quantity is crucial. There are 628 known façade tombs at Petra, 86 percent of which are adorned with merlons.<sup>34</sup> There are a few well known divergences, notably the Khazneh, the Corinthian tomb, and the Deir, which exhibit local variations of Hellenistic and Alexandrian architecture, as well as the Obelisk tomb that references the traditional architecture of pharaonic Egypt, but these are a minority and exceptional.<sup>35</sup> In contrast, hundreds and hundreds of tombs have crenelations—either carved merlon friezes, broken (split) crenelations, even free-standing crowning crenelations very similar to those seen at Persepolis.<sup>36</sup>

34. At Meda'in Saleh there are another ninety-four tombs, seventy-two of which are façade tombs. Wadeson, "Nabataean Façade Tombs," 509–10, 518.

35. For discussion of the tombs showing Hellenistic and Alexandrian influences, see Judith McKenzie, "Keys from Egypt and the East: Observations on Nabataean Culture in Light of Recent Discoveries," *BASOR* 24 (2001): 97–112; Judith McKenzie, *The Architecture of Petra* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); Stephan G. Schmid, "The 'Hellenisation' of the Nabataeans: A New Approach," *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* 7 (2001): 407–19.

36. There are different types of crenelations on the tombs - running relief friezes, freestanding merlons that crown the tops of tombs, "split" merlons that step downward toward the center, etc. The original typology was published by Rudolf-Ernst Brünnow, et al., *Die Provincia Arabia auf Grund zweier in den Jahren 1897 und 1898 unternommenen Reisen und der Berichte früherer Reisender* (3 vols.; Strassburg: K. J. Trübner, 1904–1909); cf. McKenzie, *The Architecture of Petra*; Wadeson, "Nabataean

In previous work I have explored these tombs at great length—arguing that they are a deliberate Nabataean mining of the vocabulary of a great Eastern empire, a particularly potent and provocative act in light of Rome's growing regional intervention.<sup>37</sup> I claimed then, and I maintain now, that the frequent and deep-seated interaction between the Persians and the Arabians left a lasting impression, a memory of imperial greatness which was augmented through the centuries by both the frequent revival of Persia as an archetype in Greek and Roman propaganda and by the continued visibility of impressive Persian monuments.<sup>38</sup>

The common schema of these hundreds of tombs is too pervasive to be any sort of accident of taste. The tombs are centrally located, many occupying dominant locations throughout the city. Their size and position defines the visual landscape of Petra, and indeed it is difficult to escape their presence at the site. At the very least they must therefore have met with official approval. I suggest they represent a coordinated visual program, not unlike that seen in Achaemenid Persia.<sup>39</sup> Root has clearly demonstrated that Persian art was carefully orchestrated and unified; the motifs and messages deliberately chosen to emphasize the King's divine legitimacy, his right to rule, and the timeless harmony of a people well-governed.<sup>40</sup> Art and text are seamless, working together to show Darius as King of Kings, King of all Nations, who rules by the favor of Ahuramazda—who rules a good country, full of good horses, full of good men.<sup>41</sup> The stock phrasing of the inscriptions is mirrored in art; it is consistent, universal, timeless. Furthermore, the Achaemenid representational language persisted from

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Façade Tombs"; Wadeson, "The Development of Funerary Architecture at Petra." Wadeson ("The Chronology of the Façade Tombs at Petra") has recently refined both typology and chronology. For the present analysis, the typology is less important than the simple fact that they are crenelated at all.

37. Anderson, "Imperial Legacies, Local Identities," 163–206.

38. For discussion, see Anderson, "Imperial Legacies, Local Identities," 195–97.

39. That the tombs were likely privately commissioned and owned need not pose problems in this regard; many privately-owned Persian seals were decorated with scenes and motifs that formed part of the royal vocabulary. The tombs surely align broadly with the elite class, who would have been well served by associating themselves with the king's priorities.

40. Root, *King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art*, 309–11. The whole of Root's monograph explores these themes and should be consulted in its entirety.

41. Stock phrasing in a number of Achaemenid inscriptions, see, e.g., DSf §3:A–H (Schmitt, *Altpersischen Inschriften*, 128).



place to place and from age to age, as none of Darius's successors made any great changes to the message of kingship nor the way it was visually implemented. It is repetitive; certain key symbols are deployed time and again across a range of media. Significantly the crenelation and rosette are among the most important of these symbols: both adorn the staircases of the Apadana at Persepolis. Rosettes adorn the collars of bull-head column capitals; both merlons and rosettes figure prominently in the brickwork of Susa. Crenelations are a key element of the Great King's royal crown in monumental relief sculpture (as seen at Bisitun).<sup>42</sup> Even personal seals, privately held, often show the "royal hero" wearing a dentate crown, surely a miniature version of the aforementioned crenelated crown on the Bisitun relief.<sup>43</sup>

A magnificent silver bowl from the British Museum, decorated with applied gold decoration, shows marching files of crowned figures framed by merlon and rosette friezes. This bowl illustrates just how potent these motifs were in Achaemenid Persia, for both are used in a context far removed from what we might consider their natural habitats. Crenelations, which reference fortifications, might be expected in contexts associated with, or depictions of, built structures.<sup>44</sup> Likewise, rosettes are often anchored to expressions of fertility.<sup>45</sup> Here the two motifs are deployed independently in friezes, which shows that they have been invested with sufficient significance to stand alone, and that they were both meaning-

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42. For a discussion of the stepped crown at Bisitun, see most recently Root, "Defining the Divine in Achaemenid Persian Kingship," 40.

43. Several such examples are found in the corpus of seals from the Persepolis Fortification Archive. See, e.g., PFS 7, published in Mark B. Garrison and Margaret Cool Root, *Seals on the Persepolis Fortification Tablets*, vol. 1: *Images of Heroic Encounter* (OIP 117; Chicago: Oriental Institute Publications, 2001), fig. 1.i. The "royal hero" is discussed in the same volume, pp. 54–60. Dentate crowns are also seen at Persepolis, for example on the east jamb of the southern doorway in the main hall of the Palace of Darius at Persepolis, and holes in the stone suggest that a metal crown was set into the relief. See Erich Schmidt, *Persepolis I: Structures, Reliefs, Inscriptions* (OIP 68; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), pl. 138.

44. For example, see the use of crenelated fortification imagery on Urartean belts in Adam T. Smith, *The Political Landscape: Constellations of Authority in Early Complex Polities* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2003), 259–66.

45. In Neo-Assyrian art, rosettes often decorate the clothing of the king and adorn his wrists in the form of bracelets, as seen on the palace reliefs of Ashurbanipal from Nineveh (ca. 645–640 B.C.E.). Rosette friezes are already in use on the Ishtar Gate from Babylon (ca. 575 B.C.E.).



Figure 3: Achaemenid silver bowl with applied gold figures. Photograph courtesy of and © Trustees of the British Museum.

ful and intelligible in their own right.<sup>46</sup> The Achaemenid kings, having selected certain key symbols as potent signifiers of kingship, deployed them far and wide in a range of media.

The Nabataeans, therefore, inherited more than just the crenelation and rosette motifs. The tombs of Petra and Meda'in Saleh bear elegant witness to a Nabataean recognition of the importance of programmatic art. Significant and highly charged forms, long associated with kingship, legitimacy, and fertility, are repeated over and over again. In Persia, these symbols stood as a shorthand for the entirety of their ideology of kingship. By means of their adaptation and redeployment of these essential symbols, the Nabataeans crafted a visual continuity of their own, a coordinated and multivalent expression of local identity and possibly royal prerogative.

The Achaemenid artistic program was conceived and organized by Darius the Great, who was himself responsible for much of the proliferation of symbol and image.<sup>47</sup> In Nabataea, the process of development was different. The earliest tombs at Petra must date before 50 B.C.E., before a portion of the site was repaved.<sup>48</sup> It was not until some years later that

46. For discussion see Anderson, "Imperial Legacies, Local Identities," 178–79. Merlons had a further significance recalling the mountain peaks which housed the gods; see Root, "Defining the Divine in Achaemenid Persian Kingship," 40–41.

47. See n. 40 above.

48. Wadeson, "Nabataean Façade Tombs," 513; McKenzie, "Temples, Tombs, and

the explosion in construction took place, from the late first century B.C.E. well into the first century C.E. Significantly, this corresponds with the long (forty-nine year) reign of Aretas IV, a very active figure in Nabataean and international politics. Aretas was forced to contest his claim to the throne with a rival, Syllaeus, and later found himself embroiled with the affairs of both Herod and Augustus.<sup>49</sup> I suggest that Aretas, who like Darius found himself faced with a need to establish legitimacy and authority, seized on the potent symbolism of the earlier tombs and communicated it widely to his subjects.

This need not imply that Aretas was well versed in the intricacies of Achaemenid history nor the specific symbolism and meaning of the Persian context, although certainly Herodotus remained known and studied.<sup>50</sup> There is no reason to presume the Nabataeans understood the specific agency of Darius in crafting the elegantly coordinated program, especially as so many of the monuments at Persepolis were uninscribed. However, this only increased the sense of repetition, for the Achaemenid kings who followed Darius made no great changes in the conception and execution of royal art. The post-Persian legacy of Achaemenid art was therefore one of totality and uniformity, of carefully controlled and yet widely deployed imagery tied to kingship and power. Even if the nuances of Darius's program were lost through the passage of time, the overall impression remained accessible.

Crenelations are not unique to Nabataea, of course. They appear in Syria and Lebanon, and even show up as decorations on furniture (exotica) in Pompeii. But nowhere else are crenelations so prevalent, so coordinated, as they are in Nabataea. The landscape of Petra is bound together, walled in by these crenelations. It is a systematic presentation that surely must belie official involvement. Incidentally, this is not unlike what Augustus will do in the west with garlands, bucrania, and fruit. Paul Zanker has pointed out that Augustus is similarly employing certain coded symbols in the construction of his own (also systematic) imperial message.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, it may well be the case that the Nabataean visual program evolved in

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other Recent Discoveries from the Rose Red City," *JRA* 17 (2004): 559.

49. See Anderson, "Constructing Nabataea," 153–65.

50. Papyrus fragments of Herodotus show his continued popularity in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt. See e.g., Mortimer Chambers, et al., *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, Volume 48 (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1981), 22–73.

51. Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (Ann Arbor, Mich.:

response to what was happening in Rome, that the Nabataean king recognized the importance of overarching and unifying thematic symbols. Preferring, perhaps for political expediency at home and abroad, symbols and systems of representation with a Near Eastern pedigree, Aretas seems to have seized on a few key motifs and turned them into emblematic representations of Nabataea through the encouragement of mass deployment in a coordinated visual program.

Nabataean royal art was not just about Persia, of course. In the multicultural environment of the Roman Near East, Hellenistic, Roman, Egyptian, Syrian, and Arabian influences were strong. Many aspects of Nabataean art and architecture have nothing to do with Persian precedents. Domestic architecture blends Roman and Near Eastern floorplans, and surviving wall paintings are akin to those preserved from Pompeii and Herculaneum; coinage follows a generally Hellenistic precedent (with some variations); temple architecture shows influences from Syria as well as the Mediterranean.<sup>52</sup> It was not likely that the Nabataeans were actively reviving the Achaemenid Empire, but rather that they integrated a still resonant Persian legacy into the crafting of their own expressions of kingship and identity. Thus, while it may be impossible to speak confidently of the cultural impact of Persia on Arabia during the Achaemenid period, owing to the lack of secure archaeological evidence, the funerary architecture at Petra illustrates that Arabian memories of Persia and Persian art remained active and relevant well into the Roman period.

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University of Michigan Press, 1988), 179–83; Paul Zanker, *Roman Art* (Los Angeles, Calif.: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2010), 87–97.

52. For an overview of domestic architecture: Bernhard Kolb, “Petra. From Tent to Mansion: Living on the Terraces of Ez-Zantur,” in *Petra Rediscovered: Lost City of the Nabataeans* (ed. G. Markoe; New York: Abrams, 2003), 230–38; Rolf Stucky, *Petra, Ez Zantur I. Ergebnisse der schweizerisch-liechtensteinischen Ausgrabungen 1988–1992* (Munich: Philipp von Zabern, 1996). For temples and tombs: Judith McKenzie, “Keys from Egypt and the East”; McKenzie, *The Architecture of Petra*; Schmid, “The ‘Hellenisation’ of the Nabataeans”; Ehud Netzer, *Nabatäische Architektur: Insbesondere Gräber und Tempel* (Munich: Philipp von Zabern, 2003). For coinage: Meshorer, *Nabataean Coins*.

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“I OVERWHELMED THE KING OF ELAM”:  
REMEMBERING NEBUCHADNEZZAR I  
IN PERSIAN BABYLONIA

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Cyrus's capture of Babylon in 539 B.C.E. brought to a close the final and, arguably, most spectacular era of Babylonian independence. From that date onward, Babylon would never again be the sole capital of an independent kingdom, let alone of an empire, but rather would remain a significant city under Persian and then Macedonian rule. Babylon's status was diminished when it suffered partial abandonment following the transport of much of its population to the new capital of Seleucia in 275 B.C.E.,<sup>1</sup> but it continued to be an inhabited and defensible city with a functioning cult into the Parthian era.<sup>2</sup> The date of Babylon's final destruction is not known, but it may have occurred with the cessation of cultic activities there as late as the third century C.E. following the Sassanian conquest.<sup>3</sup> When viewed against the full backdrop of the city's history, which can be securely extended back approximately two millennia to the kings of the dynasty of Agade,<sup>4</sup> the Persian conquest of Babylon was only one of many occurrences when new populations had come to power, and it preceded similar changes that would occur in the following centuries. What distinguished

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1. Abraham J. Sachs and Hermann Hunger, *Diaries from 652 B.C. to 262 B.C.* (vol. 1 of *Astronomical Diaries and Related Texts from Babylonia*; Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1988), no. -273:34'-36'.

2. R. J. van der Spek, "Cuneiform Documents on Parthian History: The Rahimesu Archive, Material for the Study of the Standard of Living," *Historia* 122 (1998): 205-7.

3. Mark Geller, "The Last Wedge," *ZA* 87 (1997): 63.

4. Douglas Frayne, *Sargonic and Gutian Periods* (vol. 2 of *The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Early Periods*; Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1993), 183 iii year name (k) and E2.1.4.28 and E2.1.5.5.

the Persian conquest from those that had preceded it was the introduction of a ruling population that did not become absorbed into Babylonian culture, but rather maintained centers of political power at cities other than Babylon outside of Mesopotamia and retained and developed distinct cultural practices that did not rely on the elevation of Babylon's significance, a transformation that would only become more pronounced following the establishment of Seleucid and then Arsacid rule.<sup>5</sup>

It is doubtful, however, that any citizen present to cheer on Cyrus's triumphant entrance into Babylon would have even contemplated the possibility that Babylon's standing had been irreversibly changed on that day. Such a possibility would likely have struck a Babylonian as preposterous precisely because of the city's illustrious and extensive history and because the identity of an important segment of Babylonia's population—those families that filled civic offices and dominated temple administration through their ownership of temple prebends—was firmly rooted in this understanding of the city's antiquity and its centrality as it related to other Babylonian cities.<sup>6</sup> During the preceding centuries, members of these families had cultivated and perpetuated a religious ideology that had sought to understand the divine will of Babylon's patron god, Marduk, as it pertained to the fortunes of his city in the past, and had preserved the historical memory of those monarchs whose legacies were outstanding, often because they were believed to have found favor with Marduk or were deemed to have committed some sacrilege against the god.<sup>7</sup> This ideology

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5. R. J. van der Spek, "The Babylonian Temple during the Macedonian and Parthian Domination," *BiOr* 42 (1985): 541–42.

6. Michael Jursa et al., *Aspects of the Economic History of Babylonia in the First Millennium BC. Economic Geography, Economic Mentalities, Agriculture, the Use of Money and the Problem of Economic Growth* (AOAT 377; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2010), 62–140 and 282–86 and idem, "The Babylonian Economy in the First Millennium BC," in *The Babylonian World* (ed. G. Leick; New York: Routledge, 2007), 224–35 (229–30).

7. This mentality is evident, for example, in the so-called Weidner Chronicle (Jean-Jacques Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles* [SBLWAW 19; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004], 263–68) or the text purporting to be a royal inscription of the Kassite king Agum-kakrime known only from mid-first millennium tablets (Benjamin R. Foster, *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature* [3rd ed.; Bethesda, Md.: CDL, 2005], 360–64). With regard to Nebuchadnezzar I, Eckart Frahm makes this point in E. A. Braun-Holzinger and E. Frahm, "Liebling des Marduk—König der Blasphemie: Große babylonische Herrscher in der Sicht der Babylonier und

and the historical memories that supported it were embedded in a stream of scholarly cuneiform tradition, which, taken as a whole, were the product of the literate intelligentsia who made up the urban elite and who held in common a religious and political worldview centering on Marduk and Babylon. The members of this class articulated that worldview when interacting with one another and with contemporary political actors, including tribal groups in southern Mesopotamia and, most notably, the king, who ideally would have been sympathetic to their interests. These interactions produced a discourse in which the participants associated themselves with larger groups and perpetuated a Babylonian identity with regard to the Persian Empire that was not based on personal acquaintances, but rather reflected what Benedict Anderson has called an imagined community.<sup>8</sup> Ultimately, this awareness of a Babylonian identity amongst a significant segment of the population residing in southern Mesopotamia shaped the history of Persian rule in Babylonia.

In the decades following the establishment of Persian rule, the importance of Babylon was not diminished. While the Persian emperor did not make Babylon his primary residence, the city retained its status as an imperial capital within the empire and was not relegated to being a provincial city. More importantly, Babylon remained a vital economic and administrative hub of empire and the presence of Marduk's temple, Esagil, ensured its ideological significance within southern Mesopotamia. As a result, Babylon continued to be a large, cosmopolitan city at the core of a dynamic urban network.<sup>9</sup> But in spite of Babylon's continued importance, the leading citizens of Babylon and those of other Babylonian cities were not always tractable subjects. Twice within less than fifty years, all or parts

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in der Sicht anderer Völker,” in *Babylon: Focus mesopotamischer Geschichte, Wiege früher Gelehrsamkeit, Mythos in der Moderne* (ed. J. Renger; CDOG 2; Saarbrücken: Saarbrücker Druckerei und Verlag, 1999), 131–56 (147–48 and 155).

8. Here I am drawing upon Nicolas Wiater's adaptation of Benedict Anderson's concept of “imagined community” in “Writing Roman History—Shaping Greek Identity: The Ideology of Historiography in Dionysius of Halicarnassus,” in *The Struggle for Identity: Greeks and their Past in the First Century BCE* (ed. T. A. Schmitz and N. Wiater; Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2011), 61–91 (61–62). While Anderson is associated with theorists who view nationalism as an exclusively modern phenomenon, the concept of “imagined community” which he explored in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (2nd ed.; London: Verso, 2006) is potentially more fluid, as Anderson admits on p. 6, and not specific to modernity.

9. Jursa, *Aspects of the Economic History of Babylonia*, 64–80.

of Babylonia were in open revolt, once from 522 to 521 B.C.E. after Darius I's usurpation of the Persian throne,<sup>10</sup> and again in 484 B.C.E., in Xerxes I's second year.<sup>11</sup> On both occasions, factions within the urban elite played leading roles. The first revolt was initiated by Nidintu-Bēl, son of Mukīn-zēri, from the Zazakku family,<sup>12</sup> who claimed to be Nebuchadnezzar (III), son of Nabonidus, the last Babylonian king.<sup>13</sup> Nidintu-Bēl's revolt failed, but an Urartean named Arakha, son of Haldita, continued the resistance to Persian rule under the guise of Nebuchadnezzar (IV). Arakha downplayed his Urartean identity and signaled his intention to align his rebellion with the Babylonian urban class of his predecessor by having documents dated to his first regnal year and not his accession year, thereby communicating that the reign of the previous Nebuchadnezzar (III) had not been interrupted, and by appealing to the religious priorities of the urban elite by summoning the gods of Uruk and Larsa in the south to Babylon for their protection.<sup>14</sup> Likewise the two rebellions of 484, which were localized to cities in northern Babylonia, appear to have received

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10. Jürgen Lorenz, *Nebukadnezar III/IV: Die politischen Wirren nach dem Tod Kambyses im Spiegel der Keilschrifttexte* (Dresden: ISLET, 2008).

11. For the dating of both revolts to 484 B.C.E., see Caroline Waerzeggers, "The Babylonian Revolts Against Xerxes and the 'End of Archives,'" *AfO* 50 (2003/2004): 150–73 (151–56).

12. The Akkadian version of the first Babylonian revolt on the Bisitun inscription provides us with a genealogy for Nidintu-Bēl that is distinct from that preserved in the Elamite and Old Persian versions (AA §15:31). Chul-Hyun Bae leaves the partially damaged signs between Nidintu-Bēl's patronym and the *za-za-ak-ku* unrestored and follows E. von Voigtlander's translation of *zazakku* as a title (Bae, "Comparative Studies of King Darius's Bisitun Inscription," [Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2001], 107). However, Jürgen Lorenz (*Nebukadnezar III/IV*, 13) understands *zazakku* as the family name, reading line 31 as <sup>m</sup>*ni-din-tu*-<sup>d</sup>*en* *dumu-šú šá* <sup>m</sup>*du-numun a* <sup>m</sup>*za-za-ak-ku*. Lorenz acknowledges that the family name rarely appears in texts, noting a few attestations from Neo-Babylonian sources (*ibid.*, 13 n. 57). To these may be added a three-tier genealogy (<sup>m</sup>*en-šú-nu a-šú šá* <sup>m</sup>*dag-numun-dù* *dumu* <sup>m</sup>*za-zak-ku*) in YBC 11317:47, a tablet dated at Babylon in 648.

13. Beaulieu offers some speculative but inconclusive thoughts on the possibility that Nabonidus had had a son named Nebuchadnezzar, concluding that regardless of whether or not the claim had any basis in truth, no name could have carried more prestige for a Babylonian audience than Nebuchadnezzar (Paul-Alain Beaulieu, "An Episode in the Reign of the Babylonian Pretender Nebuchadnezzar IV," in *Extraction & Control: Studies in Honor of Matthew W. Stolper* [ed. M. Kozuh et al.; SAOC 68; Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2014], 18–19).

14. Beaulieu, "An Episode," 18 and 24–25.

their greatest support from the prebendary families. These families were removed from their positions of local influence after Xerxes defeated the rebels while families whose business affairs relied on the Persian presence emerged unscathed.<sup>15</sup>

The causes of these revolts are manifold and complex and beyond the scope of this study, but it is important to acknowledge the role played by the elite urban families during both uprisings. Their involvement prompts questions about how they reconciled Babylonia's place within the Persian Empire with their historical memories of an independent Babylon that had ruled over its own empire. In his introduction to his translations of the so-called "Kedor-Laomer Texts" in *Before the Muses*, Benjamin Foster points out that the tablets on which the texts were recorded date from the Persian period and suggests that their description of the destructive Elamite invasion of Babylonia would have been of interest to a Babylonian scholar due to the "analogies between the Elamites and the rapacious post-Darius Persian monarchs."<sup>16</sup> Elam's long-standing status as the dominant power on the Iranian plateau meant that the region east of Babylonia continued to be referred to as Elam in scholarly circles even after it became the Persian heartland. And while Xerxes's rapaciousness has been called into question as a creation of classical Greek historians,<sup>17</sup> alterations in the prebendary system indicate that Xerxes's reaction to the revolt was real and consequential for Babylon's elite families.<sup>18</sup> As a result, there is merit in thinking that the "Kedor-Laomer Texts" might have had a special appeal to Babylonian scribes in the Persian Empire who were resentful of Persian rule. This possibility becomes all the more likely when these compositions are contextualized within a larger literary tradition that looked back on the events of the late second millennium: the Elamite invasions that ended the Kassite dynasty, their removal of Marduk, and especially the reign of Nebuchadnezzar I (r. 1125–1104 B.C.E.), who claimed to have "overwhelmed the king of

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15. Waerzeggers, "The Babylonian Revolts," 160–63.

16. *Before the Muses*, 369.

17. Amélie Kuhrt and Susan Sherwin-White, "Xerxes' Destruction of Babylonian Temples," in *The Greek Sources* (ed. H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg and A. Kuhrt; Achæmænid History 2; Leiden: NINO, 1987), 69–78 and more recently Amélie Kuhrt, "Reassessing the Reign of Xerxes in the Light of New Evidence," in *Extraction and Control: Studies in Honor of Matthew W. Stolper* (ed. M. Kozuh et al.; SAOC 68; Chicago: Oriental Institute, 2014), 163–69.

18. Johannes Hackl, "Materialien zur Urkundenlehre und Archivkunde der Texte aus Nordbabylonien" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Vienna, 2013), 380–93.



Elam” in one later composition, an act that avenged earlier aggressions and resulted in the retrieval of the Marduk statue.<sup>19</sup>

Reading Persian-period tablets with these compositions as expressions of anti-Persian sentiments may be oversimplifying a more complex problem. The literary traditions surrounding Nebuchadnezzar I had a lengthy history that predated the Persian conquest by at least more than a century and were based on events that occurred more than five hundred years earlier. Therefore, it is important to appreciate that this tradition did not originate in the sixth century, but rather was one that was perpetuated and modified over time to speak to the changing interests of a specialized scribal community that was essentially conservative in its cultural outlook. Briefly surveying how and why the memory of Nebuchadnezzar I was maintained during earlier periods, particularly within the broader context of how it pertained to the Marduk cult and the associated cults of the Babylonian pantheon, can offer insights into the worldview of the scribal elite, the formation of Babylonian identity within that community as it related to the Persian empire, and how that identity may have extended to the broader Babylonian population.

The literary depictions of Nebuchadnezzar I’s campaign against Elam were rooted in historical events that were recorded during Nebuchadnezzar I’s own reign on a bilingual building inscription found on two fragments that were possibly from the same limestone tablet<sup>20</sup> and on two *kudurru*s: BBSt 6, better known as the Šitti-Marduk *kudurru*, and BBSt 24.<sup>21</sup> These objects, or contemporary sources similar to them,<sup>22</sup> very likely provided

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19. J. A. Brinkman, *A Political History of Post-Kassite Babylonia (1158–722 B.C.)* (AnOr 43; Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1968), 86–90.

20. RIMB 2 B.2.4.1.

21. The term *kudurru*, describes a class of typically inscribed and decorated stone objects dating from the late second and early first millennia, the contents of which usually pertained to the granting or ownership of land or the bestowal of tax exemptions, often with the involvement of the king. For discussions of *kudurru*s see J. A. Brinkman, “Kudurru,” *RIA* 6:267–74; Kathryn E. Slanski, *The Babylonian Entitlement narûs (kudurru)s: A Study in Their Form and Function* (ASOR Books 9; American School of Oriental Research: Boston, 2003); and J. A. Brinkman, “Babylonian Royal Land Grants, Memorials of Financial Interest, and Invocation of the Divine,” *JESHO* 49.1:1–47 (Review of Slanski).

22. It is certainly conceivable that there were other primary sources from Nebuchadnezzar I’s reign that did not survive down to the present day but were known in the first millennium and consulted by later generations of scribes.

the inspiration for those scribes who composed the later literary traditions about Nebuchadnezzar I as well some of the details that feature in those works.<sup>23</sup> However, a key feature that distinguishes the later traditions from the texts produced during Nebuchadnezzar’s own reign is the increased emphasis placed by the former on the god Marduk as the agent of events. In the Šitti-Marduk *kudurru*, it is Marduk who orders Nebuchadnezzar to attack Elam, but Ishtar and Adad who grant him victory, with Šitti-Marduk’s charge into the Elamite ranks proving to be the decisive moment in the battle.<sup>24</sup> Likewise, the restoration of Marduk—identified only by his epithet Bēl in the text—to Babylon is simply one occurrence in a series of events commemorated in BBSt 24 and is of much less importance than the retrieval of the god Eriya from Elam and the establishment of land grants to support his cult.<sup>25</sup> By comparison, Marduk’s position in the later literary texts is central: it was Marduk’s displeasure with Babylon that caused the Elamite invasion that led to his departure, it was Marduk who called upon Nebuchadnezzar to invade Elam, and it is with Marduk’s triumphal reentry into Babylon that the compositions are concluded.

This shift in focus to Marduk suggests that individuals associated with the Marduk cult were responsible for the creation of the later compositions, undoubtedly with an eye toward promoting the interests of Esagil. This aim is best illustrated in the portrayal of Nebuchadnezzar I as the pious king who took Marduk by the hand and returned him to Babylon from Elam, which was undoubtedly an allusion to the key moment in the *akitu* festival when the king would take the hand of Bēl, which was a common epithet for Marduk, in order to escort the cult statue back into Babylon and into the Esagil. Consequently, the later Nebuchadnezzar tradition can be understood as being one strand in a broader literary tradition that sought to elevate the position of Marduk both by examining Marduk’s actions on a cosmic plane and as a worldly actor engaged in human events.<sup>26</sup>

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23. If A. R. George’s restoration of RIMB 2 B.2.4.7:14 is correct (see below, n. 41), one detail that stands out for its specificity appears in both BBSt 6 and, possibly, RIMB 2 B.2.4.7:14. Both texts place the location of the decisive battle between Nebuchadnezzar I and the Elamites at the Ulaya River.

24. Victor Hurowitz has even argued that the sun god, Šamaš is a major figure throughout the composition through the motif of the sun in “Some Literary Observations on the Šitti-Marduk Kudurru (BBSt 6),” *ZA* 82 (1992): 39–59 (53–56).

25. J. A. Brinkman, “Nebuchadnezzar I,” *RIA* 9:193.

26. Wilfred G. Lambert’s important article “The Reign of Nebuchadnezzar I: A Turning Point in the History of Ancient Mesopotamian Religion,” in *The Seed of*

It is open to speculation when the literary compositions about Nebuchadnezzar I were first written down. The earliest exemplars preserving these stories date from the seventh century, many from Ashurbanipal's library, but the tradition appears to have been well developed at this time, suggesting an earlier date of origin. The seventh-century date of the tablets and the events contemporary with them have prompted the author to postulate that there was increased interest in Nebuchadnezzar I beginning with the reign of Esarhaddon, who oversaw the rebuilding of Babylon and sought to return the statue of Marduk after Sennacherib had destroyed the city in 689 B.C.E.<sup>27</sup> These efforts continued after Esarhaddon's death and figured prominently in the inscriptions of his sons, Ashurbanipal and Šamaš-šuma-ukīn, both of whom claimed to have completed the rebuilding of Babylon and the return of Marduk to Esagil. The likely appeal of the literary compositions that featured Nebuchadnezzar I in this context was their tendency to stress Marduk's willingness to abandon Babylon and remove his protection from the city at those times when its citizens had behaved wickedly and to relent and return when the monarch pleased him. These themes helped exonerate Sennacherib from any wrongdoing in 689 B.C.E. and added legitimacy to Assyrian rule over Babylonia; it was the pious activities of Esarhaddon and his sons that had given Marduk cause to return Babylon.

As part of these processes, both Babylonian and Assyrian scholars were engaged in creating a narrative that centered on Babylon's rebuild-

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*Wisdom: Essays in Honour of T. J. Meek* (ed. W. S. McCullough; Toronto: University of Toronto, 1964), 3–13 makes the circumstantial argument that it was during Nebuchadnezzar I's reign that Marduk was elevated to the head of the Babylonian pantheon. While I embrace Lambert's understanding of Nebuchadnezzar I's reign as pivotal to the Marduk cult, I hesitate to accept his hypothesis that the return of Marduk's statue led to the official pronouncement by Nebuchadnezzar I of Marduk's supremacy (p. 10). Certainly the concept of Marduk's elevated status as king of the gods was already present in the twelfth century even if it was not a universally held position throughout Babylonia; as Lambert himself points out, assertions of this doctrine can be found during the latter half of the Kassite period. It is more likely that the literary compositions involving Nebuchadnezzar I and Marduk were composed later by scribes looking retrospectively to Nebuchadnezzar I's reign in efforts to continue magnifying Marduk's status.

27. John P. Nielsen, "Marduk's Return: Assyrian Imperial Propaganda, Babylonian Cultural Memory, and the *akītu* Festival of 667 BC," in *Memory and Urban Religion in the Ancient World* (ed. M. Bommas et al.; London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 4–32.

ing and Marduk's return in which Nebuchadnezzar I was utilized. The inclusion of several pro-Assyrian features in compositions that referenced Nebuchadnezzar I and that are unique to Assyrian contexts demonstrates that there were facets of the tradition that were either distinct to or altered to fit an Assyrian tradition.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, the Assyrian respect for Babylonian culture and scholarship and a shared language and pantheon facilitated the creation of a mutually comprehensible discourse within the circle of Assyrian and Babylonian scholars in Esarhaddon's service. This discourse did not express an explicit desire for Babylonian independence from Assyria, but rather supported a narrative that celebrated the monarch who returned Marduk to Babylon, thereby satisfying both Esarhaddon's interests in establishing his son as the legitimate king of Babylon as well as the interests of the Marduk priesthood through the proper resumption of cultic activities including the observation of the *akītu* festival. Furthermore, it is conceivable that the vilification of Elam within the Nebuchadnezzar I tradition had the added benefit of casting a negative light on a frequent ally to anti-Assyrian efforts in Babylonia.<sup>29</sup>

Following Assyria's collapse, Babylon emerged as the capital of a new successor empire. In this environment, the cultural significance of Nebuchadnezzar I's memory would have evolved with the new political realities. There is no evidence to suggest that Nabopolassar, the founder of the new empire, named his son after the earlier king,<sup>30</sup> and Nebuchadnezzar

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28. In the Marduk Prophecy, Marduk speaks positively of Assyria, stating that he desired to go to Assyria because the king of Assyria (presumably Tukulti-Ninurta I) pleased him. Marduk made the Assyrian king ruler over all the lands and gave to him the tablet of destinies before returning to Babylon. By contrast, Marduk's subsequent departure to Elam brought hardship upon Babylon. By the end of the composition, Marduk is resolved to return and he prophesies that a new king (assumed to be Nebuchadnezzar I) will smash Elam and return him to a renewed and rebuilt Babylon (Foster, *Before the Muses*, 388–91). Significantly, the only two tablets that contain this composition come from Assur and Kuyunjik (Nielsen, “Marduk's Return,” 14–15).

29. Such a portrayal of Elam would reinforce Sennacherib's depiction of the Babylonians' use of treasure from Esagil to entice the Elamites to come to their aid against Assyria as a sacrilege against Marduk (RINAP 3/1 22 v 24b–37a).

30. Grant Frame first raised this possibility in “A Bilingual Inscription of Nebuchadnezzar I,” in *Corolla Torontonensis: Studies in Honour of Ronald Morton Smith* (ed. E. Robbins and S. Sandahl; Toronto: TSAR, 1994), 69. Personal names that featured Nabû as a theophoric element are common in legal and administrative documents that date to the early Neo-Babylonian period, yet the name Nebuchadnezzar (Nabû-kudurrî-uṣur) appears only four times within that corpus with certainty (BM

zar II never made reference to his eponymous predecessor in any of his inscriptions. There must have been, however, a spirit of revival of past glories as wealth poured into Babylon from the empire to fund Nebuchadnezzar II's extensive building projects there.<sup>31</sup> Ostensibly, the social impact of both the renewed and new features of the urban topography would have been strongest during the *akītu* festival, when the population of Babylon and those drawn to the city for the celebrations would have been made aware of Nebuchadnezzar II's work on Babylon's temples, gates, and processional ways. It is difficult to know how familiar this portion of the population would have been with the memory of Nebuchadnezzar I, but the occasion may have provided leading figures with the opportunity to shape and evoke popular memory.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, for at least a segment of the scribal elite, the observation of the *akītu* festival at a time of imperial ascendance may have shaped their understanding of the preserved literary descriptions of Nebuchadnezzar I's triumphant re-entry into Babylon holding the hand of Marduk following the defeat of Elam. In this way, the textual legacy attached to Nebuchadnezzar I's reign could have been shaped by Nebuchadnezzar II's tenure on the throne, even though the reigns of the two eponymous kings were never conflated in scribal traditions. It is therefore reasonable to believe that any attempt to look back to

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46542:38, BM 47367:19, Frame, *Mušēzib-Marduk* 18:46, and *ibid.*, 19:32) and never as a patronym. A fifth possible attestation of the name can be found in Frame, *Mušēzib-Marduk* 25:21. Frame has recently restored the name of the governor of Uruk in this tablet as [m<sup>nd</sup>ag-n]īg.du, equating him with Kudurru, the governor of Uruk whose full name J. A. Brinkman suggested was Nabû-kudurri-ušur on the basis of *ABL* 859 and whom Jursa proposed was the father of Nabopolassar based on his understanding of *ABL* 469 (G. Frame, *The Archive of Mušēzib-Marduk Son of Kiribtu and Descendant of Šin-nāšir: A Landowner and Property Developer at Uruk in the Seventh Century BC* [Babylonische Archive 5; Dresden: ISLET, 2013], 196 n. 21).

Regardless of whether Nabonidus named his son for the earlier king or after his father, Nabonidus, like Nabopolassar, was an antiquarian who actively sought to tie his rule to kings of Agade in an attempt to legitimize his reign (Paul-Alain Beaulieu, "Nabopolassar and the Antiquity of Babylon," in *Hayim and Miriam Tadmor Volume* [ed. Israel Eph'al et al., *Eretz-Israel* 27; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2003], 1–9). Even if Nabopolassar had not intentionally named his son for the earlier king, with his accession to the throne, the significance of the shared name would not have been lost on him.

31. The full extent of Nebuchadnezzar's building activities is summarized by Rainer M. Czichon in "Nebukadnezar II. B. Archäologisch," *RIA* 9: 201–6.

32. Nielsen, "Marduk's Return," 18–19.

Nebuchadnezzar I's time during the height of Nebuchadnezzar II's reign and during the decades that followed would have been viewed through the lens of Nebuchadnezzar II's achievements.

The impact of Nebuchadnezzar II's reign on the continued vitality of Nebuchadnezzar I's memory in the Neo-Babylonian period and the latter king's continued association with Marduk is made more evident when the events of 554, Nabonidus's second year, are considered. In this year, king Nabonidus had his daughter, En-nigaldi-Nanna, consecrated as *entu* priestess in the Egipar at Ur while simultaneously increasing the offerings to Sin and Ningal and granting privileged status to the priesthood there. These acts were consistent with Nabonidus's religious leanings and appear to have met with resistance from the priestly circles at Babylon who disputed Nabonidus's interpretation of the lunar eclipse that he believed called for the installation of his daughter.<sup>33</sup> Nabonidus's claim to have seen a stela set up by Nebuchadnezzar I in the Egipar that depicted the *entu* priestess and detailed the ritual requirements of the office may have been intended as a response to those factions that had opposed him. It is even conceivable that Nabonidus wanted to use the stela to address the very immediate and favorable legacy of Nebuchadnezzar II, whose extensive building activities at Babylon had benefitted the Marduk cult and whose illustrious reign had ended just eight years earlier.<sup>34</sup> By attempting to imitate the actions of the earlier Nebuchadnezzar, Nabonidus was associating

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33. Paul-Alain Beaulieu, *The Reign of Nabonidus, King of Babylon 556–539 B.C.* (Yale Near Eastern Researches 10; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 127–32. This resistance would not have constituted direct opposition to Nabonidus's reign on the part of Esagil's administration. As Michael Jursa has pointed out, these men would have been reliant on Nabonidus for their appointments ("The Transition of Babylonia from the Neo-Babylonian Empire to Achaemenid Rule," in *Regime Change in the Ancient Near East and Egypt: From Sargon of Agade to Saddam Hussein* [ed. H. Crawford; Proceedings of the British Academy 136; Oxford: Oxford University Press], 76–77). They would, however, have wanted to use their cultic expertise to sway the king to their position. Their inability to do so might have led to some dissatisfaction that could have filtered down to the temple rank and file whom Jursa believes shaped the anti-Nabonidus propaganda that emerged after Cyrus's victory (*Ibid.*, 77 n.7).

34. The position of Nebuchadnezzar II's palace within the city even deferred to the centrality of Etemenanki and Esagil, the ziggurat and temple of Marduk respectively, a fact that Nebuchadnezzar II emphasized in his own building inscriptions. Paul-Alain Beaulieu, "Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon as World Capital," *Journal of the Canadian Society for Mesopotamian Studies* 3 (2008): 9.

his program at Ur with a forgotten precedent that had been established by Nebuchadnezzar I.<sup>35</sup> This act would have been all the more meaningful if Nebuchadnezzar I was still actively remembered at Babylon for his piety and favor with Marduk.

Nabonidus's preference for Šin over Marduk was held up as the cause for his defeat in later Babylonian tradition. Likewise, Cyrus was presented as Marduk's champion, a portrayal that Cyrus fostered, most famously in the Cyrus cylinder. The political and ideological message presented by Cyrus in his cylinder was not simply interred on a foundation deposit but was also circulated among the scribal class as evidenced by the survival of two fragments, likely from the same tablet, that bear an excerpt from the cylinder.<sup>36</sup> Cyrus's claims would also have been communicated to the population of Babylon during the period of transition to Persian rule, if not explicitly through public address, then implicitly through the Marduk priesthood's involvement in public ceremonies involving Cyrus and Cambyses. The language of the cylinder tied Cyrus into a past of pious builders at Babylon and linked him with a discursive tradition that included Esarhaddon, Ashurbanipal, and Nabonidus.<sup>37</sup> The explicit reference to Ashurbanipal in the Cyrus Cylinder has been interpreted as an attempt to appropriate Ashurbanipal's legacy from Nabonidus, who had demonstrated a propensity to emulate Ashurbanipal in his own inscriptions,<sup>38</sup> and served as a signal from Cyrus—or those at Babylon who favored his rule—that he wished to assume Ashurbanipal's mantle in the eyes of the Babylonians as a king who had acted reverently toward Marduk and possibly to remind them that Esarhaddon had designated Šamaš-šuma-ukīn as the heir to the

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35. Beaulieu also points out that factions at Babylon objected to the way Nabonidus treated the artifacts and tablets from Ur associated with Nebuchadnezzar I, suggesting that his handling of these items constituted a blasphemous act (*Reign of Nabonidus*, 131).

36. Piotr Michalowski, "Biography of a Sentence: Assurbanipal, Nabonidus, and Cyrus," in *Extraction and Control: Studies in Honor of Matthew W. Stolper* (ed. M. Kozuh et al.; SAOC 68; Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2014), 203–4.

37. Amélie Kuhrt, "The Cyrus Cylinder and Achaemenid Imperial Policy," *JSOT* 25 (1983): 83–97.

38. David S. Vanderhoof, *The Neo-Babylonian Empire and Babylon in the Latter Prophets* (Harvard Semitic Monographs 59; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 53.



Babylonian throne in order to raise a precedent for his own appointment of his son, Cambyases, as king of Babylon.<sup>39</sup>

Nebuchadnezzar I did not figure in the Cyrus Cylinder, but in structuring its central message, the scribes who composed and then continued to copy its contents were drawing upon the historical memory of Ashurbanipal with regard to Marduk and perhaps upon the memories of Esarhaddon and Šamaš-šuma-ukīn as well. As discussed earlier, the memory of Nebuchadnezzar I shaped the discourse these Assyrian kings created in conjunction with the rebuilding of Babylon and the eventual return of Marduk. This utilization probably accounts for the survival of texts pertaining to Nebuchadnezzar I on tablets from Ashurbanipal's library. A colophon on at least one of these tablets that indicates that the text had been copied from a Babylonian original points to contemporary scribal interest in Nebuchadnezzar I at Babylon and elsewhere in Babylonia where the traditions originated.<sup>40</sup>

It is reasonable to assume that the interest in these compositions persisted at comparable levels among the scribal community in Babylonia for more than a century, even if the number of tablets with literary texts concerning Nebuchadnezzar I dating from the sixth or early fifth centuries is less than what was part of Ashurbanipal's library. Two such tablets were excavated in the Merkes quarter in Babylon. Unfortunately, neither tablet can be assigned to a larger archive. One of these tablets has an otherwise unknown composition on it purporting to be a letter written by Nebuchadnezzar I to the people of Babylon. The letter informs them of his victory over Elam at the Ulaya River and his imminent return with Marduk and concludes with instructions to prepare for his return. The tablet was found in a structure just north of the Ishtar temple in the same context as a fragment of a lexical list, an omen tablet, and a contract.<sup>41</sup> The exact

39. Michalowski, “Biography of a Sentence,” 210.

40. RIMB 2 B.2.4.5 r. 2'–3'.

41. RIMB 2 B.2.4.7. The location of the battle at the Ulaya river in line 14 of the text follows a restoration of [id ú-l]a-a-a proposed by A. R. George (review of J. van Dijk, *Literarische Texte aus Babylon*, BO 46 [1989]: 383) on the basis of a passage in the Šitti-Marduk *kudurru* that states that a battle was fought there (*BBSt* 6 i 28–29). Information about the tablet's archaeological context can be found in Olof Pedersén, *Archive und Bibliotheken in Babylon: Die Tontafeln der Grabung Robert Koldeweys 1899–1917* (Abhandlungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 25; Berlin: Saarländische Druckerei und Verlag, 2005), 219, N13 (26). The date of the unpublished Neo-



find spot of the second tablet in the Merkes quarter is not known,<sup>42</sup> but its contents are part of a multi-tablet composition that begins with passages praising Marduk and describing Nebuchadnezzar as a pious king and descendant of Enmeduranki, the antediluvian king of Sippar, and continues with an account of how Marduk allowed himself to be taken to Elam and eventually decided to return to Babylon.<sup>43</sup> Portions of this composition were also found on five tablets from Ashurbanipal's library as well as on two tablets from unprovenanced Babylonian contexts, indicating that it had circulated among scribes in Assyria and Babylonia.<sup>44</sup> The description of Marduk as "the one in whose power it is to make (a region) desolate and resettle (it), (and who) *shows* future people how to watch for his sign,"<sup>45</sup> certainly would have appealed to Esarhaddon's concerns regarding the exoneration of his father and the rebuilding of Babylon. It is therefore unfortunate that the inexact archaeological context for the one exemplar found in the Merkes quarter does not offer as much information as it might have if its precise findspot relative to other tablets had been recorded. Nevertheless, its presence in the Merkes quarter points to the continued interest in this composition after the fall of Assyria.

Fortunately a tablet inscribed with a copy of the Nebuchadnezzar I bilingual discovered in the temple library of the Ebabbar at Sippar presents no such ambiguity. The contents of the library can be dated to the Persian period on the basis of an economic text found in the collection dated to 529 B.C.E., Cambyses's first year.<sup>46</sup> The library's collection illuminates the diverse scholarly and antiquarian interests of the scribes affiliated with the Ebabbar.<sup>47</sup> Select compositions within the library reveal a parochial fascination with Sippar and its past.<sup>48</sup> However, there are many more tablets, such as tablet II of *Enuma Elish*, that reveal that the scribes of Ebabbar

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Babylonian contract VAT 22110 found in the same context as B.2.4.7 (ibid., N13 [27]) is not known by the author.

42. Pedersén, *Archive und Bibliotheken in Babylon*, 225, N13 (225).

43. RIMB 2 2.4.8 and 2.4.9.

44. RIMB 2, p. 24 and 28.

45. RIMB 2.4.8:3.

46. "Excavations in Iraq 1985–1986," *Iraq* 49 (1987): 248–49 and Olof Pedersén, *Archives and Libraries in the Ancient Near East, 1500–300 B.C.* (Bethesda, Md.: CDL Press, 1998), 194–97.

47. Farouk N. H. Al-Rawi and Andrew R. George, "Tablets from the Sippar Library II, Tablet II of the Babylonian Creation Epic," *Iraq* 52 (1990): 149 n. 1.

48. For example, a Neo-Babylonian copy of a Hammurabi inscription commemo-

adhered to the commonly held religious and cultural outlook that recognized Babylon and Esagil as the cultic and political center of Babylonia, and the presence of only a few previously-unknown compositions in the library suggests that the contents of the library were representative of collections that would have been found in other temple libraries throughout Babylonia as well as Assyria.<sup>49</sup> With this in mind, the inclusion of the Nebuchadnezzar I bilingual in the library should probably be viewed as typical of such collections and not necessarily as an indicator of virulent anti-Persian sentiments on the part of Ebabbar’s personnel. By extension, the copy of the bilingual found in the Merkes quarter in the vicinity of the Temple of Ishtar should probably also be understood as being representative of literary compositions that would have been in the possession of a specialist scribe affiliated with a temple.

This point becomes important when one considers the large number of varied omen tablets found in the temple library at Sippar. An important concern of the temple staff was the proper taking and interpreting of omens. We lack a royal correspondence for the Neo-Babylonian court comparable to that which survives from the Assyrian court,<sup>50</sup> but Nabonidus’s own disagreement with priests at Babylon over interpretations of astronomical omens indicates that he and other Neo-Babylonian kings were kept informed by a circle of scholars of oracular revelations. With relations with Media and then Persia a potential concern on Babylonia’s eastern front,<sup>51</sup> it is reasonable to think that scholars would have been

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rating the building of the wall of Sippar and a hymn to Šamaš were part of the library (“Excavations in Iraq 1985–1986,” 249).

49. Al-Rawi and George, “Tablets from the Sippar Library II,” 149. The authors reference Erica Reiner’s remarks in *JNES* 19 (1960): 24 regarding the Sultantepe tablets to make this point (“Tablets from the Sippar Library II,” 149 n. 2) and summarize the evidence for library rooms similar to the one discovered at Sippar in other temples (n. 4).

50. Michael Jursa, “The Lost State Correspondence of the Babylonian Empire as Reflected in Contemporary Administrative Letters,” in *State Correspondence in the Ancient World: From New Kingdom Egypt to the Roman Empire* (ed. K. Radner; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 94.

51. The so-called Median Wall of Nebuchadnezzar II could be construed as an indication that Nebuchadnezzar II was concerned about his eastern neighbors, particularly if he was forced to confront Elamite forces on the Tigris in his ninth year (596 BC) (*ABC* 5:16–20). The resources and the time committed to the project underscore its ongoing importance. The physical remains of a portion of this defensive system

mindful of the opening lines of the Nebuchadnezzar I bilingual calling Marduk the one who “shows future people how to watch for his sign,” by trying to understand the signs that preceded Nebuchadnezzar’s victory over Elam. For that matter, it is also possible that elements opposed to Nabonidus would have equated the Persians with the Elamites who were the instrument of Marduk’s wrath. It is therefore unfortunate that we have no evidence for the continued existence in the Persian period of an omen series titled “When Nebuchadnezzar I Broke Elam” alluded to in a Neo-Assyrian report to Esarhaddon.<sup>52</sup>

Contextualizing the Nebuchadnezzar I bilingual and related texts that celebrate Nebuchadnezzar I within the larger stream of literary tradition relating to Marduk can help nuance our understanding of Nebuchadnezzar I’s relevance in the Persian period. Babylonian literary tradition provided the urban elite with a rich palette of symbols and metaphors with which to bring meaning to contemporary events. Members of this urban class shared this common cultural outlook but did not constitute a unified

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as well as textual references to the wall in Akkadian and later Classical sources have been examined in Jeremy A. Black et al., *Habl aš-Šaḥr 1983–1985: Nebuchadnezzar II’s Cross-Country Wall North of Sippar* (Mesopotamian History and Environment Series 1, Northern Akkad Project Reports 1; Ghent: University of Ghent, 1987). Work on the wall probably began in the latter half of the second decade of Nebuchadnezzar II’s reign (c. 577 BC) and continued into the reign of Nabonidus. On the basis of Nebuchadnezzar II’s rock inscriptions at Brisa, Rocío Da Riva has proposed that the wall had reached a state of completion late in Nebuchadnezzar’s life during his fourth decade on the throne (“Just Another Brick in the Median Wall,” *Aramazd: Armenian Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 5 [2010]: 55–65).

Cyrus’s defeat of Astyages and the disappearance of the Median kingdom altered Babylonian geopolitics and presented the Neo-Babylonian empire with a new regional rival, and his eventual capture of Babylon was likely precipitated by more and lengthier conflict than Cyrus’s own accounts of the event allow (Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire* [trans. Peter T. Daniels; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2002], 33–34 and 40–43).

52. SAA 8 158 r. 4–5. The allusion to this omens series, which is otherwise unknown, is especially tantalizing in light of the literary traditions describing Nebuchadnezzar I’s failure against the Elamites that existed side by side with those that celebrated his triumph. The belief that Nebuchadnezzar suffered a defeat that could be contrasted with his victory may have inspired negative and positive omen apodoses or, alternately, such apodoses may have provided a basis for the literary tradition. This series and its potential role in the preservation of Nebuchadnezzar I’s legacy during the approximately four centuries that passed between Nebuchadnezzar I’s death and the reign of Esarhaddon deserve further study.

political block.<sup>53</sup> The presence of factions and divisions is perhaps best exemplified by Sennacherib's installation of Bēl-ibni (r. 702–700 B.C.E.), a member of the Rab-banê family who had grown up in Sennacherib's court, as his preferred candidate for the Babylonian throne, and by Hallušu-Inšušinak's placement, seven years later, of Nergal-ušēzib from the seemingly pro-Elamite Gahal family in the same position.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, after Darius suppressed the revolt of 521 B.C.E., splits between anti- and pro-Persian factions at Uruk and Sippar among the urban leadership become apparent in the measures Darius took to remove disloyal individuals and install men from the urban elite who supported his rule.<sup>55</sup>

And it was this relationship between ruler and ruled in Babylonia under the Persians that differed significantly from anything that had occurred before in Babylonian history; the Persians neither assimilated themselves to Mesopotamian cultural and political norms as local rulers as the Amorites, Kassites, and Chaldeans all had done, nor did they embrace and share Babylonian culture, religion, and language while retaining ultimate political authority outside of Babylonia in the manner of the Neo-Assyrian kings. Persian rule in Babylonia compelled the urban elite to accommodate themselves to new political realities, even as they retained their local positions of prestige and influence in their respective cities. In this way, the contents of the Cyrus Cylinder and the use of Babylonian royal titles by the Persian kings were emblematic of their willingness to meet Babylonian cultural expectations in order to legitimize their rule. Under these circumstances, the Babylonian urban elite found themselves negotiating a cultural middle ground in their interactions with the Persian monarchy in which their theological understanding of Marduk's role in bestowing kingship proved especially useful, establishing a precedent that would continue under the Seleucids.<sup>56</sup> This theology had its basis in

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53. John P. Nielsen, *Sons and Descendants: A Social History of Kin Groups and Family Names in the Early Neo-Babylonian Period, 747–626 BC* (Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 43; Leiden: Brill, 2011), 263–66.

54. J. A. Brinkman, *Prelude to Empire: Babylonian Society and Politics, 747–626 B.C.* (Occasional Publication of the Babylonian Fund 7; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1984), 58–62.

55. Stefan Zawadzki, "Bardiya, Darius and Babylonian Usurpers," *AMI* 27 (1994): 137b.

56. This point follows Rolf Strootman's modifications and application of Richard White's concept of Middle Ground in "Babylonian, Macedonian, King of the World: The Antiochus Cylinder from Borsippa and Seleukid Imperial Integration," in *Shifting*

a stream of tradition that had embedded in it the narratives of Nebuchadnezzar I's defeat of Elam. The ease with which Elam could be equated with Persia in this narrative helped to delineate the imagined community of which the Babylonian elite conceptualized themselves to be a part, but the relationship with Persian rule could be expressed as a positive or a negative depending how the tradition was utilized. Furthermore, the potential uses of Nebuchadnezzar I's legacy should illustrate the flexibility of Babylonian historical memory in the Persian period.

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HEROES AND SINNERS:  
BABYLONIAN KINGS IN CUNEIFORM HISTORIOGRAPHY  
OF THE PERSIAN AND HELLENISTIC PERIODS

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With the conquest of the Babylonian Empire by Cyrus the Great in 539 B.C.E., Babylonia lost its political independence and, despite several revolts, the country remained under Persian rule until Alexander the Great crushed the empire of the Great King and brought it under Graeco-Macedonian rule. Simultaneously with this foreign domination, the cuneiform culture of ancient Mesopotamia was gradually relegated to the realms of religion, tradition, and scholarship.<sup>1</sup> It is, therefore, noteworthy that for the Persian and Hellenistic periods an increased number of historiographical texts has been preserved.<sup>2</sup> It cannot be excluded that this is due to the coincidences of archaeological findings, but publications in the past decades of text groups like chronicles and *Astronomical Diaries* containing historical notes suggest that their authors and copyists made a strong effort to record history.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, texts dealing with the “remote

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1. Philippe Clancier, “La Babylonie hellénistique: Aperçu d’Histoire politique et culturelle.” *Topoi* 15 (2007): 21–74.

2. A. Kirk Grayson, “Histories and Historians of the Ancient Near East: Assyria and Babylonia,” *Or* 49 (1980): 192–93.

3. For an edition of chronicles from the Hellenistic period, see Irving L. Finkel and Robartus J. van der Spek, “Babylonian Chronicles of the Hellenistic Period,” <http://www.livius.org/cg-cm/chronicles/chron00.html>. For the *Astronomical Diaries*, see Abraham J. Sachs and Hermann Hunger, *Astronomical Diaries and Related Texts from Babylonia*, vol. 1: *Diaries from 652 B.C. to 262 B.C.*; vol. 2: *Diaries from 261 B.C. to 165 B.C.*; vol. 3: *Diaries from 164 B.C. to 61 B.C.* (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-historische Klasse. Denkschriften 195, 210, 247; Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1988–1996).

past” are remarkably well attested within this historiographical production, indicating an increased interest in the past in this late period. In a way, this is not surprising, as it is a widespread phenomenon that when cultures and languages are vanishing, vigorous attempts are made to lay them down in writing.

In this late period the fading cuneiform culture was fostered and cultivated in the learned circles connected to the temples of the traditional Mesopotamian religion. Scholars and their apprentices copied and commented on literary and scholarly compositions, some of them originating from the second millennium B.C.E. And, as in the case of astronomy and astrology, they composed new types of texts in cuneiform writing. At least for the Hellenistic period, the cultivation of cuneiform culture appears to be limited to a few extended families, all performing duties in the temple, as the case of Uruk proves.<sup>4</sup> These temple communities were, like their peers in Ptolemaic Egypt, the upholders of their country’s age-old writing culture in a world in which Aramaic—and later Greek—was the vernacular and was used to express everyday culture.<sup>5</sup>

The group of cuneiform texts dealing with the “remote past” mainly consists of three types: (1) chronicles; (2) historical-literary epics; (3) (fictitious) literary letters. The chronicles on the remote past record events according to reigns of Babylonian kings. The topics treated are limited, as they pertain to war and rebellion, accession and death of kings and religious affairs.<sup>6</sup> The epics or “historical narratives” are centered on Babylonian rulers and warfare.<sup>7</sup> The letters are written by and/or addressed to kings. Unless otherwise mentioned, all tablets from the late period that

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4. L. Timothy Doty, *Cuneiform Archives from Hellenistic Uruk* (Ph.D. diss; Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1977); Philippe Clancier, “Cuneiform Culture’s Last Guardians: The Old Urban Notability of Hellenistic Uruk,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Cuneiform Culture* (ed. K. Radner and E. Robson; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 756–58.

5. Paul-Alain Beaulieu, “Official and Vernacular Languages: The Shifting Sands of Imperial and Cultural Identities in First-millennium B.C. Mesopotamia,” in *Margins of Writing, Origins of Cultures: New Approaches to Writing and Reading in the Ancient Near East; Papers from a Symposium held February 25–26, 2005* (ed. S. L. Sanders; OIS 2; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 187–216.

6. Jean-Jacques Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles* (SBLWAW 19; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 84–88.

7. A. Kirk Grayson edited the largest part of this group in his *Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts* (Toronto Semitic Texts and Studies 3; Toronto: University of Toronto

we shall treat originate from Babylon. This provenance can be specified: using the results of “museum archaeology,” Philippe Clancier has argued that specific collections of tablets that are now being kept in the British Museum have been dug up in the area of the Esagil, the main temple complex of Bēl-Marduk in Babylon, or its environs.<sup>8</sup> The inventory numbers under which these chronicles, letters and historical epics are registered in the British Museum indicate that they belong to these collections considered to be part of the Esagil library.<sup>9</sup>

When we have a closer look at these texts, it is striking that nearly all epics and letters deal with Babylonian kings who successfully fought against foreign domination. Nabopolassar, the founder of the Neo-Babylonian Empire (r. 626–605 B.C.E.), is the protagonist in three cuneiform texts. In the “Epic of Nabopolassar,”<sup>10</sup> the first part of the composition describes fighting in Cutha and narrates how the Assyrian chief eunuch—probably the Assyrian usurper king Sîn-šuma-lišir—asked Nabopolassar in vain to spare his life.<sup>11</sup> The second part describes what is generally considered to have been Nabopolassar’s coronation ceremony. In a (fictitious) letter, the anonymous writer (Nabopolassar) reminds his addressee (the Assyrian king Sîn-šarra-iškun) of the Assyrian crimes committed against Babylon and the Esagil and reports that Marduk selected him in order to avenge Akkad and rule over the lands and the peoples.<sup>12</sup> Nabopolassar states that he will avenge Akkad and destroy Nineveh and his addressee. In another letter, which could be seen as a reply of the Assyrian king to Nabopolassar,

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Press, 1975). These texts are mostly very fragmentary, which makes their interpretation very difficult.

8. Philippe Clancier, *Les bibliothèques en Babylonie dans la deuxième moitié du Ier millénaire av. J.-C.* (AOAT 363; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2009), 168–213.

9. Caroline Waerzeggers, “The Babylonian Chronicles: Classification and Provenance,” *JNES* 71 (2012): 288 n. 15. Clancier gives an overview of the inventory numbers of these collections (*Bibliothèques en Babylonie*, 192–93). For this reason we shall give the inventory number of the texts treated below (BM + number).

10. Edition by Grayson, *Historical-Literary Texts*, 78–86 (BM 34793).

11. It must remain speculative whether another epic in which Cutha is mentioned refers to this same event. In the poorly preserved fragment Šallā, the chief of the diviners (*bārû*), performed a ritual for the king in Cutha in order to overwhelm the enemy. Thereupon measures to defend the city are apparently mentioned (Grayson, *Historical-Literary Texts*, 93–97 [BM 45684]).

12. Edition by Pamela Gerardi, “Declaring War in Mesopotamia,” *Afo* 33 (1986): 30–38 (BM 55467).

Šin-šarra-iškun presents himself as inferior to the Babylonian king, whom he calls “my lord.”<sup>13</sup> This late tablet, probably written in the reign of Alexander I Balas (152–145 B.C.E.), was copied from an original kept in the Esagil (ll. 32–33). The Babylonian priest Berossos also depicts Nabopolassar as a “hero liberator”: he rebelled against Sarakos (Šin-šarra-iškun) and quickly marched to Nineveh, causing the Assyrian king to commit suicide (BNJ 680 F 7c-d and BNJ 685 F 5<sup>14</sup>). Both Berossos and the letters reflect the same tradition, as they completely omitted the role of the Medes, Nabopolassar’s allies in the war against Assyria.

Another “hero king” was Adad-šuma-ušur (r. 1216–1187). He repulsed the Assyrian domination of Babylonia and dethroned the Assyrian puppet king in Babylon. Adad-šuma-ušur is the main character in an epic, of which approximately one-half to two-thirds has been preserved.<sup>15</sup> The text is very difficult to understand. According to Grayson’s interpretation Adad-šuma-ušur was confronted with a rebellion. The rebels allowed him to pray to Bēl in the Esagil, where he confessed his sins and made sacrifices. He gained victory, and after restoring and refurbishing the temple, Adad-šuma-ušur went on a pilgrimage to Borsippa, where he also confessed his sins, and to the Emeslam, the main temple of Cutha. The text possibly ends with a description of income assignments to temple personnel, royal land grants to the temples and a blessing.<sup>16</sup>

The interpretation of the text is tentative and one wonders whether the epic might reflect events recorded in two separate chronicles, one from the Late Babylonian period, the other Neo-Babylonian. According to the former, Akkadian officers of Karduniaš (i.e. Babylonia) rebelled against Assyria and put Adad-šuma-ušur on the throne.<sup>17</sup> The Neo-Babylonian chronicle records that Adad-šuma-ušur, who apparently ruled over southern Babylonia only, defeated the Assyrian king Enlil-kudur-ušur.<sup>18</sup>

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13. Edition by Ira Spar and Wilfred G. Lambert, *Cuneiform Texts in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, vol. 2: *Literary and Scholastic Texts of the First Millennium B.C.* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2005), no. 44.

14. Geert De Breucker, “Berossos (680)” and “Abydenos (685),” in *Brill’s New Jacoby Online* (ed. I. Worthington; Leiden: Brill, 2010). Berossos composed his history of Babylonia, the *Babyloniaca* (in Greek), in the first decades of the third century B.C.E.

15. Grayson, *Historical-Literary Texts*, 56–77 (BM 34644).

16. *Ibid.*, 57–59.

17. ABC 22 iv 8–9; edited by A. Kirk Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (TCS 5; Locust Valley, N.Y.: Augustin, 1975); see also Glassner, *Chronicles*, no. 45.

18. Edited by Christopher B. F. Walker, “Babylonian Chronicle 25: A Chronicle

The Assyrian was taken and delivered to Adad-šuma-ušur (probably by Assyrian officers) and Babylonians who had fled to Assyria<sup>19</sup> were given to the Babylonian ruler. He himself went to Babylon, where an unnamed usurper ruled. Adad-šuma-ušur raised a revolt. Eternal divine protection was placed upon him and he established himself on his royal throne (*ABC* 25 2–10).<sup>20</sup> Perhaps the epic describes Adad-šuma-ušur's conquest of Babylon, in which he succeeded after his confession and prayers to Bēl in the Esagil. "He killed the nobles quickly" (iii 7) and, being in full control, restored Esagil, went to Borsippa and Cutha, assigned incomes and donated land.

Kurigalzu II (r. 1332–1308), the Kassite king who successfully fought against Elam and Assyria, is thus far not treated in a separate epic composition. The above-mentioned Late Babylonian chronicle elaborates on his campaigns (*ABC* 22 i 14–iii 22). Direct speech is interwoven in the narrative description of the battles, which gives this section of the chronicle an epic flavor. The generic boundaries between "chronicles" and "epics" or "historical narratives" are fluid.<sup>21</sup> This is not surprising, as these types of texts were composed by the same people—the scholars linked to the Esagil—who drew on the same historical material. The chronicle has parallels with the *Synchronistic Chronicle*, known from Neo-Assyrian tablets.<sup>22</sup> Glassner<sup>23</sup> supposes that the chronicle is a Babylonian copy of this Assyrian text, but the divergences between both are too large to accept this view. By inserting narrative passages the composer(s) of the chronicle expanded on the plain recording of events.

It is doubtful whether the events described in a fragmentarily preserved epic took place during the reign of Kurigalzu II, as Grayson suggests.<sup>24</sup> The fragment narrates warfare against Elam: the "Elamite" (king)

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of the Kassite and Isin II Dynasties," in *Zikir Šumim: Assyriological Studies Presented to F.R. Kraus on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday* (ed. G. van Driel et al.; Studia Scholten 5; Leiden: Brill, 1982), 398–417; see also Glassner, *Chronicles*, no. 46.

19. It is very speculative that "fugitives" mentioned in broken context in the Epic (i 8) refer to this episode.

20. See also Walker, "Babylonian Chronicle 25," 405–9.

21. *ABC* 6 (on the third year of Neriglissar) is labelled by modern scholars as a "chronicle on the recent past," but contains several narrative passages; see also Glassner, *Chronicles*, no. 25.

22. *ABC* 21 // Glassner, *Chronicles*, no. 10.

23. *Chronicles*, p. 278.

24. *Historical-Literary Texts*, 47–55 (BM 35322).

retreated towards the mountains, but was seized. The—presumable—reverse of the tablet deals with the killing of an Elamite woman and the giving of her pectorals to the daughter of Enlil-kidinnu, a man who is further unknown.

Quite a number of historiographical texts deal with the Elamite invasion of Babylonia at the end of the Kassite dynasty and the subsequent revenge by Nebuchadnezzar I (r. 1125–1104). The Elamites abducted the statue of Marduk in Babylon, according to Babylonian theological thought, because the god was angry with his people. The same ideology stated that after a period of “exile” in Elam, Marduk chose Nebuchadnezzar I to attack Elam and to bring him back to Babylon. The apodosis of a so-called “historical omen,” one copy of which dates from the Persian-Hellenistic period, fixes the duration of Bēl-Marduk’s exile to thirty years.<sup>25</sup> These events represent in the history of Babylonian theology a watershed moment, as they mark the beginning of the rise of Marduk to supreme god of the Babylonian pantheon. Whether this rise really started in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar I or is a later reconstruction, is matter of debate.<sup>26</sup>

Three tablets, known as the so-called “Kedorlaomer Texts,” focus on the Elamite king Kudur-nahhunte and describe the Elamite raids in Babylonia.<sup>27</sup> The first tablet contains correspondence between Kudur-nahhunte and the Babylonians.<sup>28</sup> The Elamite addresses the Babylonians claiming the royal throne by virtue of his descent of a Babylonian king’s daughter. In their reply, however, the Babylonians reject his claims. The second

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25. *LBAT* 1526 (BM 34031), rev. 1–3: “The Umman-manda [i.e. the Medes] will arise and rule the land. The daises of the great gods will arise. Bēl will go to Elam and—it is said—vengeance will be taken after thirty years and the great gods will return to their places.” (trans. John A. Brinkman, *A Political History of Post-Kassite Babylonia, 1158–722 B.C.* [AnOr 43; Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1968], 108 n. 585). On the basis of its inventory number, the tablet belongs to the Esagil library.

26. See John P. Nielsen, this volume.

27. The name “Kedorlaomer Texts” is derived from the supposed, and indeed incorrect, identification of Kudur-nahhunte with the Elamite king Kedorlaomer in *Genesis* 14.1; see the discussion in Wilfred G. Lambert, “The Fall of the Cassite Dynasty to the Elamites: An Historical Epic,” in *Cinquante-deux réflexions sur le Proche-Orient ancien offertes en hommage à Léon De Meyer* (ed. H. Gasche et al.; Mesopotamian History and Environment Occasional Publications 2; Leuven: Peeters, 1994), 67 and Benjamin R. Foster, *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature* (3rd ed.; Bethesda, Md.: CDL, 2005), 369 n. 1.

28. See Foster, *Before the Muses*, 370–71 (BM 35404).

tablet—an extract from a larger composition—describes the desecration of Nippur by Kudur-nahhunte and his attack on Babylonian cult centers and their sanctuaries.<sup>29</sup> The third tablet, which is very fragmentary, narrates an attack on Babylon and the Esagil and on other cult centers.<sup>30</sup> Marduk, who still dwells in Elam, becomes angry with the Elamites. The text ends with a plea for Marduk's return. The style of these texts can be labelled as "epic" or "mythical" in their description of the horrific events and the deluge-like devastation of the country. Another tablet fragment from the late period describes in equally epic wordings the battlefield after the fighting, now between the Elamites and Nebuchadnezzar I.<sup>31</sup> This tablet contains the first six lines of a larger bilingual (Sumerian and Akkadian) composition, first known from three Neo-Assyrian tablets from Nineveh.<sup>32</sup> After the end of the battle the text describes the return of Marduk and the celebrations in Babylon. The text is actually the continuation of an epic consisting of two tablets. The first part of this composition begins with the praise of Marduk and introduces Nebuchadnezzar I. It then describes that Marduk became angry during the reign of a previous ruler and on his command the gods abandoned the land. Evil demons and the Elamites entered it. The two oldest preserved copies of this first part also date from the Neo-Assyrian period, one of which has a colophon noting that it was indeed the "first tablet" of the work and belonged to the library in the "Palace of Assurbanipal."<sup>33</sup> Other copies of this first tablet in Babylonian script have

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29. Edited by Lambert, "The Fall of the Cassite Dynasty," 67–72 (BM 34026). Although the text states that the desecration took place in Nippur, it mentions sanctuaries that are better or solely known from Babylon (Lambert, "Fall of the Cassite Dynasty," 67 and 72 and Foster, *Before the Muses*, 369–70); see also Andrew R. George, *House Most High: The Temples of Ancient Mesopotamia* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1993), 65, no. 41. Either the author conflated the cultic topography of the two cities or he deliberately aimed to equate Babylon with Nippur for theological purposes.

30. See Foster, *Before the Muses*, 374–75 (BM 35496).

31. Edited by Grant Frame, *Rulers of Babylonia. From the Second Dynasty of Isin to the End of Assyrian Domination (1157–612 BC)* (Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia. Babylonian Periods 2; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 28–31 (B.2.4.9, ex. 4 = BM 35000).

32. All belong to the Kuyunjik Collection of the British Museum; see Frame, *Rulers of Babylonia*, 28.

33. Frame, *Rulers of Babylonia*, 27 (B.2.4.8), ex. 1. It is known that Assurbanipal collected all sorts of Babylonian tablets, but perhaps he had a particular interest in the war between Nebuchadnezzar I and Elam, as he himself campaigned against that country and defeated it completely.



come down to us.<sup>34</sup> One piece very probably dates from the Late Babylonian period;<sup>35</sup> its provenance is uncertain.<sup>36</sup>

It appears that at least from the Neo-Assyrian period onwards there existed a kind of “epic cycle” around the Elamite invasion in Babylonia and the revenge of Nebuchadnezzar I, as is further demonstrated by other compositions:<sup>37</sup> a letter of Kudur-nahhunte, comparable to the above-mentioned text, in which he attempts to convince the Babylonians to accept him as king,<sup>38</sup> a prayer of Nebuchadnezzar I to Marduk and the god’s answer by commanding the king to bring him back from Elam to Babylon,<sup>39</sup> a report of—very probably—the same king to the Babylonians on his successful campaign in Elam.<sup>40</sup> In the case of two other tablets it must remain unclear whether the king mentioned is Nebuchadnezzar I or another Babylonian king who fought against Elam.<sup>41</sup> The colophon of

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34. One copy (VAT 17051) has been excavated in Babylon (residential quarter of Merkes; see Olof Pedersén, *Archive und Bibliotheken in Babylon. Die Tontafeln der Grabung Robert Koldeweys 1899–1917* [ADOG 25; Saarbrücken: SDV, 2005], 225 (225). Another, still unpublished text, has been found in the (Neo-Babylonian) “Sippar Library” (Andrew R. George and Farouk N. H. Al-Rawi, “Tablets from the Sippar Library: II. Tablet II of the Babylonian Creation Epic,” *Iraq* 52 [1990]:149 n. 1). Other new pieces will be published by Irving L. Finkel.

35. Wilfred G. Lambert, “Enmeduranki and Related Matters,” *JCS* 21 (1967): 126, exemplar e (BM 47805+).

36. Frame, *Rulers of Babylonia*, 24. It is highly likely that the tablet originates from Babylon, Borsippa or Dilbat.

37. See John P. Nielsen in this volume for a discussion of these texts.

38. Jan J. van Dijk, “Die dynastischen Heiraten zwischen Kassiten und Elamern: eine verhängnisvolle Politik,” *Or* 55 (1986): 159–70. The text dates from the Neo-Babylonian period and has been excavated in the residential quarter of Ishin-Aswad in Babylon in the vicinity of the Ninurta temple; see Pedersén, *Archive und Bibliotheken*, 259–60 (146).

39. Frame, *Rulers of Babylonia*, 17–19 (B.2.4.5; Neo-Assyrian period).

40. Ibid., 21–23 (B.2.4.7). The partially preserved tablet very probably dates from the Neo-Babylonian period and was found in Merkes, a residential quarter in Babylon; see Pedersén, *Archive und Bibliotheken*, 219 (26).

41. The first composition, known by a damaged Neo-Assyrian tablet from Nineveh, describes how the Elamite kings Šutruk-nahhunte and his son Kudur-nahhunte respectively defeated the Babylonian kings Zababa-šuma-iddina and Enlil-nadin-ahi, the two last Kassite rulers (Frame, *Rulers of Babylonia*, 19–21; B.2.4.6). Kudur-nahhunte devastated the cult centers of Babylonia, which is the oldest attestation of his “religious crimes.” On the reverse of the tablet warfare between a Babylonian king, who ruled after the Kassite period, and the Elamites is described. In the

the just mentioned prayer of Nebuchadnezzar to Marduk states that the tablet was written and collated from a copy from Babylon (rev. 2'). This indicates that this "epic cycle" had already emerged before the preserved tablets from the Neo-Assyrian period, but it is not possible to determine when exactly.

In the case of Nebuchadnezzar I, his portrayal as a "heroic liberator" is a well-established tradition before the Persian-Hellenistic period. With regard to the other kings, earlier texts too hint to a "hero status." In a Neo-Assyrian copy of a letter in which Adad-šuma-ušur addresses the Assyrian kings Assur-nīrārī III and Ili-PA-da, the Babylonian insulted them by calling them stupid and mad, thus expressing a superior disdain for both Assyrian rulers.<sup>42</sup> Kurigalzu is ascribed the authorship of a literary letter in which he commands all subject peoples to bring him tribute. The letter is known from two copies, probably both dating back to the Neo-Babylonian period.<sup>43</sup> These older texts prove that the historical narratives of the Persian-Hellenistic period were not innovative with regard to the theme of "heroic liberator," but, on the contrary, built on earlier traditions. The fact that Nabopolassar is a relatively recent ruler could explain why we do not have forerunners for him.

Another striking common feature of the historiographical texts from the late period is that several of them exhibit the so-called "Marduk ideology": kings who revered Bēl-Marduk, his temple Esagil and his city Babylon gained divine protection and were successful rulers. Kings who did the opposite were severely punished. Adad-šuma-ušur confessed his sins to Bēl and subjected himself to that god and gained victory. In another

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second piece—a cylinder fragment—the sun-god Shamash of Sippar appointed the king of Babylonia and commanded him to plunder Elam (Frame, *Rulers of Babylonia*, 31–33; B.2.4.10).

42. ABL 924; see also A. Kirk Grayson, *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions*, vol. 1: *From the Beginning to Ashur-resha-ishi I* (Records of the Ancient Near East 1; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1972), 137–38.

43. One copy, still unpublished, belongs to the "Sippar Library" (Farouk N. H. Al-Rawi and Andrew R. George, "Tablets from the Sippar Library: III. Two Royal Counterfeits," *Iraq* 56 [1994]: 135 n. 2). The other has been published by Wiseman, who assumed that it was a Late Babylonian text, probably originating from Babylon (Donald J. Wiseman, "A Late Babylonian Tribute List?" *BSOAS* 30 [1967], 495–504). Borger, however, labelled this copy as "neubabylonischer Königsbrief o.ä.?"; see Rykle Borger, *Handbuch der Keilschriftliteratur*, vol. 2: *Supplement zu Band I. Anhang: Zu Kuyunjik-Sammlung* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1975), 324.

historical narrative, Amēl-Marduk had fallen into disgrace with his father Nebuchadnezzar II and went to the temple of Bēl to pray.<sup>44</sup> The reason for the disgrace differs according to the interpretation of the very fragmentary composition. Grayson reads the text as if Amēl-Marduk had neglected the Esagil and Babylon and paid no attention to son or daughter, family or kin. In the temple he repented. According to Finkel,<sup>45</sup> Amēl-Marduk had been falsely accused before his father and could not defend himself against the accusations. He went to Bēl to call him for help. Finkel based his interpretation on another Late Babylonian tablet in which “Nabû-šuma-ukīn, son of Nebuchadnezzar” prays to Marduk because he has been imprisoned through false accusations.<sup>46</sup> The identification of the supplicant with Amēl-Marduk is, however, questionable.

The topic of the sinning and repenting king is also attested in the Old Testament. To give only one example: Manasseh of Judah committed crimes against Yahweh by honoring other gods. God punished him and his sinning people by sending the Assyrian army against them. Manasseh was deported to Babylon. There he repented and prayed to Yahweh, who re-installed him on his royal throne in Jerusalem (2 Chr 33:1–13). It falls outside the remit of this contribution whether this is a coincidental parallel with the Babylonian topic or both are interconnected in that sense that there is question of influence or a common origin.

Late Babylonian chronicles on the remote past also express the Marduk ideology. In two of them the ill fate of a king is explained by his crimes against Babylon and the Esagil. Sargon of Agade (r. twenty-third century B.C.E.), whose life had become shrouded in legend in the first millennium, violated a taboo by building a copy of Babylon. Marduk became angry and finished off his people by famine. All subject peoples revolted and Marduk inflicted the sinner with insomnia.<sup>47</sup> It is almost certain that this chronicle of unknown provenance was composed in the Persian-Hellenistic period,

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44. Edited by Grayson, *Historical-Literary Texts*, 87–92 (BM 34113).

45. Irving L. Finkel, “The Lament of Nabû-šuma-ukīn,” in *Babylon: Focus mesopotamischer Geschichte, Wiege früherer Gelehrtsamkeit, Mythos in der Moderne. 2. Internationales Colloquium der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 24.–26. März 1998 in Berlin* (ed. J. Renger; CDOG 2; Saarbrücken: SDV, 1999), 337.

46. Finkel, “Lament of Nabû-šuma-ukīn,” 323–41 (BM 40474). The author refers to a late rabbinic tradition that holds that Nebuchadnezzar II imprisoned his son Amēl-Marduk. Finkel assumes that after his release Nabû-šuma-ukīn would have adopted the name “Amēl-Marduk” (“Man of Marduk”) in gratitude.

47. ABC 20A 18–23, Glassner, *Chronicles*, no. 39.

using among other sources older material from collections of historical omens.<sup>48</sup> Sargon's sin of building a new Babylon also features in the "Weidner Chronicle" (cf. *infra*).<sup>49</sup> According to the above-mentioned chronicle on the Kassite period (ABC 22 iv 9–11) the Assyrian king Tukultī-Ninurta I (r. 1243–1207) was killed by his son and the rebelling officials of Assyria because he had plotted evil against Babylon. Nabopolassar, on the other hand, was examined and selected by Marduk in order to avenge Babylon, as his letter to Sīn-šarra-iškun states. In fact, all great kings who successfully fought against foreign domination, including Nebuchadnezzar I, subdued themselves to Marduk and were under his protection.

The older preserved tablets of the "Nebuchadnezzar I Cycle" and the "Weidner Chronicle" clearly demonstrate that this Marduk ideology emerged well before the Persian-Hellenistic period. The oldest copies of the latter composition, actually a fictitious letter of a king of Isin to his peer in Babylon or Larsa, date back to the Neo-Assyrian period. The letter contains a long list of pseudo-historical and anachronistic examples of rulers revering Marduk and his cult in the Esagil or not.<sup>50</sup> It seems that this topic was further developed and flourished in the late period, when it became part of local patriotic traditions.

Some time in the Achaemenid or perhaps Hellenistic period, a parallel "Anu ideology" emerged in Uruk, as is attested by the "Shulgi Chronicle."<sup>51</sup> King Shulgi (r. 2094–2047) committed crimes against the Esagil and Babylon as well as against Anu. The latter god punished him. The anachronistic features of its contents indicate a late date for the creation of this composition. According to its colophon, the tablet was written down in 251 B.C.E.,

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48. See Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 152–54 sub Commentary. For an edition of the historical omens; see Ivan Starr, "The Place of the Historical Omens in the System of Apodoses," *BiOr* 43 (1986): 633–39.

49. Glassner, *Chronicles*, no. 38, ll. 60–61.

50. Glassner, *Chronicles*, no. 38, ll. 41–75. The list starts with Aka, a legendary king, and ends with Ibī-Sin, the last king of the Ur III Dynasty. Grayson (*Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 44 and 278–79) assumes that the text has been composed in the late Kassite or early Isin II period; see also Farouk N. H. Al-Rawi, "Tablets from the Sippar Library: I. The 'Weidner Chronicle': A Supposititious Royal Letter concerning a Vision," *Iraq* 52 (1990): 1–2. In the passage of Sargon's violation of the taboo the god Enlil is mentioned instead of Marduk, probably indicating that the text used older material dating back to a time when Enlil was still supreme god of the Mesopotamian pantheon.

51. Glassner, *Chronicles*, no. 48 (SpTU 1, 2).

but it is a copy of an obviously older wooden tablet (rev. 5'–10'). The development of the parallel Anu ideology in Uruk could be explained by the fact that Babylonia was under foreign domination: the Babylonian cities were no longer ruled from and subjected to Babylon. Uruk was politically on an equal level as the latter, especially in the Hellenistic period, when Babylon had also lost its position as provincial capital to Seleucia on the Tigris. This new political situation led to, or at least contributed to, the rise of separate traditions and local patriotism. The evolution of this process can be followed by means of onomastics: from the Achaemenid period onwards names having as theophoric element the name of Anu, Uruk's patron god in the late period, gradually increased.<sup>52</sup>

The question arises whether the historical narratives only known by tablets of the Persian-Hellenistic period are copies of older compositions or indeed newly created texts. The epic tradition on Nebuchadnezzar I clearly proves that historical epics already existed in the Neo-Assyrian period—and are probably even older. The surviving narratives on the other kings reflect orthographical and grammatical features of the Late Babylonian period, but this cannot be used as evidence for a late origin. There are, however, two distinct features compared to the older preserved epics. First, in these texts individuals, most of whom are further unknown, are mentioned by name: the daughter of Enlil-kidinnu (Elamite Epic, iii[?] 5, 8, 15); the Assyrian chief eunuch (Epic of Nabopolassar, ii(?) 12–18); Rēmūt and Šar-ilūa (Epic of Adad-šuma-ušur, iii 8); Šallā, chief of the diviners (Cutha fragment, rev.[?], 2); and one Ibbi-Tutu in the “Desecration of Nippur Text” (rev. 27). Secondly, the topic of the king who sinned and repented, like Adad-šuma-ušur and Amēl-Marduk, is not attested before. This could hint at a further, younger development.

If we accept that these epics and historical narratives are creations of the late, i.e. Persian-Hellenistic period, is it possible to fix their date more precisely? As we have seen, the tablets originating from Babylon belong to collections connected with the Esagil. These collections include dated or datable astronomical texts and archival documents. The documentary tablets, which belonged to the Rahimešu archive, were written down in

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52. Karlheinz Kessler, “Urukäische Familien versus babylonische Familien: Die Namengebung in Uruk, die Degradierung der Kulte von Eanna und der Aufstieg des Gottes Anu,” *AoF* 31 (2004): 237–53; Paul-Alain Beaulieu, “Uruk before and after Xerxes” (paper read at Xerxes and Babylon: The Cuneiform Evidence Symposium, Leiden, January 16–17, 2014).

the second and first century B.C.E.<sup>53</sup> The largest part of the astronomical tablets date from the fourth to the first century B.C.E., with a peak between 299 and 50 B.C.E.<sup>54</sup> This could lead to the conclusion that all tablets belonging to the Esagil library, including the literary ones, must be dated in the Hellenistic period. The Letter of Šin-šarra-iškun, though belonging to the cuneiform collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (CTMMA 2, no. 44, cf. *supra*), seems to confirm this conclusion: according to its damaged colophon the tablet was probably written down during the reign of Alexander I Balas (152–145 B.C.E.).

An origin of the historiographical texts in the Achaemenid—or more specifically, the later Achaemenid—period can, however, not be excluded.<sup>55</sup> Although these tablets—astronomical, documentary as well as literary—have been excavated together, the data are not precise enough to conclude that they were stored in the same room or, even, same building. Moreover, the “life time” and use of literary texts very likely differ from archival documents and scientific texts. We do not know how long library copies of literary compositions were kept and consulted before they were replaced by new copies. The Šin-šarra-iškun Letter is a copy whose original was kept in the Esagil, and it is completely unknown when that original was written down.

Several of the above-mentioned historiographical texts focus on the horrific Elamite invasion of Babylonia and warfare against Elam. One tablet deals with the claims on the Babylonian throne the Elamite king Kudur-nahhunte made to the citizens of Babylon and their rejection of it. Is it possible that these texts—new creations or copies of older compositions—had an actual political meaning in the sense that with “Elam” the Achaemenid Empire and rule over Babylonia were meant, as Foster (*Before the Muses*, 369) has suggested?

It is not known how Achaemenid rule was conceived in Babylonian historiography, as we have only a few texts pertaining to the Achaemenids. The sole exception is Cyrus the Great, whom the propagandistic text of the *Cyrus Cylinder* depicts as a legitimate king of Babylon, having been elected by Marduk to rule the land.<sup>56</sup> In the *Dynastic Prophecy*, Cyrus is presented

53. Clancier, *Bibliothèques en Babylonie*, 195–200.

54. *Ibid.*, 235–39.

55. So Foster, *Before the Muses*, 369 and Lambert, “Fall of the Cassite Dynasty,” 67 in the case of the Kedorlaomer Texts.

56. *Cyrus Cylinder*: Hanspeter Schaudig, *Die Inschriften Nabonids von Babylon*

as a good ruler under whose reign Babylonia flourished.<sup>57</sup> The latter composition preserved on a tablet that also belonged to the Esagil library, lists kings and their deeds and evaluates their reigns.<sup>58</sup> The composition, however, very likely did not treat all the Achaemenid kings.<sup>59</sup> Berossos wrote that Artaxerxes II erected a statue of the goddess Anaïtis in Babylon and the other satrapal capitals and showed how to worship it (BNJ 680 F 11). Since we do not know in which context Berossos recorded this innovation, we cannot discern whether he made a judgment about this or about Artaxerxes. The Babylonian priest also wrote on the other Achaemenid kings, but to what extent is not known (BNJ 680 F 10). Despite this lack of information it is fairly possible that the texts describing the Elamite raids and sacrilege in Babylonia and the revenge by a native ruler did indeed express real political aspirations.

The milieu in which the historical narratives were composed and copied could shed light on their background. The epics and letters belong, as we have seen, to the Esagil library in Babylon or, better, one of that temple's libraries. Clancier does not rule out the possibility that some of the tablets excavated in the Esagil and its surroundings were actually part of tablet collections possessed by scholars who lived in the neighboring quarters of

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*und Kyros' des Großen samt den in ihrem Umfeld entstandenen Tendenzschriften. Textausgabe und Grammatik* (AOAT 256; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2001), 550–56, and Irving L. Finkel, “The Cyrus Cylinder: the Babylonian Perspective,” in *The Cyrus Cylinder: The King of Persia's Proclamation from Ancient Babylon* (ed. I. Finkel; New York: Tauris, 2013), 4–34 (with publication of two new fragments that have been found in the British Museum).

57. *Dynastic Prophecy* ii 17'–24'. Ed. Robartus J. van der Spek, “Darius III, Alexander the Great and Babylonian Scholarship,” in *A Persian Perspective: Essays in Memory of Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg* (ed. W. Henkelman and A. Kuhrt; Achaemenid History 13; Leiden: NINO, 2003), 311–32 (BM 40623); see also Grayson, *Historical-Literary Texts*, 24–37.

58. According to its very broken colophon the tablet is a copy (vi 16–18).

59. See Caroline Waerzeggers, “Babylonian Kingship in the Persian Period: Performance and Reception,” in *Exile and Return: The Babylonian Context* (ed. J. Stökl and C. Waerzeggers; BZAW 478; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015). Column ii ends with the reign of Cyrus and the legible part of the next column first treats the reign of Arses (338–336 B.C.E.). Lambert assumes that (at least) one column on both sides of the tablet is missing (Wilfred G. Lambert, *The Background of Jewish Apocalyptic* [London: Athlone, 1978], 12–13); see also van der Spek, “Darius,” 312 and 320. Lambert's argumentation is, however, not convincing.



Eridu and Shu'anna.<sup>60</sup> It corresponds with the fact that cuneiform culture was fostered by scholars belonging to the milieu of the traditional Babylonian temple. Did this temple community of the Esagil long for a regime change or were they just nostalgic for a glorious past? The latter is certain. Students copied during their school curriculum historiographical texts, like chronicles and tablets with inscriptions of ancient kings, and were in this way imbued with Babylonia's rich history. The creation of the historical epics and letters dealing with kings who liberated Babylonia from foreign yoke, though building on older material, can be interpreted as part of this nostalgia. The question whether the temple community dreamt of a regime change is more difficult to answer. In essence, regime change was inherent to the Mesopotamian concept of history. Texts like the *Dynastic Chronicle* and *Babylonian King List A* show that Mesopotamian history was a continuum of the rise and fall of dynasties: cities and kings came to power and after their term (Sumerian: *bala*) were replaced by the following ones.<sup>61</sup> This concept of succeeding dynasties parallels the idea of the four empires in the book of Daniel, but it goes too far to assume direct Mesopotamian influence on its origins.

On the basis of this concept of succeeding dynasties it was certain for the members of the temple community that the rule of the Achaemenids and of the Seleucids would also inevitably come to an end after a period of time. But when was uncertain. Two texts from the late period could reflect the hope of an imminent regime change. The above-mentioned *Dynastic Prophecy* "predicts" that after a reign of five years Darius III will be defeated by "the army of the Hani," i.e. of the Greeks (col. v 8–13). Later, someone else will assemble an army, and, being under divine protection, he will overthrow the army of the Hani. The people will enjoy well-being and tax exemption will be granted (v 13–23). This much-debated passage seems to predict the end of Alexander the Great. Van der Spek is very probably right, when he assumes that, whereas all preceding predictions

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60. Clancier, *Bibliothèques en Babylonie*, 200–203.

61. *Dynastic Chronicle*: Glassner, *Chronicles*, no. 3, first attested by copies from the Neo-Assyrian period. Two pieces are Late Babylonian and originate from Babylon: BM 35572 and BM 40565; see Irving L. Finkel, "Bilingual Chronicle Fragments," *JCS* 32 (1980): 65–72. According to Clancier's reconstruction both pieces belonged to the Esagil library (*Bibliothèques en Babylonie*, 192–93). *Babylonian King List A*: A. Kirk Grayson, "Königslisten und Chroniken. B. Akkadisch," *RIA* 6 (1980–1983): 90–96 (BM 33332; Neo-Babylonian script, unknown provenance).



can actually be labelled as “vaticinia ex eventu,” this is the first “real” prediction.<sup>62</sup> If correct, the text is negative vis-à-vis the Macedonian.<sup>63</sup> The “Uruk Prophecy” also expresses the idea of a regime change, but in Uruk itself, and it ends with a final ideal dynasty:

[Af]ter him a king, his son, will arise in Uruk and rule the four quarters of the world.... His dynasty will endure forever. [The king]s of Uruk will exercise the rulership like the gods.<sup>64</sup>

It must remain unclear whether this prediction really refers to a specific king and dynasty or just expresses the hope for an ideal dynasty.<sup>65</sup> This prophecy, found in a residential quarter in Uruk, was composed by the local temple community and expressed local patriotic traditions.

Let us now turn again to the historical narratives. Given the fact that they were composed in the temple community, how should we interpret that other motif of sinning and repenting kings and rulers honoring or neglecting Bēl-Marduk, Esagil and Babylon? Or, in the case of Uruk, Anu and his cult? It is unlikely that the temple community had religious intentions in the way that their members aimed to defend their traditional religion in an age when other deities, like Anāitis or Greek gods, were invading Babylonia. Only in one composition from Uruk an entry could be interpreted in this way: the vilified Chaldaean king Nabû-šuma-iškun, who committed sin after sin, is accused of making offerings to foreign gods: the gods of the Sealand, of the Chaldaeans and of the Aramaeans.<sup>66</sup> It is, however, more likely that the topic of kings submitting themselves to the temple's patron god enabled its community to define or, perhaps better,

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62. Van der Spek, “Darius,” 312–32.

63. This is not the end of the text. It continues with other largely damaged predictions. Neujahr has nicely proposed that after a certain moment in time the Prophecy was expanded and updated (Matthew Neujahr, “When Darius Defeated Alexander: Composition and Redaction in the Dynastic Prophecy,” *JNES* 64 [2005]: 101–7).

64. SpTU 1, 3, rev. 16–18.

65. On the basis of its archaeological context the tablet can be dated between the fifth and third centuries B.C.E. Beaulieu argues that the text was composed at the beginning of the third century, in the reign of Antiochus I and was intended for him (Paul-Alain Beaulieu, “The Historical Background of the Uruk Prophecy,” in *The Tablet and the Scroll: Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William W. Hallo* (ed. M. E. Cohen et al.; Bethesda, Md.: CDL, 1993), 48–50).

66. SpTU 3, 58 iii 42'–43'; see also Glassner, *Chronicles*, no. 52.

redefine its identity. It provided its members with self-consciousness in a world of foreign rulers and alien cultures. They were the upholders of a gradually fading culture with a glorious past and, in the case of the Esagil, the members of that temple community revered and served Bēl-Marduk, to whom kings, even the most successful, paid obeisance.

This process of creating identity very likely explains why a corpus of historical epics and letters was compiled within the Esagila community. It is unlikely that these texts ever reached the outside world or were intended to be a *Fürstenspiegel* for the foreign rulers. As few outsiders could read and understand Akkadian, these texts only circulated within the circle of the temple community itself. As far as we can judge from the few extant colophons of these historiographical texts, it even seems that there was no exchange of copies between the temple communities of Babylon and Uruk. We could compare this historiographical literature with the Judean “apologetic” works of the Hellenistic period that, according to some scholars, were written for an inner audience and circulated in the inner circles.<sup>67</sup> Could we, then, speak of a “cuneiform apologetic literature”?

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67. See the discussion in Gregory S. Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition: Josephus, Luke-Acts and Apologetic Historiography* (NovTSup 64; Brill: Leiden, 1992), 223–25; and Erich S. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition* (Hellenistic Culture and Society 30; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 292–93.

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## FACTS, PROPAGANDA, OR HISTORY? SHAPING POLITICAL MEMORY IN THE NABONIDUS CHRONICLE

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The *Nabonidus Chronicle* has proven invaluable for writing the early history of the Persian Empire.<sup>1</sup> Historians derive from it the “only chronologically fixed data” for Cyrus’s reign and an indispensable framework for understanding the fall of Babylon and the emergence of the Persian Empire in the wider context of the Near East.<sup>2</sup> In a year-by-year review of events, this unique cuneiform tablet discusses the reign of Babylon’s last independent king Nabonidus (r. 556–539 B.C.E.), the international stir caused by the rise of Cyrus, the fatal confrontation between the armies of Persia and Akkad in 539 B.C.E., and the first months (or perhaps years) of

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1. The most recent editions of the text are A. Kirk Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (TCS 5; Locust Valley, NY: J. J. Augustin, 1975), no. 7, and Jean-Jacques Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles* (SBLWAW 19; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), no. 28. A translation by R. J. van der Spek is available on [www.livius.org](http://www.livius.org).

2. The quote is from Amélie Kuhrt, *The Persian Empire: A Corpus of Sources from the Achaemenid Period* (London: Routledge, 2007), 47. The *Nabonidus Chronicle* is the key source in many reconstructions of the early history of the Persian Empire; among many examples: A. Leo Oppenheim, “The Babylonian Evidence of Achaemenian Rule in Mesopotamia,” *The Cambridge History of Iran 2* (1985): 529–87 (537–45); Pierre Briant, *Histoire de l’empire perse: De Cyrus à Alexandre* (Paris: Fayard, 1996), 50–53.

Persia's rule over the territory formerly held by Nabonidus. Most historians use this text as a neutral witness of events as they happened, quarrying it for historical data. Those who recognize a political bias in it nonetheless believe that its apologetic distortions can easily be peeled away from a factual core. Both sides situate the *Chronicle's* value in its reliability as a source of historical fact, compiled at the time or in living memory of the events it reports.

Despite this confidence, it is a well-known (but barely acknowledged) fact that the only surviving manuscript of the *Nabonidus Chronicle* dates from the Hellenistic or perhaps even Parthian period.<sup>3</sup> This means that our witness is at least two hundred years younger than the reality it is thought to reflect so adequately. Despite the enormous lapse of time, no unease about the text's reliability as a source on sixth-century history is expressed. This is because the *Chronicle* is held to be a "copy" of an "original" dated to the time of the events. As the copy is usually treated *as if it is* the (putative) sixth-century original, there is an implicit assumption that the transmission process happened smoothly and faithfully. Yet, Achaemenid historians have found at least one element in the text that calls for caution. In ii:15 Cyrus is called "king of Parsu" while this title only came into use under Darius I, some twenty years later.<sup>4</sup> As this title is "of course not contemporary,"<sup>5</sup> the relationship between copy and original might be more complicated than assumed.

In this paper I propose a different approach to the *Nabonidus Chronicle*. Instead of reading this text either as a factual report or as a piece of propaganda, I argue that the text is more suitably read as historical literature, or "history." As such, the text allows us to study first and foremost the practice of historiography, and only on a secondary level the historical course of events. The practice of historiography behind the *Chronicle* should be situated in Hellenistic Babylon. This is the cultural and histori-

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3. As pointed out already by the first editor of the text: Sidney Smith, *Babylonian Historical Texts Relating to the Capture and Downfall of Babylon* (London: Methuen, 1924), 98.

4. Peter R. Bedford, *Temple Restoration in Early Achaemenid Judah* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 120–21; Matt Waters, "Cyrus and the Achaemenids," *Iran* 42 (2004): 91–101; Daniel T. Potts, "Cyrus the Great and the Kingdom of Anshan," in *Birth of the Persian Empire* (ed. V. S. Curtis and S. Stewart; The Idea of Iran 1; London: Tauris, 2005), 7–28; Matt Waters, "Parsumaš, Šušān, and Cyrus," in *Elam and Persia* (ed. J. Álvarez-Mon and M. B. Garrison; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 285–96.

5. Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 50.



cal context that supplies the framework for understanding the text's meaning and function.

#### NEUTRAL WITNESS OR PROPAGANDA?

So far, discussions of the *Nabonidus Chronicle* have focused on the question of its historical reliability. How do the facts presented in the text relate to history as it happened? Two diametrically opposed answers have been formulated to this question: one group of scholars considers the *Chronicle* as a neutral witness of history while others discover in it an attempt to distort it. Both views, however, share the belief that the *Chronicle* gives access to reliable information, because it was drafted from observation or within living memory of the events. Before proposing a different approach to this text, I will review these perspectives on the *Chronicle*, starting with the most pervasive one.

It is striking how often and how easily historians insist on the *Chronicle's* status as an objective account of historical facts. Such statements usually serve to validate larger decisions of source criticism. The orthodoxy is that the *Chronicle* is a beacon of truth and clarity in a minefield of otherwise tricky and deceptive sources on Cyrus and Nabonidus.<sup>6</sup> On the one hand, there are the so-called "propaganda" texts allegedly written in cuneiform by priests of Babylon eager to collaborate with the Persian conqueror and discredit Nabonidus's reign; the *Cyrus Cylinder* and *Verse Account* are the principal products remaining of this effort. On the other hand, there

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6. E.g., Amélie Kuhrt, "Babylonia from Cyrus to Xerxes," in *Cambridge Ancient History* (2nd ed; vol. 4; Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 1988): 112–38 (120, 122); Paul-Alain Beaulieu, "Nabonidus the Mad King: A Reconsideration of His Stelas from Harran and Babylon," in *Representations of Political Power: Case Histories from Times of Change and Dissolving Order in the Ancient Near East* (ed. M. Heinz and M. H. Feldman; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 137–66 (138); Amélie Kuhrt, "Cyrus the Great of Persia: Images and Realities," in *Representations of Political Power: Case Histories from Times of Change and Dissolving Order in the Ancient Near East* (ed. M. Heinz and M. H. Feldman; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 169–91 (176); Matt Waters, "Cyrus and the Medes," in *The World of Ancient Persia* (ed. J. Curtis and S. Simpson; London: Tauris, 2010), 63–71 (69); R. J. van der Spek, "Cyrus the Great, Exiles, and Foreign Gods: A Comparison of Assyrian and Persian Policies on Subject Nations," in *Extraction and Control: Studies in Honor of Matthew W. Stolper* (ed. M. Kozuh et al; SAOC 68; Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2014), 233–64 (254–55).



are accounts about the fall of Babylon in Old Testament and Greek historical literature, written long after the facts by communities with their own cultural and political agendas. The *Chronicle* is usually contrasted to these ideological writings as serving no other purpose than the objective recording of events as they happened. As a result, the *Chronicle* gives access to “reality,” whereas the other sources give access to an “image.” Among many authors, we can cite Amélie Kuhrt, who states that the *Chronicle* is “the sole reliable, indeed crucial document” on the period, “not written at the behest or in the interests of any political agency.”<sup>7</sup> David Vanderhooft embraces the idea of the *Chronicle*’s reliability to the extent that he classifies it as “documentary evidence.”<sup>8</sup>

Two sets of arguments instill this level of confidence in the *Chronicle*’s reliability. Firstly, there is a good match between certain sections of the *Chronicle* and evidence from contemporary sources, in particular archival texts and royal inscriptions of Nabonidus and Cyrus. Archival texts help to corroborate the chronological outline of the Persian takeover of Babylonia. This is thanks to the fact that archival texts mention, in their dates, the king who reigned on the day, month and year of the deed. The information obtained in this fashion is almost perfectly in tune with the *Chronicle* in relation to the establishment of Persian rule in Babylonia.<sup>9</sup> Another area where archival texts match the *Chronicle* is

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7. The first citation is from Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 47. The second citation is from Kuhrt, “Cyrus the Great of Persia,” 176.

8. David Vanderhooft, “Cyrus II, Liberator or Conqueror? Ancient Historiography concerning Cyrus in Babylon,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (ed. O. Lipschits and M. Oeming; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 351–72 (352). Earlier, Ronald Sack situated the *Nabonidus Chronicle* and archival texts on the same level of historical reliability, cf. Ronald H. Sack, “The Nabonidus Legend,” *RA* 77 (1983): 59–67 (63–64).

9. There is only a slight mismatch. In Sippar, the scribe of CT 56 55 dated his record to Nabonidus (15–VII of year 17), while the *Chronicle* places that city under Persian control a day earlier (14–VII). As (according to the *Chronicle*) the Persian army had not yet reached Babylon, Nabonidus would still have held the kingship, so this information does not contradict the information in the *Chronicle*. Somewhat more problematic is that on 17–VII a scribe in Uruk dated his tablet to Nabonidus while Babylon had fallen to the Persians a day earlier according to the *Chronicle* (16–VII). As suggested by Parker and Dubberstein, this may be due to a communication lag between Babylon and the southern city of Uruk (Richard A. Parker and Waldo H. Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology 626 B.C.–A.D. 75* [Providence, R. I.: Brown University Press, 1956], 13–14). In any event, the Sippar tablet CT 57 717 shows that no later than 19–VII

in its report about Nabonidus's collection of divine statues in Babylon in the months prior to the confrontation with Cyrus's army in 539 B.C.E.<sup>10</sup> Royal inscriptions, a second major source of information on the period, also contain corroborative evidence. Those of Nabonidus confirm reports in the *Chronicle* about military and political events in his reign, including the campaign to Hume in the first year, his departure to Teima and his absence from Babylon, the Astyages-Cyrus episode, and the death of Nabonidus's mother. *The Cyrus Cylinder* can also be usefully compared with the *Chronicle*, e.g. in its reference to Cyrus's subjugation of Media and the peaceful surrender of Babylon. Moreover, besides validating historical "facts," the royal inscriptions help to authenticate the discursive framework of the *Chronicle*, such as the branding of Cyrus as "King of Anshan," a practice only known from mid-sixth century texts.<sup>11</sup> In a similar vein, the long interruption of the New Year festival under Nabonidus, which was clearly of deep concern to the authors of the *Chronicle*, is echoed (and hence validated as a contemporary sensitivity) in the *Verse Account*, a cuneiform literary text from the early Persian period.<sup>12</sup> Finally, there is extensive archaeological and epigraphic evidence to support the *Chronicle*'s statements about Nabonidus's stay in Teima.<sup>13</sup> All these

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Babylonian scribes recognized Cyrus as king of Babylon. This is three days after the *Chronicle* places the capture of Babylon. Based on this evidence, therefore, the chronology of the take-over presented in the *Chronicle* is reliable (cf. Paul-Alain Beaulieu, *The Reign of Nabonidus King of Babylon* [YNER 10; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989], 230–31). Most problematic, however, is *Nbn.* 1054 which is dated to Nabonidus on 10-VIII, fully three weeks after the fall of Babylon, although John MacGinnis, who kindly collated the tablet, suggests that the year number can be read "16" as well as "17." See also Vanderhooft, "Cyrus II, Liberator or Conqueror?" 352 n. 2.

10. The Uruk evidence was discussed by Paul-Alain Beaulieu (*Reign of Nabonidus*, 220–24 and "An Episode in the Fall of Babylon to the Persians," *JNES* 52 [1993]: 241–61). Stefan Zawadzki recently adduced new evidence from a Sippar tablet about the dispatch of the god of Bās to Babylon in the same period ("The End of the Neo-Babylonian Empire: New Data Concerning Nabonidus' Order to Send the Statues of Gods to Babylon," *JNES* 71 [2012]: 47–52).

11. See Waters, "Cyrus and the Achaemenids," 94 for an overview of the royal titles used by Cyrus.

12. The latest edition of the *Verse Account* is by Hanspeter Schaudig, *Die Inschriften Nabonids von Babylon und Kyros' des Großen samt den in ihrem Umfeld entstandenen Tendenzschriften. Textausgabe und Grammatik* (AOAT 256; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2001), 563–78.

13. E.g. Ricardo Eichmann, Hanspeter Schaudig and Arnulf Hausleiter, "Archae-

matches between the *Chronicle* and contemporary evidence instill confidence in the general reliability of the *Chronicle* as fact-based and true to the events as they happened.

A second set of arguments in support of the *Chronicle*'s reliability is of a generic nature. The *Nabonidus Chronicle* is usually placed within a longer series of "Babylonian Chronicles" that, when complete, would have provided an uninterrupted history of Babylonia from Nabonassar down to the Seleucids. The Neo-Babylonian chronicles are generally thought to be "impartial historical documents" written by authors who were "not trying to convince their readers of some particular idea."<sup>14</sup> This opinion finds wide acceptance in ancient Near Eastern scholarship, even if in other areas of history awareness has grown that ideas about the past are not only shaped by understandings of the present and *vice versa*, but also that selecting "facts" of history is in itself an act of interpretation.<sup>15</sup> The conviction that the Neo-Babylonian chronicles constitute history pure and simple—history written for history's sake<sup>16</sup>—seems rather naive in this light. But despite occasional skepticism,<sup>17</sup> this remains the majority opinion.<sup>18</sup> It is fed by the idea that the chronicles were compiled from contemporary notations based on observation.<sup>19</sup> According to this idea, the

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ology and Epigraphy at Tayma (Saudi Arabia)," *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 17 (2006): 163–76.

14. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 11.

15. See among many possible examples Rosamond McKitterick, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

16. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 11.

17. John A. Brinkman, "The Babylonian Chronicle Revisited," in *Lingering over Words: Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Literature in Honor of William L. Moran* (ed. T. Abusch et al; HSS 37; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 73–104 (74–75); Manuel Gerber, "Die Inschrift H(arran)1.A/B und die neubabylonische Chronologie," *ZA* 88 (1998): 72–93 (78); *ibid.*, "A Common Source for the Late Babylonian Chronicles Dealing with the Eighth and Seventh Centuries," *JAOS* 120 (2000): 553–69 (569); Johannes Haubold, *Greece and Mesopotamia: Dialogues in Literature* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 133 n. 27.

18. Some examples include Robert Drews, "The Babylonian Chronicles and Berossus," *Iraq* 37 (1975): 39–55 (39–40); Robartus J. van der Spek, "Berossus as a Babylonian Chronicler and Greek Historian," in *Studies in Ancient Near Eastern World View and Society Presented to Marten Stol on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday* (ed. R. J. van der Spek; Bethesda, Md.: CDL, 2007), 277–318 (277–84).

19. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 12–13; van der Spek, "Berossus," 284–287; Kuhrt, "Cyrus the Great of Persia," 176.

chroniclers excerpted their reports from running accounts, to be identified as the *Astronomical Diaries*. These texts, many of which survive, contain observations of a number of historical phenomena, including astronomical events, market prices, environmental conditions, and significant human activities, such as battles, coronations, festivals, diseases, rebellions and deaths of kings. The assumed connection with the *Diaries* enhances the aura of objectivity of the chronicles, as it anchors them in observation.<sup>20</sup>

A totally different approach to the *Nabonidus Chronicle* is taken by a second, smaller group of scholars, who argue that the text was written, not for history's sake, but with a deliberate intention to mislead. These authors emphasize that the text emerged in a politically complex and sensitive period, shortly after Nabonidus lost control of Babylon and at the time when the Persians were seeking to connect to local power brokers and negotiate a new system of rule. Within this context, priests of Babylon's Esagil temple would have felt the need to rewrite the history of Nabonidus's reign in order to explain his failure and justify Cyrus's victory. Not only the *Cyrus Cylinder* and *Verse Account* resulted from this effort, according to these scholars, but also the *Nabonidus Chronicle*. In other words, rather than setting up a firm dichotomy between the *Chronicle* as truthful history on the one hand, and the *Cyrus Cylinder* and *Verse Account* as propaganda on the other, these authors classify all these works as tendentious.<sup>21</sup> This opinion was first briefly formulated by Wolfram von Soden<sup>22</sup> and later taken up by Reinhard Kratz, who insisted on the literary character of the *Chronicle* and the need to investigate its ideological premises rather than its historical accuracy, adding that ancient historical texts were "not composed to inform the modern historian, but rather to indoctrinate or instruct their contemporary readers."<sup>23</sup> The

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20. The dependency of the chronicles on the *Astronomical Diaries* has been critiqued by Brinkman, "The Babylonian Chronicle Revisited" and Caroline Waerzeggers, "The Babylonian Chronicles: Classification and Provenance," *JNES* 71 (2012): 285–98 (297–98).

21. E.g., Muhammad A. Dandamaev and Vladimir G. Lukonin, *The Culture and Social Institutions of Ancient Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 377.

22. Wolfram von Soden, "Eine babylonische Volksüberlieferung von Nabonid in den Danielerzählungen," *ZAW* 53 (1935): 81–89 (82); *ibid.*, "Kyros und Nabonid: Propaganda und Gegenpropaganda," in *Kunst, Kultur und Geschichte der Achämenidenzeit und ihr Fortleben* (ed. H. Koch and D. N. Mackenzie; AMIE 10; Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1983), 61–68 (61).

23. Reinhard Kratz, "From Nabonidus to Cyrus," in *Ideologies and Intercultural*

*Tendenz* of the *Chronicle*, according to Kratz, lies in its selection of facts (particularly its insistence on the disruption of the New Year festival under Nabonidus) and in its narrative structuring of the material. Stefan Zawadzki recently gave further weight to this argument by pointing out that the *Chronicle* omits information favorable to Nabonidus and that it seeks to set up a contrast with Cyrus on various levels, including military failure and success, collection and restoration of cult statues, disregard and respect for the dead, and the interruption and celebration of the New Year festival.<sup>24</sup> These strategies resulted in a positive portrait of Cyrus and a negative one of Nabonidus. Zawadzki pays close attention to the multiple redactions behind the present version of the text, and in doing so he is the first to tackle this important issue in any depth.<sup>25</sup> He concludes that authors in the early Persian period modified and rewrote an earlier chronicle “undoubtedly on the orders of Cyrus.”<sup>26</sup> This rewritten version distorted the facts of Nabonidus’s reign contained in the original composition to suit the political realities after his fall. As the distortion took place only at the level of selecting (true) information and structuring it in a suggestive narrative format, the *Chronicle*’s ultimate reliability remains undisputed by Zawadzki. The report may be selective and incomplete, but it is not false.

Summing up, two contrasting evaluations presently mark the scholarship on the *Nabonidus Chronicle*. These evaluations assign fundamentally different motives to the ancient authors and also draw different linkages between the *Chronicle* and other literary texts created in the sixth century B.C.E. Historians, who appreciate the *Chronicle* as an objective source of historical facts, emphasize the text’s attribution to the genre of the chronicles, an affiliation that underscores its authority as an eye-witness report based on observation. Those who are sensitive to possible bias in the text notice a greater affinity between the *Chronicle* and propagandistic texts

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*Phenomena* (Melammu Symposia III; ed. A. Panaino and G. Pettinato; Milan: Università di Bologna & IsIao, 2002), 143–56 (145).

24. Stefan Zawadzki, “The Portrait of Nabonidus and Cyrus in *Their(?) Chronicle*: When and Why the Present Version Was Composed,” in *Who Was King? Who Was Not King? The Rulers and Ruled in the Ancient Near East* (ed. P. Charvát and P. Maříková Vlčková; Prague: Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, 2010), 142–54.

25. See his comments on the neglect of this topic in the present scholarship: Zawadzki, “End of the Neo-Babylonian Empire,” 47 n. 2.

26. Zawadzki, “Portrait of Nabonidus and Cyrus,” 143.

created under the influence, or even at the explicit request, of the Persians. Stefan Zawadzki recently pushed the discussion into a new direction by pointing out that the redaction process behind our present manuscript may be complex.

#### ORIGINAL, COPY, AND TRANSMISSION

Continuing on this last point, one aspect on which most commentators agree is that the surviving manuscript of the *Nabonidus Chronicle* is a late “copy” of an earlier text. Among the questions that such a label invokes, the most pertinent are that of the date of its production, its relationship to the “original,” and the intermittent process of transmission. I will begin with the first question: when was the surviving “copy” produced?

Authors following Wiseman date its creation to the reign of Darius I.<sup>27</sup> This is based on Wiseman’s suggestion that the *Nabonidus Chronicle* was written by the same scribe who wrote the *Babylonian Chronicle* in Darius’s twenty-second year (500 B.C.E.) because of similarities of *ductus* and layout.<sup>28</sup> This suggestion was rejected by Brinkman who pointed out that not only do the same signs have distinctly different shapes in the two manuscripts, but that the handwriting of the *Nabonidus Chronicle* is also much more slanted than that of the *Babylonian Chronicle*.<sup>29</sup> Even if Wiseman’s idea continues to attract supporters,<sup>30</sup> it cannot be seriously upheld. A much more likely proposal is that the manuscript is late Achaemenid, Seleucid, or Parthian in date.<sup>31</sup> This is based on the manuscript’s location in collection Sp 2 of the British Museum, a collection made up of materials coming from the late Babylonian Esagil “library,” dug up in Babylon in the 1870s.<sup>32</sup> This “library” was in active use between the reign of Artaxerxes II

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27. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 9 n. 7, 14, 21. Zawadzki, “Portrait of Nabonidus and Cyrus,” 143.

28. Donald J. Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings (626–556 B.C.) in the British Museum* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1956), 3.

29. Brinkman, “Babylonian Chronicle Revisited,” 86–87.

30. Zawadzki, “Portrait of Nabonidus and Cyrus,” 143.

31. This was first suggested by Smith, *Babylonian Historical Texts*, 98 and the idea has since been confirmed on the basis of museological considerations, cf. Philippe Clancier, *Les bibliothèques en Babylonie dans la deuxième moitié du Ier millénaire av. J.-C.* (AOAT 363; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2009), 448; Waerzeggers, “Babylonian Chronicles,” 291.

32. Clancier, *Bibliothèques*, 192. See also G. van Driel, “The British Museum

and c. 60 B.C.E.,<sup>33</sup> which gives us a broad but reliable time frame for situating the production of the present manuscript of the *Nabonidus Chronicle*.

Few scholars, if any, have reflected on the implications of the late date of our manuscript. An unproblematic process of transmission is imagined, linking the “copy”—the text that survives today—to its “original.” That original text is assigned, mostly without further comment, to the sixth century and held to be coterminous to, or written in living memory of, the reported events. The two evaluations of the *Nabonidus Chronicle* that I outlined above, while in some points sharply contradictory, share this basic assumption.

There are indications that the situation was more complex, however. A first sign is the *Chronicle*’s use of the anachronistic title “King of Parsu” for Cyrus. This should urge us, at the very least, to accommodate room for change and adaptation in the copyist’s work. Secondly, the use of “Elam” to refer to Persia<sup>34</sup> finds no parallels in contemporary literature but reminds us of the *Dynastic Prophecy*, a Hellenistic cuneiform text, which calls Cyrus “King of Elam.”<sup>35</sup> The use of this old geographic name carried connotations of threat and destruction by Babylonia’s age-old

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Sippar Collection: Babylonia 1882–1893,” *ZA* 79 (1989): 102–17 (109) on the cuneiform materials excavated in Babylon in the 1870s. The tablets were found to the south of Esagil, near the temple precinct, but details about the findspot are not available. It is uncertain, therefore, whether we are dealing with the remains of a single collection of tablets or of a conglomerate of archives. It is clear, however, that the tablets were produced by persons closely affiliated to the Esagil temple, and in that sense the label “Esagil library” will be employed here. See Clancier, *Bibliothèques*, for an extensive discussion of the texts and their relationship to the Esagil temple.

33. Francis Joannès, “De Babylone à Sumer: Le parcours intellectuel des lettrés de la Babylonie récente,” *Revue Historique* 302 (2000): 693–717 (703).

34. That is if Elammiya in ii: 22 refers to Elam; see lately Zawadzki, “End of the Neo-Babylonian Empire,” 48 n. 4.

35. First edition by A. Kirk Grayson, *Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts* (Toronto Semitic Texts and Studies 3; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 24–37. See also Robartus J. van der Spek, “Darius III, Alexander the Great and Babylonian Scholarship,” in *A Persian Perspective: Essays in Memory of Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg* (ed. W. F. M. Henkelman and A. Kuhrt; Achaemenid History 13; Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2003), 289–346 (311–24); Matthew Neujahr, “When Darius defeated Alexander: Composition and Redaction in the Dynastic Prophecy,” *JNES* 64 (2005): 101–7; Matthew Neujahr, *Predicting the Past in the Ancient Near East: Mantic Historiography in Ancient Mesopotamia, Judah, and the Mediterranean World* (BJS 354; Providence: Brown Judaic Studies, 2012), 58–63.



archenemy and may thus convey an anti-Persian sentiment.<sup>36</sup> Stephanie Dalley made a similar suggestion about the use of Gutium in relation to Ugbaru, the general whom Cyrus sent ahead to do the dirty work of capturing Babylon, according to the *Chronicle*.<sup>37</sup> This label evokes negative connotations: the Gutians were seen as the “archetypal sackers of cities, «a people who know no inhibitions», «like hordes of locusts».” Transposing this label to the army of Cyrus may thus have constituted criticism of Persian imperialism.<sup>38</sup>

These instances caution us in two ways. First, they suggest that the text of our manuscript may not be identical to the (putative) sixth-century original. Second, they also suggest that a one-sided categorization of the *Chronicle* as pro-Persian propaganda may be too limiting. Several possibilities should be kept open: ideas about Persian rule might have been ambiguous already at the time of Cyrus or they might have become less clear-cut as time moved on. Sentiments about Persian rule did not remain static during the two hundred years of the Empire’s existence in Babylonia.<sup>39</sup> Authors may well have reworked the text of the *Chronicle* to speak to present concerns, especially if one realizes that the surviving manuscript dates from a time when Persian rule had already been dismantled and replaced. It should not come as a surprise, then, if the *Chronicle* contains a subtle, rather than a one-dimensional, judgment of Persian rule. For instance, it is generally assumed that the authors of the *Chronicle* applauded the celebration of the New Year festival by Cambyses (and Cyrus?) in 538 B.C.E. This idea is indeed supported by the narrative structure of the *Chronicle*, which sets up a contrast with the festival’s suspension under Nabonidus. At the same time, however, the authors of the *Chronicle* insert a remark that one of the royal protagonists of 538 B.C.E. appeared in Elamite dress, a gesture that may well have been perceived as

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36. See John P. Nielsen in this volume.

37. Stephanie Dalley, “Herodotos and Babylon,” *OLZ* 91 (1996): 525–32 (527).

38. *Ibid.*, 527.

39. Two double revolts broke out in Babylonia, the first after Cambyses’s death and the second after Darius I’s death. On the former conflict, see most recently Paul-Alain Beaulieu, “An Episode in the Reign of the Babylonian Pretender Nebuchadnezzar IV,” in *Extraction and Control: Studies in Honor of Matthew W. Stolper* (ed. M. Kozuh et al.; SAOC 68; Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2014), 17–26 with earlier literature; on the revolts against Xerxes, see Caroline Waerzeggers, “The Babylonian Revolts Against Xerxes and the ‘End of Archives,’” *AfO* 50 (2003/2004): 150–73.



inappropriate, insulting, or oppressive in the context of the religious festival—not only because the dress was non-Babylonian but because it was from Elam, Babylonia's perennial enemy. Do we need to choose between a pro- and contra-Persian reading of this passage, or can both readings be maintained?<sup>40</sup>

#### CHRONICLE OR LITERATURE?

The notion of the “Babylonian Chronicle Series” has deeply influenced how scholars perceive the *Nabonidus Chronicle*. This notion originates with Grayson who selected fifteen of the twenty-four then-known Babylonian chronicles (1975)<sup>41</sup> and sorted them in a single series ranked according to subject matter, chronicle “1” starting with the reign of Nabonassar in the mid-eighth century and chronicle “13” ending in the late third century B.C.E.<sup>42</sup> Even though big parts of this time span are unaccounted for, Grayson insisted that the fifteen chronicles are the remnants of a once continuous, year-by-year, system of record-keeping begun under the auspices of the eighth century king. Placed within the context of this “continuous register of events”<sup>43</sup> the *Nabonidus Chronicle* becomes a natural, even necessary, link anchored in the sixth century through a continual tradition of record-keeping.

Several objections can be made against this classification of the *Nabonidus Chronicle*. Firstly, and perhaps superfluously, we need to recall that there is as yet no evidence of a sixth-century ancestor of the *Chronicle*. The last Neo-Babylonian king whose reign is discussed in a contemporary

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40. Indeed, Hellenistic Babylonian audiences who looked back on the Persian period passed no single positive or negative verdict on the quality of Persian rule, cf. Caroline Waerzeggers, “Babylonian Kingship in the Persian Period: Performance and Reception,” in *Exile and Return: The Babylonian Context* (ed. J. Stökl and C. Waerzeggers; BZAW 478; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015), 181–222. Walter Pohl's critical remarks about the tendency in modern historical narratives to identify consistent ideologies in Medieval texts are instructive, “History in Fragments: Montecassino's Politics of Memory,” *Early Medieval Europe* 10 (2001): 343–74.

41. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*.

42. Chronicle 1 exists in three exemplars according to Grayson, so the total number of manuscripts selected and included in the Series is fifteen (Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*). Brinkman, “The Babylonian Chronicle Revisited,” questioned whether chronicle 1a, 1b and 1c represent the same text.

43. Van der Spek, “Berossus,” 277.

chronicle is Neriglissar, in *ABC* 6. It is certainly highly likely that later chronicles existed, for instance the (missing) continuators of *ABC* 1A, but as yet there is a gap in the preservation of chronicles between the reign of Neriglissar in the mid-sixth century and that of Artaxerxes III in the mid-fourth century B.C.E.<sup>44</sup> As our copy of the *Chronicle* was produced within the context of this second batch of texts, the assumption that its authors (or copyists) had easy access to a sixth-century original chronicle is rather optimistic. The validity of the over-arching framework of the “Babylonian Chronicle Series” is thus debatable.<sup>45</sup> It is correct that some chronicles were serialized in antiquity, but Grayson’s reconstruction groups together a lot of material that (as far as we know) never existed in the same place and time. The “Series” is a philological construct: it bundles texts from different places and times together into a single sequence based on genre and subject matter. As the “Series” is a modern construct, the *Nabonidus Chronicle* can, and perhaps should, be seen as something different than as a product of sixth-century record-keeping.

A second and, in my opinion, more fundamental objection has to do with the literary quality of the work. Stefan Zawadzki and Reinhard Kratz have already argued that the *Chronicle* is not simply a dry enumeration of facts but a literary text that was written to serve a particular political purpose. Because the genre of the “chronicle” is ill-defined,<sup>46</sup> we run the risk of tilting at windmills here: can any of the Babylonian chronicles be rightfully described as a “data base of historical facts in strict chronological order”?<sup>47</sup> In any event, in the case of the *Nabonidus Chronicle*, such a definition is particularly ill-suited. The narrative quality of the text emerges, first of all, in the connections it draws and the contrasts it sets up between Nabonidus and Cyrus. Whereas Nabonidus does not show up at his mother’s funeral, Cyrus calls for an official period of mourning after his wife’s death. Whereas Nabonidus disrupts the New Year festival years on end, Cyrus allows the festival to go ahead. Whereas Nabonidus collects the cult statues of Babylonia’s provincial deities in the capital, Cyrus sends

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44. Waerzeggers, “The Babylonian Chronicles,” 297.

45. See in particular Brinkman, “Babylonian Chronicle Revisited” and Waerzeggers, “Babylonian Chronicles.”

46. On the problematic definition of the “chronicle” as a separate genre of Babylonian historiography, see in particular Brinkman, “Babylonian Chronicle Revisited.”

47. The quote is from van der Spek, “Berossus,” 280.

them back home.<sup>48</sup> Another literary device at work in the *Chronicle* is the manipulation of narrative rhythm. Having reviewed events by years and months so far,<sup>49</sup> the authors of the *Chronicle* switch to a day-to-day mode of narration for the dramatic climax of Babylon's fall to the Persians. By slowing down the release of information, the authors create suspense at this critical moment of the text. The rhythm stalls even more in the episode about Cambyses and the New Year festival. We now get a gesture-by-gesture account of a single ritual act, which has the effect of highlighting the solemnity of the event. This effect is enhanced by the use of spatial and plastic descriptions that create a sensory and sensual texture, unlike the more sober way of reporting that we find elsewhere in the *Chronicle*. Cambyses moves into the Sceptre House of Nabû, receives the scepter from Nabû's priest, and comes out into the temple courtyard. All these movements take place in sacred areas that are unknown and inaccessible to all but the most high-placed priests and royalty. The reader of the *Chronicle*, allowed to view this hidden space, is treated to a spectacle of the senses as the authors dwell not only on the gestures but on the implements (the scepter), the garments (Elamite attire) and the weaponry (lances and quivers) used at the scene.<sup>50</sup>

In the light of its literary quality and deliberate design, it is hard to maintain that the *Chronicle* is a (standard) chronicle. Bert van der Spek recently said of the Neo-Babylonian chronicles that they "are not narrative; there is no story, no plot, no introduction or conclusion, nor is there any attempt to explain, to find causes and effects, to see relations between recorded events."<sup>51</sup> None of this applies to the *Nabonidus Chronicle*. It

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48. See also Zawadzki, "Portrait of Nabonidus and Cyrus," 144 who argues that the text consciously seeks to contrast Nabonidus's military passivity with Cyrus's military success.

49. The exception is, not accidentally, I would say, the episode about the death of Nabonidus's mother (ii.13–15) which plays a crucial role as evidence of Nabonidus's moral downfall.

50. It is debated whether the *Chronicle* asserts that some of these gestures were performed by Cyrus (Andrew R. George, "Studies in Cultic Topography and Ideology," *BO* 53 [1996]: 363–95 [380]) or whether it asserts that only Cambyses was present at the festivities (see lately Gauthier Tolini, "La Babylonie et l'Iran: Les relations d'une province avec le coeur de l'empire achéménide [539-331 avant notre ère]" [Ph.D. diss., Université Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne, 2011], 135–45 on this interpretation of the passage of the *Nabonidus Chronicle* iii:24–28).

51. Van der Spek, "Berossus," 280.

narrates, it values, it compares, it explains and it argues. Its format may be that of a chronicle, but it breaks free of the limitations of the genre. By suggestively contrasting the protagonists and by playing with rhythm and detail, the authors structure the materials and assign meaning to it. Not only what is *in* the text offers clues in that direction, also what is left out. For the eighth year of Nabonidus, the *Chronicle* supplies a heading but not an entry. The reason behind this silence is debated, but we may be certain that information only needed to be suppressed because it was considered irrelevant or unwanted within a structured argument.<sup>52</sup> In short, the *Chronicle* does not simply report facts but it tries to explain them. Von Soden, Kratz, and Zawadzki already argued in this direction. But what, then, does the text explain, and for whom? Should we seek its purpose in propaganda, as von Soden, Kratz and Zawadzki did? Does the *Chronicle* address urgent political needs of the emergent Persian Empire? Or does it speak to an altogether different time and place? Above, I already indicated why an interpretation of the *Chronicle* as a straightforwardly pro-Persian piece of propaganda is too limiting. I will now turn to the manuscript and its environment to formulate an alternative approach to the question of the text's purpose and audience.

#### THE MANUSCRIPT AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

The manuscript of the *Nabonidus Chronicle* was produced in one of the archives or libraries connected to the Esagil temple of Babylon, roughly in the period between Artaxerxes II and 60 B.C.E.<sup>53</sup> As it is uncertain whether these texts were part of a physical collection of works, held at a single location, I will use the label "library" with some reservation, to refer to the body of literature that was produced in the margins of Esagil by its affiliated staff and deposited in its immediate vicinity. This literature offers a rich textual context for reading and interpreting the *Chronicle* within its own social and cultural setting. Rather than fixing our eyes on a putative, unrecovered and uncertain, sixth-century source, I propose to look at the environment of the manuscript for clues about its function and its audience. I will draw different intertextual circles around the *Chronicle* than those proposed so far. Neither sixth-century chronicles, nor sixth-century pro-Persian propaganda, but

52. On this issue, see Zawadzki, "Portrait of Nabonidus and Cyrus," 148–50.

53. Joannès, "Babylone à Sumer," 703.

texts produced in the manuscript's present (however broadly this present is defined) will constitute my frame of analysis. Every act of copying, however mechanical we imagine it to be, is also an act of actualization and appropriation. If we want to know why the manuscript was produced, we need to understand the concerns and interests of the copyists (or, indeed, authors).

The "library," or libraries, of the Esagil temple were discovered in the 1870s during unregulated digs at the site of Babylon. Not much is known about the place and the context of the find, except that it produced a very large amount of cuneiform texts (ca. 10,000). These texts were sold in Baghdad and then shipped to the British Museum in London, where they can still be consulted today. Recent studies of the collections of the British Museum have revealed that most of the find consisted of astronomical tablets and other scholarly texts.<sup>54</sup> Although only a minority in quantitative terms, historical texts are fairly well represented in the "library" and these provide a first context for understanding the production of the *Nabonidus Chronicle*. The *Babyloniaca* of Berossus is the best-known example of this historical literature, but several compositions in Babylonian cuneiform survive on clay tablets recovered in excavations in the nineteenth century C.E.<sup>55</sup>

What emerges clearly from this textual environment is that there was a lively interest in Nabonidus and Cyrus among scholars of Esagil. Several texts in their "library" deal with this historical episode. Some of these works visit Nabonidus's downfall and Cyrus's victory in the context of a long-term overview of Babylonian history, such as Berossus's *Babyloniaca*

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54. See in particular the detailed study by Clancier, *Bibliothèques*.

55. Berossus's social identity as a Babylonian scholar of the Esagil temple is discussed by van der Spek, "Berossus"; Geert De Breucker, "Berossos and the Mesopotamian Temple as Centre of Knowledge during the Hellenistic Period," in *Learned Antiquity: Scholarship and Society in the Near-East, the Greco-Roman World, and the Early Medieval West* (ed. A. A. MacDonald et al; Groningen Studies in Cultural Change 5; Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 13–23; Paul-Alain Beaulieu, "Berossus on Late Babylonian Historiography," in *Special Issue of Oriental Studies: A Collection of Papers on Ancient Civilizations of Western Asia, Asia Minor and North Africa* (ed. Y. Gong and Y. Chen; Beijing: University of Beijing, 2006), 116–49; Geert De Breucker, "Berossos between Tradition and Innovation," in *The Oxford Handbook of Cuneiform Culture* (ed. K. Radner and E. Robson; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 637–57; Geert De Breucker, "De Babyloniaca van Berossos" (Ph.D. diss., Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, 2012); Geert De Breucker, "Berossos: His Life and His Work," in *The World of Berossos* (ed. J. Haubold et al; CLCO 5; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2013), 15–28.

and the *Dynastic Prophecy*, both written under Seleucid rule.<sup>56</sup> Others offer a more focused discussion, such as the *Royal Chronicle* and an unidentified fragment of a literary text.<sup>57</sup> It is quite possible that a copy of the *Verse Account* was available as well.<sup>58</sup>

A first conclusion to be drawn from this evidence is that the topic of the *Nabonidus Chronicle* was alive in this environment: it was written and rewritten multiple times and in multiple formats. These texts all deal with the same historical period, but they focus on different aspects of that history, and they express different opinions about it, in different genres.<sup>59</sup> This was a past that mattered in the present—and not only to the learned community of Esagil. The *Prayer of Nabonidus* from Qumran, the *Shulgi Chronicle* from Uruk, and the book of Daniel all speak of a similar, and widely shared, interest in this crucial turning point in history, when mighty Babylon was integrated in an even more powerful empire. How inadequate, then, is the idea that the *Nabonidus Chronicle* was the product of an unimaginative Babylonian scribe, mechanically copying out an old and obsolete text? Clearly, the *Chronicle* spoke to actual, contemporary concerns that were widely shared within the learned community of Esagil and beyond. Might it not be more fruitful, then, to give credence to the creative imagination of this audience and entertain the possibility that the *Chronicle* was actually produced in Hellenistic Babylonia?

This possibility does seem to hold a certain attraction. Inquisitive historians in Hellenistic Babylon had access to a lot of source materials that would have informed them about events that happened at the time of Nabonidus and Cyrus. Many royal inscriptions of Neo-Babylonian kings had long since been buried in walls and foundations, but some were still around and could be consulted. We know that Berossus reworked content from surviving inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar and Nabonidus in

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56. For the *Dynastic Prophecy*, see n. 35 above.

57. See for an edition of the *Royal Chronicle* and the fragmentary literary text Schaudig, *Inscripfen*, 591–95 and 474–75.

58. The manuscript is located in a collection of the British Museum (80-11-12) that holds significant amounts of material produced by Esagil's learned community (Mathieu Ossendrijver, personal communication), but overall the collection is mixed in content and also includes texts from other sites, cf. Julian E. Reade, introduction to *Catalogue of the Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum*, vol. 6: *Tablets from Sippar I*, by Erle Leichty (London: British Museum, 1986), xx–xxi.

59. On the multivocality of these texts, see Waerzeggers, “Babylonian Kingship in the Persian Period.”

his book;<sup>60</sup> it is not at all unreasonable to assume that more historians in his circle did so. In fact, when we put this idea to the test, it appears that much of the *Chronicle*'s account about Nabonidus could easily have been culled from authentic monuments of this king that were still present in Babylon's cityscape. The march to Hume in Nabonidus's first year (i:7'), for instance, is mentioned in the *Babylon Stela* (ix:32').<sup>61</sup> This original inscription of Nabonidus also inspired Berossus's account of Nabonidus's rise to power. The stele stood near the Ishtar Gate and the North Palace, where those curious about the past could have read it. The text is, in fact, a treasure trove of historical information: it starts with a long preamble to Nabonidus's reign—from Sennacherib's destruction of Babylon and the fall of Assyria, to the troubled succession of Neriglissar—and it ends with an extensive report on the major events in his first year(s) of rule.<sup>62</sup> Besides the march to Hume, authors of the *Chronicle* may have taken other information about Nabonidus's first year from this source, but the manuscript is too badly broken to pursue this thought any further. Another original inscription from Nabonidus's reign available in Hellenistic Babylon was the *Ehulhul Cylinder*.<sup>63</sup> This text could have taught the authors of the *Chronicle* about the authentic title "King of Anshan," which disappeared from Persian royal self-representation after the reign of Cyrus.<sup>64</sup> It is strik-

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60. Notably in his account of Nabonidus's rise to power, which is based on the *Babylon Stela* (also known as the *Istanbul Stela*; cf. Stanley M. Burstein, *The Babyloniaca of Berossus* [Sources from the Ancient Near East 1.5; Malibu, Ca.: 1978], 28; William Gallagher, "The Istanbul Stela of Nabonidus," *WZKM* 86 [1996]: 119–26 [123]; Beaulieu, "Berossus," 141; De Breucker, *De Babyloniaca*, 110, 556; Haubold, *Greece and Mesopotamia*, 82) and in his assertion that Nebuchadnezzar built his palace in fifteen days, which was taken from (a copy of) the *Basalt Stone Inscription* (van der Spek, "Berossus," 296).

61. Edition by Schaudig, *Inschriften*, 514–29.

62. It is debated how far into Nabonidus's reign the text reaches; see the discussion by Schaudig, *Inschriften*, 515.

63. Edition by Schaudig, *Inschriften*, 409–40. A copy of the cylinder was found together with other antiquarian epigraphic materials (including Nabonidus's *Babylon Stela*) near the North Palace and the Ishtar Gate of Babylon. On this collection of monuments and inscriptions, see most recently Francis Joannès, "L'écriture publique du pouvoir à Babylone sous Nabuchodonosor II," in *Babylon: Wissenskultur in Orient und Okzident* (ed. E. Cancik-Kirschbaum et al.; Topoi 1; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), 113–20 (118) with earlier literature. This assemblage used to be known as the "museum" of Nebuchadnezzar's palace, but this notion has been revised.

64. The title is used in ii:1, 4 of the *Chronicle* and i:27 of the *Ehulhul Cylinder*. See



ing, moreover, that the title occurs in the same episode in both texts, that is, in the context of Cyrus's victory over the Medes. Even if the *Chronicle* places this event in a different year than the *Cylinder*, the use of this title in this specific context is significant because elsewhere the *Chronicle* uses the anachronistic title "King of Parsu" (ii:15). Such inconsistency could have resulted from a cut-and-paste adaptation from sources of different genres and from different times. At least one more royal inscription of Nabonidus was available in the Hellenistic period: a copy of the *Harran Stela*, which was reused during the renovation of the temple of Larsa at the time.<sup>65</sup> Members of Esagil's learned community could easily have traveled there to consult the text.<sup>66</sup> It would have provided its readers with knowledge of Nabonidus's decade-long exile in Teima, a piece of information that is basic to a large part of the *Chronicle*'s second column. Finally, if a library copy of the *Cyrus Cylinder* was around—a distinct possibility<sup>67</sup>—it could have served as a source for the *Chronicle*'s report about the collection and return of cult statues and the peaceful surrender of Babylon.

Besides original source materials available in Hellenistic Babylonia, there were a number of literary texts with which the *Chronicle* could engage. For instance, in contrast to (sixth-century) Neo-Babylonian chronicles, which rarely include other actors besides the king, the *Nabonidus Chronicle* assigns a prominent place to the *ahu rabû* or *šešgallu* as the dutiful priest who protects the continuity of cultic life in the absence of Nabonidus. There is only one other chronicle that allows the same figure into its narrative, even in the same context of interruptions to the New Year festival. This is the so-called *Religious Chronicle*, a text that—not inci-

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on the role of Anshan in early Persian royal ideology Potts, "Cyrus the Great and the Kingdom of Anshan" and Waters, "Parsumaš, Anšan, and Cyrus."

65. Schaudig, *Inschriften*, 532.

66. Babylonian scholars traveled widely in pursuit of knowledge, see Eckart Frahm, "Headhunter, Bücherdiebe und wandernde Gelehrte: Anmerkungen zum altorientalischen Wissenskultur im ersten Jahrtausend v. Chr.," in *Wissenskultur im Alten Orient: Weltanschauung, Wissenschaften, Techniken, Technologien* (ed. H. Neumann and S. Paulus; CDOG 4; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012), 15–30.

67. Recently, two fragments of a Neo-Babylonian library copy were discovered, showing that the text of the *Cyrus Cylinder* circulated more widely than previously assumed; see Irving J. Finkel, "The Cyrus Cylinder: The Babylonian Perspective," in *The Cyrus Cylinder: The King of Persia's Proclamation from Ancient Babylon* (ed. I. J. Finkel; London: Tauris, 2013), 4–34.



dentally in my opinion—was available at Esagil.<sup>68</sup> Besides their manner of reporting on the *akītu* festival,<sup>69</sup> both texts share an interest in the E-gidru-kalamma-summa shrine of Babylon. Another text to which the *Chronicle* seems to speak is the *Verse Account*. Both compositions refer to Amurru in the context of the king's departure to Arabia.<sup>70</sup> Like the *Babylon Stela*, the *Verse Account* is rich in historical detail. Today, much of the text is lost because the only surviving manuscript is heavily damaged, but in what remains one finds significant overlap with the *Chronicle*: Nabonidus's departure from Akkad to Teima in the third year, the subsequent interruption of the New Year festival, the delegation of power to his unnamed first-born son, the entrustment of the army to this son's command, a military confrontation with Cyrus (unfortunately badly broken in the *Verse Account*), a lengthy discussion of the New Year festival of 538 B.C.E., the use of exact days to structure key parts of the narrative, and Cyrus's return of the statues of the gods to their shrines after reestablishing peace in Babylon. It is thus within the limits of the possible that the authors of the *Chronicle* used the *Verse Account* as one of their sources. Most unfortunate are the breaks in columns iii–iv–v of the *Verse Account* as it would have been interesting to know whether it delivered as meticulous an account of the conquest of Babylon as did the *Chronicle*. Though less focused on chronological detail, the *Verse Account* does supply indications of time and duration (ii:17'; iii:2'; v:28'). A third literary text available in the Esagil "library" (or libraries) that we can connect to the *Chronicle* is the so-called *Royal Chronicle*. Besides the general topic of Nabonidus's reign, this text notes in the third year of this king the same event in Ammananu (iv:29) as does the *Nabonidus Chronicle* (i:11).

These literary contacts are part of a larger web of intertextuality. The *Royal Chronicle*, for instance, entertains an argumentative relationship with the *Verse Account* in proposing a completely different evaluation

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68. ABC 17. On its provenance, see Waerzeggers, "Babylonian Chronicles."

69. The *akītu* festival was of course a common topic in the Neo-Babylonian chronicles (A. Kirk Grayson, "Chronicles and the Akītu Festival," in *Actes de la XVIIe Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* [ed. A. Finet; Ham-sur-Heure: Comité belge de recherches en Mésopotamie, 1970], 160–70) but the particular manner of reporting on the interruptions and the role of the *ahu rabû* are unique to the *Nabonidus Chronicle* and the *Religious Chronicle*.

70. *Nabonidus Chronicle* i:16 and *Verse Account* i:23.

of Nabonidus's use of the series *Enūma Anu Enlil*.<sup>71</sup> Like the *Nabonidus Chronicle*, it also has a connection to the *Harran Stela* of Nabonidus, a copy of which was available in contemporary Larsa as we have seen.<sup>72</sup> The interest in the E-gidri-kalamma-summa shrine of Babylon that we observed in the *Religious Chronicle* and the *Nabonidus Chronicle* is also in evidence in the *Babylon Stela* (vii:23'). The *Babyloniaca* of Berossus engages with several of these texts, including the *Babylon Stela*, the *Dynastic Prophecy* and the *Nabonidus Chronicle*, though with various degrees of contrast and agreement.<sup>73</sup>

It is senseless to try to untangle which text served as a source for which other text within this intertextual web. What we can say, however, is that the literature spun from this web seems at its most vibrant in the Hellenistic period, when at least two new historical works saw the light of day (Berossus's *Babyloniaca* and the *Dynastic Prophecy*). I suggest that other narratives about Nabonidus, including the *Chronicle*, emerged at the same time. It cannot be excluded that sixth-century chronicles somehow survived, but this remains unproven—and moreover, I would argue, such originals would be insufficient to explain the *Chronicle*'s existence. There was an active pool of historical "facts" which authors tapped, plied, and integrated in new works. These facts derived from a variety of sources including original inscriptions and literary works. That pool constituted the raw material from which Esagil's intellectual community shaped its memory of the past, not once but through multiple literary creations. In my opinion, the *Chronicle* should be seen as a product of that effort, whether or not parts of it derive from a sixth-century source.

Before looking more closely at this process, one more issue remains to be addressed: If the *Nabonidus Chronicle* is a Hellenistic Babylonian text, can it have been influenced by Greek literature? The *Nabonidus Chronicle* is now often used as a yardstick to measure the reliability of authors like Xenophon and Herodotus on the fall of Babylon, but if we take the possibility of a post-Persian date for the *Chronicle* seriously, as I think we should,

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71. Peter Machinist and Hayim Tadmor, "Heavenly Wisdom," in *The Tablet and the Scroll: Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William W. Hallo* (ed. M. E. Cohen, D. C. Snell, and D. B. Weisberg; Bethesda, Md.: CDL, 1993), 146–51 (149).

72. Both texts mention the king of *Dadanu*, cf. *Royal Chronicle* v.20 and *Harran Stela* 2.I.25 (Schaudig, *Inscripfen*, text 3.1).

73. De Breucker, *Babyloniaca*, 546–56.

this procedure is of doubtful legitimacy. Could it be that the *Chronicle* is not independent from these Greek texts, but in dialogue with them?

Recent work on the social and intellectual milieu of Berossus shows that this Babylonian “priest” of Esagil was versed in two historiographic traditions: that of the cuneiform world and that of the Greek world.<sup>74</sup> He was able to draw from both traditions in his own work, eloquently and creatively, through processes of adoption, transformation, and rejection. Johannes Haubold situates his work in an archival “contact zone,” where Greek and Mesopotamian views were forged into a “new synthesis.”<sup>75</sup> For instance, Berossus would consciously have reworked Greek traditions about the Hanging Gardens of Babylon to meet the expectations of a Greek audience while integrating these views within a framework informed by cuneiform sources.<sup>76</sup> He subtly but firmly rejected Herodotus’s idea that the Persians diverted the Euphrates in order to take Babylon by surprise.<sup>77</sup> He would have engaged with Ctesias’s scheme of the succession of empires, but turned it on its head to suit local sensibilities about the primacy of Babylonian history.<sup>78</sup>

Berossus’s intimate knowledge of Greek literature did not exist in a vacuum. Other members of his circle must have shared his level of access to these traditions. If one member of Esagil’s intellectual community engaged with Greek historical writing, it cannot be too fanciful to assume that more will have done so. As Berossus combined Greek and Babylonian knowledge in a work addressing a Greek audience, the possibility should at least be considered that authors writing for a Babylonian audience might have combined these two traditions as well. I would like to point to one feature in the *Nabonidus Chronicle* that may indeed have spoken to ideas circulating in a Greek cultural background.<sup>79</sup> The *Chronicle*’s concern with

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74. Van der Spek, “Berossus”; Beaulieu, “Berossus”; De Breucker, *Babyloniaca*; Haubold, *Greece and Mesopotamia*.

75. Haubold, *Greece and Mesopotamia*, 167. See also Johannes Haubold, “Berossus,” in *The Romance Between Greece and the East* (ed. T. Whitmarsh and S. Thomson; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 107–16 for a discussion of Berossus’s intimate knowledge of Greek historical fiction.

76. Haubold, *Greece and Mesopotamia*, 173–76.

77. Van der Spek, “Berossus,” 297 n. 36.

78. Haubold, *Greece and Mesopotamia*, 177.

79. The rise of Cyrus’s empire in three crucial battles (in Media, Lydia, and Babylonia) is a scheme that the *Chronicle* possibly shared with Herodotus (Zawadzki, “The Portrait of Nabonidus and Cyrus,” 146–47), but the reading of the place name

the death of royal women fits Hellenistic interests at least as much as Babylonian ones, if not better. Mesopotamian chronicles make little mention of queens and princesses. They are given brief tablet space as mothers in notices of royal pedigree, as brides in Assyrian-Babylonian negotiations, and in reports of their deaths.<sup>80</sup> This last issue is taken up rarely; besides in the *Nabonidus Chronicle* it only occurs in two chronicles about Esarhaddon's reign. In those two chronicles, the death of the Assyrian king's wife is mentioned in passing, between battle reports. In comparison, the *Nabonidus Chronicle* is much more intensively interested in the topic. It treats the deaths of Nabonidus's mother and Cyrus's wife in detail, assigning over two lines of texts to each event (ii:13–15 and iii:22–24). Moreover, these stories occupy key positions in the narrative structure of the text. Both deaths are placed immediately before the New Year festival, and given moral weight: the death of Nabonidus's mother served to further illustrate her son's immorality, while the death of Cyrus's wife served to enhance his credibility as legitimate king of Babylon. Within the wider argument of the text, the deaths also seem to accompany major turning points in the history told by its authors: the downfall of Nabonidus and the victory of Cyrus. The importance assigned to these royal women is uncommon in the Mesopotamian chronicle tradition, but it does fit the interests of Hellenistic literature. Johannes Haubold suggested that Berossus's digression on princess Amyitis might have been inspired by this cultural background.<sup>81</sup> It is striking that, like in the *Chronicle*, this episode precedes a world-changing event in the *Babyloniaca* (the fall of Nineveh). Comparing Berossus and the *Chronicle* thus reveals a third interlocutor: these texts share a narrative strategy with each other and with Greek literature on Oriental kingship. More specifically, the *Nabonidus Chronicle* may have interacted with Herodotus's account of the death of Cyrus's wife Cassandane (2.1).<sup>82</sup>

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where Cyrus achieved his second victory according to the *Nabonidus Chronicle* remains contested.

80. Women in royal genealogies: ABC 21 i:9'–10', ABC 22 i:6, 12, ABC 1 i:40, *Shulgi Chronicle* line 10 (Jean-Jacques Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, no. 48 with previous literature); women in Assyrian-Babylonian relations: ABC 21 ii:33'–37' and iii:17; Esarhaddon's dead wife: ABC 1 iv:22 and ABC 14 26. I would like to thank Jacqueline Albrecht for these references.

81. Haubold, *Greece and Mesopotamia*, 174.

82. Muhammad Dandamaev, "Cassandane," *Encyclopaedia Iranica* 5/1 (1990): 62; Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 106.

MEMORY IN THE *NABONIDUS CHRONICLE*

Much remains uncertain about the *Nabonidus Chronicle*, but it does seem sensible to conclude that the manuscript that survives today is an instance of Hellenistic Babylonian historiography. The rich intertextual web between the *Chronicle*, other historical writings about Nabonidus and Cyrus produced by Esagil's learned community (including the *Babyloniaca*), original epigraphic materials in cuneiform available in Hellenistic Babylonia, and Greek historical texts, indicates that the *Chronicle* belongs in an active, living literary field. Of course, it remains entirely possible that some parts, big or small, were based on a sixth-century chronicle. But even so, its topic, its narrative structure, its explanatory pretensions, and its contact with other texts (Babylonian and Greek) all indicate that we are looking at a product of creative engagement, not at the result of a passive act of copying.

In order to understand the function of the *Chronicle*, this text should be read neither as a factual report, nor as a piece of propaganda, but as history—that is, in the Dutch historian Johan Huizinga's famous definition, as “the intellectual form in which a civilization renders account to itself of its past.”<sup>83</sup> Put within its proper context, the *Chronicle* offers a window on how one particular community in Hellenistic Babylon constructed its past. This is not a polished, authoritative account; rather we should see the *Chronicle* as one voice among many. When we look beyond our individual text and into its wider context, we discover that it was one of multiple attempts at structuring history in meaningful sequences and in convincing formats. The meaning that these texts tried to convey should not be sought in how well these texts succeeded in reporting “actual” sixth-century events, but in how these texts mattered in the contemporary, Hellenistic Babylonian, world. The Nabonidus-Cyrus episode and the emergence of the Persian Empire may have raised interest among Esagil's learned community in view of that more recent global transformation, the one brought about by Alexander, which equally redrew the political map and Babylon's place therein. As the priestly community of Esagil found itself once again in the position of renegotiating its position within a new set of power relations, the past may have served both as a source of *exempla* for the present

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83. Johan Huizinga, “A Definition of the Concept of History,” in *Philosophy and History: Essays Presented to Ernst Cassirer* (ed. R. Klibansky and H. J. Patton; Oxford: Clarendon, 1936), 1–10.

and as a means to forge community bonds and group identity. They did not only write about Nabonidus and Cyrus, but also about other historical “royal pairs” whose confrontations had resulted in significant power shifts in the past.<sup>84</sup> It is reasonable to explain this concern as a product of hopes and realities in the present. This was a community that saw its history intimately linked to the history of royalty, and it wished to maintain that legitimizing bond also in the future. The rich web of texts that these scholars wrote on the topic of Nabonidus should be seen as a conscious attempt to shape memory of this event in a world where native Babylonian kingship had vanished since the time of this very king.

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84. Waerzeggers, “Babylonian Kingship in the Persian Period.”

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PETUBASTIS IV IN THE DAKHLA OASIS:  
NEW EVIDENCE ABOUT AN EARLY REBELLION  
AGAINST PERSIAN RULE AND ITS SUPPRESSION  
IN POLITICAL MEMORY

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Persian rule in Egypt was marked by a series of rebellions and Egyptian rival kings. We know of four major insurgencies, one of which led to a long period of independence. Herodotus (*Hist.* 3.15.4) records the planning of a revolt as early as the year 525 or 524 B.C.E. by Psamtek III, the king who was deposed by Cambyses II. Soon afterward, around 522, there was a first successful revolt by a counterking, Petubastis, now numbered as Petubastis IV,<sup>1</sup> which is attested in some inscriptions found near Memphis.<sup>2</sup> At the end of the reign of Darius I, we know of another revolt led by King Psamtek IV (ca. 486–485 B.C.E.), who is mentioned in Demotic sources from Diospolis Parva.<sup>3</sup> The next major revolt was by King Inaros, dated

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1. Confusion surrounds the numbering of the kings with the name Petubastis. A recent summary of this issue appears in Claus Jurman, “From the Libyan Dynasties to the Kushites in Memphis,” in *The Libyan Period in Egypt: Historical and Cultural Studies into the 21st–24th Dynasties; Proceedings of a Conference at Leiden University, 25–27 October 2007* (ed. G. P. F. Broekman, R. J. Demarée, and O. E. Kaper; Egyptologische Uitgaven, Egyptological Publications 23; Leiden: NINO; Leuven: Peeters, 2009), 124–25. The Persian period counterking was formerly known as Petubastis III, but he should now be designated as Petubastis IV to avoid further confusion, as was done already in Jürgen von Beckerath, *Handbuch der ägyptischen Königsnamen* (2nd ed.; MÄS 49; Mainz am Rhein: von Zabern, 1999), 222–23.

2. Jean Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” *REg* 24 (1972): 216–23.

3. Pierre Salmon, “Les Relations entre la Perse et l’Égypte du VI<sup>e</sup> au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle av J.-C.,” in *The land of Israel: Cross-Roads of Civilizations* (ed. E. Lipiński et al; OLA 19; Leuven: Peeters, 1985), 147–68 (148–51).

between circa 465 and 450 B.C.E., which started in Sais, and whose rule was recognized as far south as the Kharga Oasis,<sup>4</sup> and it left its traces in Demotic literature. The fourth major revolt, by King Amyrtaios II/Psamtek V (ca. 404–398 B.C.E.) liberated the entire country, and it heralded a longer period of independence from 404 until 343 B.C.E. During independence Persians attempted to enter the country several times, until eventually Artaxerxes III succeeded in overthrowing Nectanebo II and bringing Egypt back under Persian control. A fifth revolt is known from the years before the arrival of Alexander the Great, led by King Khababash, which is possibly to be dated 337–335 B.C.E.<sup>5</sup>

#### THE EXCAVATIONS AT AMHEIDA

Excavations at Amheida, a Roman town site in the western part of the Dakhla Oasis, are directed by Roger Bagnall (New York University) and with Paola Davoli (University of Salento, Lecce) in charge of the excavations. The author of this chapter is associate director for Egyptology. In January 2014, the excavations continued the uncovering of the remains of the ruined temple of Thoth, which has been under investigation since 2005. The temple was demolished in at least two phases; one during the late Roman period, when the building was destroyed so that only the foundations and some lower courses of the walls' stone masonry remained *in situ*. A second phase of destruction took place when the soil underneath the temple, built up from the mudbrick remains of the pharaonic town that stretches back to the early Old Kingdom, was quarried for fertilizer (*sebbakh*). This possibly happened in the seventeenth and eighteen centuries C.E., because blocks from the temple found their way into the neighboring town of El-Qasr, where they were reused as building material, some of them visibly exposed in the masonry.<sup>6</sup> The temple site at Amheida was

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4. Michel Chauveau, "Inarôs, prince des rebelles," in *Res Severa Verum Gaudium; Festschrift für Karl-Theodor Zauzich zum 65. Geburtstag am 8. Juni 2004* (ed. F. Hoffmann and H. Thissen; Studia Demotica 6; Leuven, Peeters: 2004), 39–46; J. Winnicki, "Der libysche Stamm der Bakaler im pharaonischen, persischen und ptolemäischen Ägypten," *AncSoc* 36 (2006): 135–42.

5. Günter Vittmann, "Ägypten zur Zeit der Perserherrschaft," in *Herodot und das Persische Weltreich—Herodotus and the Persian Empire* (ed. R. Rollinger; CLeO 3; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011), 373–429 (410).

6. Anthony J. Mills, "The Dakhleh Oasis Project: Report on the Second Season of Survey, September–December, 1979," *JSSEA* 10 (1980): 260, pl. 12; *Linteaux à épig-*

left full of deep pits, in which a few thousand mostly unarticulated blocks and fragments of the demolished temple remained.

In the reigns of the Roman emperors Titus and Domitian, an earlier temple complex from the Late Period was demolished and the new building was erected with its stones. For this reason, blocks from different periods are found mixed together in the current excavations. The following phases of construction of the local temple may at present be distinguished on the basis of the hieroglyphic inscriptions found, which indicate that the temple was extended or rebuilt under Seti II, Ramesses IX, Nekau II, Psamtek II, Amasis, Petubastis IV, and Darius I.<sup>7</sup> There is no evidence for a temple building from the Ptolemaic period at the site.

#### PETUBASTIS AT AMHEIDA

The royal name Petubastis was first discovered at the site of the temple in 2005. Because there were no further inscriptions associated with this cartouche, it was not clear whether this king was Petubastis I, II, III, or IV. It was decided that the most likely identification was Petubastis I *Wsr-mꜣꜥt-Rꜥ-stp-n-ʿImn* (ca. 818–793 B.C.E.), founder of Twenty-Third Dynasty, because we also found a stela from the same dynasty, of king Takelot III, among the temple blocks of that season.<sup>8</sup> A presumed temple built by Petubastis I provided the location where this stela had been erected. No earlier remains of a temple were known at that stage of our excavations. Petubastis II is a presumed later king of the Twenty-Third Dynasty based at Tanis, while Petubastis III *Shꜥtp-ib-n-Rꜥ* lived at the time of the Assyrian

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*raphes de l'oasis de Dakhla* (ed. Chr. Décobert and D. Gril; Suppléments aux Annales Islamologiques, Cahier 1; Cairo: IFAO, 1981), 10, pl. V.

7. Olaf E. Kaper, "Epigraphic Evidence from the Dakhleh Oasis in the Late Period," in *The Oasis Papers 6: Proceedings of the Sixth International Conference of the Dakhleh Oasis Project* (ed. R. S. Bagnall et al.; Dakhleh Oasis Project Monographs 15; Oxford: Oxbow, 2012), 167–76.

8. Olaf E. Kaper and Robert J. Demarée, "A Donation Stela in the Name of Takelot III from Amheida, Dakhleh Oasis," *JEOL* 32 (2006): 19–37 (20–21); Olaf E. Kaper, "Epigraphic Evidence from the Dakhleh Oasis in the Libyan Period," in *The Libyan Period in Egypt: Historical and Cultural Studies into the 21st–24th Dynasties; Proceedings of a Conference at Leiden University, 25–27 October 2007* (ed. G. P. F. Broekman, R. J. Demarée, and O. E. Kaper; Egyptologische Uitgaven, Egyptological Publications 23; Leiden: NINO; Leuven: Peeters, 2009), 149–59 (151); Karl Jansen-Winkel, *Inschriften der Spätzeit*, vol. 2: *Die 22.–24. Dynastie* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2007), 209.

conquest of Assurbanipal in the seventh century B.C.E. (667–666), but he is only attested in Tanis and Memphis.<sup>9</sup> Petubastis IV *Shr-ib-R<sup>c</sup>* is dated to the early Twenty-Seventh Dynasty (ca. 522–520 B.C.E.), but he was only associated with the region of Memphis and Herakleopolis Magna, which made it highly unlikely that either of the latter three kings would have built a temple in Dakhla.

In January 2014 we found two further cartouches, reading: *Shr-ib-R<sup>c</sup>*, “Who delights the heart of Re.” This provided proof that the initial identification of Petubastis I was wrong and that the building was in fact erected in the name of Petubastis IV.

Petubastis IV was previously known only from two fragments of a wooden *naos*, now divided between Bologna and the Louvre,<sup>10</sup> one scarab and two seals.<sup>11</sup> One seal was found by Petrie either at Memphis or at Meydum, sealing a papyrus document relating to fields in the area of Herakleopolis Magna. The form of the seal impression, which is now in the Petrie Museum,<sup>12</sup> led Jean Yoyotte to conclude that the king ruled

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9. On Petubastis II, cf. Jurman mentioned in note 1. On Petubastis III, cf. Karl Jansen-Winkel, *Inschriften der Spätzeit*, vol. 3: *Die 25. Dynastie* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009), 254–55.

10. Archaeological Museum of Bologna, no. KS 289; Cristiana Morigi Govi et al., eds., *La Collezione Egiziana: Museo Civico Archeologico di Bologna* (Milano: Leonardo Arte, 1994), 91. Musée du Louvre, no. N 503; Christiane Ziegler, ed., *The Pharaohs* (Milano: Bompiani Arte, 2002), no. 81; Marc Étienne, *Les Portes du Ciel: Visions du monde dans l'Égypte ancienne* (Paris: Musée du Louvre, 2009), 303. These are the only known two images of the king. It is possible that also an uninscribed fragment in New York, MMA 23.6.75a, stems from the same *naos*.

11. Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 217. Other scarabs found abroad with a reference to this king are published in Ingrid Gamer-Wallert, “Der Skarabäus des Pedubaste von der Finca del Jardin,” *Madrid Mitteilungen* 16 (1975): 187–94; and Dimitri Meeks, “Un scarabée ‘Pédoubastis’ dans la maison III O de Délos,” *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 121 (1997): 613–15.

12. Petrie Museum no. UC13098; Jan Moje, *Herrschaftsräume und Herrschaftswissen ägyptischer Lokalregenten: soziokulturelle Interaktionen zur Machtkonsolidierung vom 8. bis zum 4. Jahrhundert v. Chr.* (Topoi: Berlin Studies of the Ancient World 21; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014), 465; 268, fig. 76. The website of the Petrie Museum, [www.ucl.ac.uk/museums/objects/LDUCE-UC13098](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/museums/objects/LDUCE-UC13098) (accessed October 2014) expresses doubt about the provenance of this seal: “There is some confusion over whether it was found in Memphis (implied by *Historical Studies* pl. XX title of plate) or Meydum (as stated *Meydum and Memphis* pl. XXXVII and implied perhaps by the preservation of the papyrus paper).” Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 217 note 3 refers to a letter from Petrie about the Meydum provenance. I thank Liam McNamara of the Ashmolean Museum,



shortly after the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty, in the early years of the Persian occupation.<sup>13</sup>

The blocks of Petubastis IV found at Amheida consist of four complete relief blocks and a fragment from the façade of a temple gateway (fig. 1), and one additional block from an offering scene. The upper block (figs. 2–3), no. Amheida 16362, measures 35 x 39 x 17 cm; the central block (figs. 4–5), no. Amheida 16512, measures 45 x 23 x 34 cm; the bottom block (fig. 6), no. Amheida 2078, measures 23 x 30 x 11 cm.

Three blocks join together and they allow three inscription columns to be reconstructed (fig. 1). Two columns were located upon the façade of the left jamb of the gateway, and a single column was located in the passage of the gateway. The hieroglyphs are carved in sunk relief, with blue colour in the hieroglyphs and the framing bands, with black for the inner details, and yellow for the interior spaces in the mouth hieroglyph (letter *r*), the cartouches and the *serekh* (Horus name). Remains of oil are stuck to some parts of the surface of the stones, as part of the ritual use of the temple doorway, which indicates that the building functioned for a number of years. Similar traces of oil libations are visible in the temples of the Roman period in Dakhla, such as Deir el-Hagar and Kellis (Ismant el-Kharab).<sup>14</sup>

The inscriptions (fig. 7) contain the full titulary of Petubastis IV in two columns on the façade of the gateway:

(1) *Hr smn t3wy nbty* [*s3 Nt*] *shd r-prw Hr[-nbw ...]* (2) *nsw-bity nb t3wy*  
*spr-ib-Rc s3-Rc nb h[ w ]* [*P3-di-B3stt*] *mr Pth rsy-inb[=f ...]*

“Horus, who controls the Two Lands; The Two Ladies [Son of Neith?] who illuminates the temples; Horus of Gold ... (lost); [King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Lord of the Two Lands] Who-delights-the-heart-of-Re; Son of Re, Lord of Appearances, Petubastis, beloved of Ptah of Memphis (South of His Wall).”

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Oxford, for researching the papyrus document now in his collection, and the history of its seal.

13. Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 216–23. His view on the dating of this king is already cited in Labib Habachi, “Three Monuments of King Sehetepibre Pedubastis,” *ZÄS* 93 (1966): 73–74.

14. On Kellis, see Andrew Ross, “Identifying the Oil used in the Rituals in the Temple of Tutu,” in *Dakhleh Oasis Project: Preliminary Reports on the 1994–1995 to 1998–1999 Field Seasons* (ed. C. A. Hope and G. E. Bowen; Dakhleh Oasis Project Monograph 11; Oxford: Oxbow, 2002), 263–67. An article on this topic is in preparation by the author of this chapter.

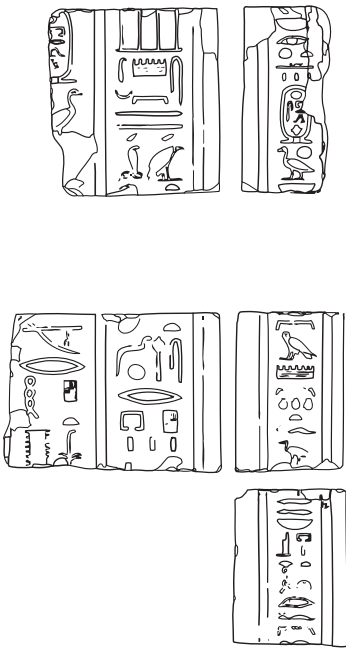


Figure 1: Reconstruction of the façade and reveal of the gateway of Petubastis IV at Amheida. Drawing by O. E. Kaper.

Figure 2: Block from the façade of the gateway with part of the Horus name of Petubastis IV. Copyright New York University. Photograph by B. Bazzani.



Figure 3: Inscription from the reveal of the gateway, upon the same block as Figure 2. Copyright New York University. Photograph by B. Bazzani.

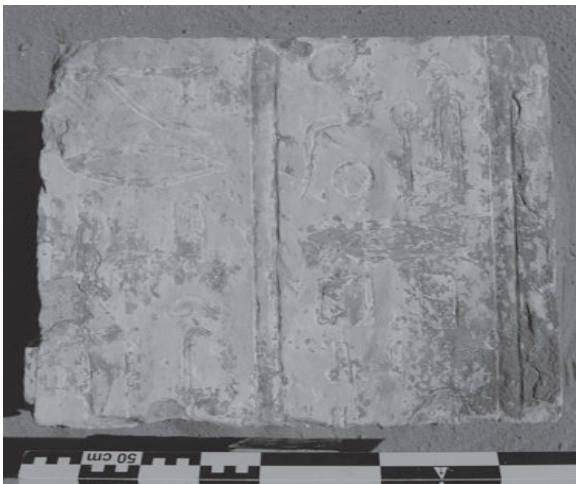
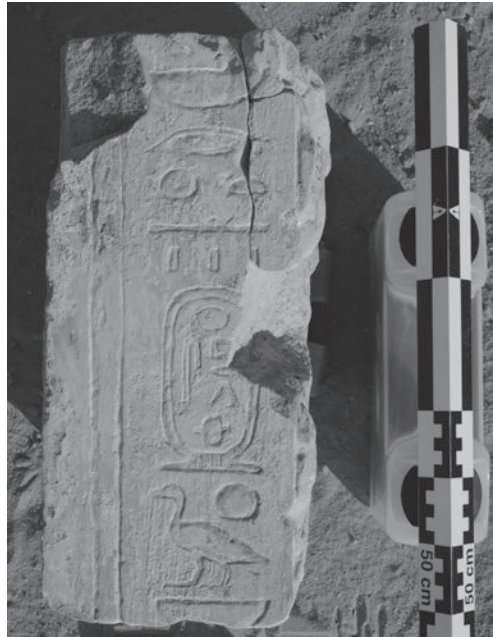


Figure 4: Block from the façade of the gateway with part of the Two-Ladies name of Petubastis. Copyright New York University. Photograph by B. Bazzani.



Figure 5: Inscription from the reveal of the gateway, upon the same block as Figure 4. Copyright New York University. Photograph by B. Bazzani.

Figure 6: Inscription from the reveal of the gateway with the lower part of the building inscription. Copyright New York University. Photograph by B. Bazzani.





Figure 7: Hieroglyphic inscriptions from the gateway of Petubastis IV (author).

The reveal of the gateway contains a building inscription in a single column:<sup>15</sup>

[nsw-bity nb t3]wy nb irt ht spr-ib-R<sup>c</sup> s3-R<sup>c</sup> nb [h<sup>c</sup>w P3-di-B3stt] ir.n<=f>  
m mnw <n> it=f Dḥwty ʿ3 ʿ3 nb St-w3ḥ ir=f n=f [di ʿnh]

“[King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Lord of the Two Lands], Lord of Rituals, Who-delights-the-heart-of-Re; Son of Re, Lord of [Appearances, Petubastis]; He has made (it) as a monument for his father Thoth the Twice Great, the Lord of Amheida, so that he may be given [life].”


The previously found block (fig. 8), no. Amheida 2076 (measuring 34 x 17 x 42 cm), belongs to the same building phase:<sup>16</sup>

P3-di-B3stt ʿnh dt

“Petubastis living for ever”



15. About this formula, termed the “königliche Weiheformel,” see Silke Grallert, *Bauen—Stiften—Weihen: Ägyptische Bau- und Restaurierunginschriften von den Anfängen bis zur 30. Dynastie* (Abhandlungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Kairo 18.1–2; Berlin: Achet, 2001), 34–40.

16. Arguments from outside the text itself are the following: the reconstructed width of the text column on 2076 and those on the façade of the doorway is the same. The shape of blocks 2076 and 16362 is unusual, because they are both taller than wide, and they are of nearly the same size. The light blue colour on the two reliefs is different from that used in other building phases, such as the relief work dating to Amasis. There are identical splashes of red paint on the surface of the blocks 2076 and 16362, probably from a red cornice painting overhead.

A small fragment was found belonging to the opposite reveal (fig. 9). It bears the number Amheida 16357 and measures 15 x 16 x 10 cm. It contains the group  *mnw*, “monument.” Even though the writing direction is ambiguous, the size of the signs and the word itself indicate that it preserves part of a building inscription parallel to the one cited above.<sup>17</sup>

#### COMMENTARY TO THE NEW INSCRIPTIONS

Of Petubastis IV, only the birth name (*s3-R<sup>c</sup>*) and the throne name (*nsw-bity*) were known previously. The new inscriptions also contain the Horus name and the Two-Ladies name.

The name *Spr-ib-R<sup>c</sup>* is a mistaken writing for *Shr-ib-R<sup>c</sup>*:  (*pr*) for  (*h*). The two confused signs *pr* and *h* look similar in hieratic script, and we assume therefore a visual mistake based on a *Vorlage* written in hieratic. However, the mistake was aggravated when the scribe elaborated upon his misreading of the name by the addition of the determinative of the verb *spr*, “cause to emerge,” the sign of the walking legs. The resulting reading does not yield a satisfactory meaning of the royal name, because this verb is generally not constructed with *ib*, and it makes no sense in a throne name, whereas *Shr-ib-R<sup>c</sup>* makes perfect sense.<sup>18</sup> The signs *pr* and *h* have likewise been confused in some inscriptions of Darius I at Hibis.<sup>19</sup>

17. This is common practice on temple doorways; Grallert, *Bauen—Stiften—Weißen*, 48–49.

18. Adolf Erman and Hermann Grapow, eds., *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*, vol. IV (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1926–1931), 208.14. The confusion in the spelling helps to confirm that the element *ib* is to be read separately, and that is not merely a determinative with *shr* (as in Karl Jansen-Winkeln, *Inschriften der Spätzeit*, Vol. 1: *Die 21. Dynastie* [Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2007], 72, line 6). The inclusion of the element *ib* corresponds to a tradition in royal names in the Late Period, on which cf. note 26 below.

19. “*pr*” is used in the toponym *Hbt*, Hibis (54 S behind Khonsu) and *h* is used as determinative in *p<sub>rt</sub>*, “distribution place” (27 N 26); Eugene Cruz-Uribe, *Hibis Temple Project Volume I: Translations, Commentary, Discussions and Sign List* (San Antonio, Tex.: Van Siclen, 1988), 227, index [598–599]. Already by the Third Intermediate Period, the sign *h* is used instead of *pr* (Karl Jansen-Winkeln, *Spätmittelägyptische Grammatik der Texte der 3. Zwischenzeit* [Ägypten und Altes Testament 34; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1996], 27 §35: B/3.3.41, RS,1), and the same is found in Ptolemaic Dendera (Sylvie Cauville, *Dendara: Le fonds hiéroglyphique au temps de Cléopâtre* [Paris: Cybèle, 2001], 161), but apparently not the reverse. In Edfu, *pr* can be used for *h* (Dieter Kurth, *Einführung ins Ptolemäische: Eine Grammatik mit Zeichen-*



The paleography of the signs is remarkable, chiefly because of the small size of the cartouches in comparison with the other signs. The same phenomenon is also found on the interior wall decoration of the Hibis temple from the time of Darius I.<sup>20</sup> Red paint drops are visible on the surface of blocks 2076 and 16362. Possibly there was a red-painted lintel or cornice overhead, which was painted only after the door jambs had been finished.

The building inscription refers to Thoth of Amheida. This is the local form of the god mentioned in the stela of Takelot III, mentioned above, albeit that the toponym changed its spelling somewhere in the course of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty or the early years of the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty.<sup>21</sup>

The title ʕ ʕ is common for Thoth in Amheida in all Late Period inscriptions from the temple.<sup>22</sup>

The block with the cartouche of Petubastis that was found in 2005 is not from the same gateway, but it must stem from a regular temple scene. On the left is the remains of the *Ini*-crown of the king, who was depicted facing right. The height of the crown is ca. 30 cm, which indicates that the scale of the figure as a whole was only slightly smaller than life-size. The presence of such a large-scale relief confirms that Petubastis IV had an entire temple or chapel constructed.

Building a temple was only done for a king's hometown or for an important administrative center. Political considerations played a major part.<sup>23</sup> In the case of Petubastis IV, there is no other building known that

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*liste und Übungsstücken* [2 vols.; Hützel: Backe, 2008–2009], 347 n. 6) and *h* can be used to write *pr* (ibid., 349 n. 75). The confusion is explained by the similarity of the two signs in the hieratic script: Dieter Kurth, “Der Einfluß der Kursive auf die Inschriften des Tempels von Edfu,” in *Edfu: Bericht über drei Surveys; Materialien und Studien* (ed. D. Kurth; Die Inschriften des Tempels von Edfu 5; Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 1999), 69–96, esp. 77 [h], 81 [ai].

20. Melanie Wasmuth, “Reflexion und Repräsentation kultureller Interaktion: Ägypten und die Achämeniden” (Ph.D. diss., University of Basel, 2009), 216. I do not share Wasmuth’s interpretation of this feature as indicating a recarving of the cartouche. It should rather be seen as an art historical phenomenon related to the tendency to abandon isocephaly in two-dimensional representations at Hibis.

21. Kaper and Demarée, “A donation stela in the name of Takeloth III,” 34–35.

22. As also elsewhere in Egypt; see Jan Quaegebeur, “Thoth-Hermès, le dieu le plus grand,” in *Hommages à François Daumas* (ed. Institut de l’égyptologie; vol. 2; Orientalia monspeliensia 3; Montpellier: Institut de l’égyptologie, Université Paul Valéry, 1986), 525–44 (533).

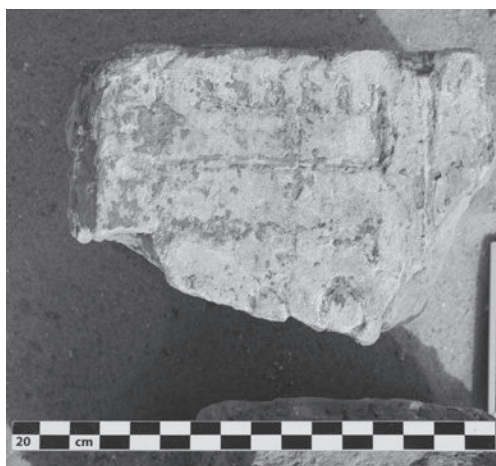
23. See Jean-Claude Goyon et al., *La construction pharaonique du Moyen Empire à l’époque gréco-romaine. Contexte et principes technologiques* (Paris: Picard, 2004),





Figure 8: Block from an offering scene of the temple of Petubastis IV, with his cartouche. Copyright New York University. Photograph by B. Bazzani.

Figure 9: Fragment from the reveal of the gateway of Petubastis IV with part of a building inscription. Copyright New York University. Photograph by B. Bazzani.



34–35. Dieter Arnold (*Temples of the Last Pharaohs* [New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999], 64–65) comments on the Saite kings favoring temples in the Delta and the oases, but neglecting Thebes.

was dedicated in his name, only a piece of temple furnishings in the form of the small wooden shrine, mentioned in note 10 above. The temple at Amheida must have been a product of the brief period of rule between the capture of Memphis, where Petubastis presumably was crowned, and his overthrow in the early years of Darius I. During this period, the papyrus letter found by Petrie at Memphis or Meydum was written. It demonstrates that the administration of the country, at least of the part recaptured by Petubastis, resumed its normal routine. The letter sealed with the name of Petubastis is dated to year one.<sup>24</sup>

The previous Twenty-Sixth Dynasty had invested heavily in the development of the Dakhla Oasis, because evidence for temple building at Amheida is attested under Nekau II, Psamtek II and especially Amasis. The addition of a gateway and at least one large-scale relief by Petubastis IV is therefore to be seen as a supplement to the existing buildings on the site. There is no evidence that earlier buildings were demolished and reused at this time.

#### HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The new material indicates that the area governed by king Petubastis IV was considerably larger than was previously suspected. It was known that this Egyptian rebellion against Persian rule managed to occupy the capital Memphis, but otherwise its extent is unknown. Now it is clear that Dakhla Oasis was also involved, which means that the entire Southern Oasis (Kharga and Dakhla) must have been with the rebellion. The rebel king even built a temple there, which calls attention to a number of issues.

The dating of the rebellion of Petubastis was placed by Yoyotte on good grounds in the early years of the Persian domination.<sup>25</sup> His principal argument was the shape of the seal inscribed with the royal name, which closely follows the model of the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty. A new argument that confirms this dating is found in the titulary of the king, now known almost in its entirety, which is modeled on those of the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty kings.

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24. Eugene Cruz-Urbe, "Early Demotic Texts from Heracleopolis," in *Res severa verum gaudium: Festschrift für Karl Theodor Zauzich zum 65. Geburtstag am 8. Juni 2004* (ed. F. Hoffmann and H. J. Thissen; Studia Demotica 6; Leuven: Peeters, 2004), 59–66 (60).

25. Yoyotte, "Pétoubastis III,,"; see also Eugene Cruz-Urbe, "The Invasion of Egypt by Cambyses," *Transeu* 25 (2003): 5–60 (55–56).

The Coronation Name refers to the “Heart (mind) of Re,” which was the pattern for almost all kings of the Saite dynasty.<sup>26</sup> The “Two Ladies Name,” [s3-Nt] *shd r-prw*, is constructed similarly to that of Amasis: s3-Nt *spd-t3wy*. It has been suggested that Petubastis was a member of the Saite royal family,<sup>27</sup> but this remains mere speculation without further data.

The temple at Amheida was built after Petubastis had assumed his titulary, and after he established control over a large part of the country. The reference to Memphis in the title “Beloved of Ptah, South of his Wall,” points at the seat of government at the time.<sup>28</sup> The papyrus document from “year 1” that was found at Memphis or Meydum indicate that there was a period of stability that would be conducive to royal construction activity. Yet, the location of the temple is remarkable.

The town of *St-w3h* (Amheida) had been the site of recent temple construction under Amasis. A medium-sized temple to the god Thoth had been erected at the site. However, Petubastis IV did not merely continue the building programme of an admired predecessor. To understand this we have to consider the circumstances of his reign.

Petubastis had fought several battles with the Persian army, we must assume, and he had occupied the capital Memphis. It is possible that the “great rage” (*n3n 3*) mentioned by Udjahorresne,<sup>29</sup> refers to the insurrection. Sais, the hometown of Udjahorresne, may have remained in Persian hands, but there must have been violent confrontations. The duration of Petubastis’s claim to the throne is unknown, but it cannot have been more than a few years. Darius I and the satrap Aryandes did everything in their power to bring the country back under their control. By the time when

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26. Ronald J. Leprohon, *The Great Name: Ancient Egyptian Royal Titulary* (SBLWAW 33; Atlanta, Ga: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 164–65: the titulary of the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty was not bellicose as in previous periods, but it adapted much older Middle Kingdom models, which express the king’s relationship with the gods.

27. Cruz-Urbe, “Invasion of Egypt,” 55.

28. Stephen Ruzicka, *Trouble in the West: Egypt and the Persian Empire 525–332 BCE* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 237 n. 41, considers the possibility that the Persian army retained control over the White Wall, the fortified garrison section of Memphis, as at the time of Inaros’ revolt in the 450s (Thuc. 1.104.2), but this is hard to imagine. A retreat by the Persians to some fortifications in the Delta seems more likely, such as Sais, where Udjahorresne continued to hold office.

29. G. Posener, *La première domination perse en Égypte, recueil d’inscriptions hiéroglyphiques* (BdÉ 11; Cairo: IFAO, 1936), 18–19 [line 33–34]; 20 [line 40–41].

Darius I came to Egypt in 518 B.C.E. or not long afterwards, the matter must have been settled. There is not a shred of evidence that Petubastis built any other stone monument, be it a royal statue or a temple. The building activity in the oasis is thus highly significant, because of the threatened position of Petubastis, which made it difficult to organize any building activities at all.

The Dakhla oasis could very well have been a powerbase for Petubastis, from where he organized his rebellion. That would explain the extraordinary building activity there, as an expression of his attachment or even gratitude to the region and its gods. There is circumstantial evidence that this was indeed the case.

Herodotus (3.25.3) reports the following story he had heard about Cambyses II:

When he reached Thebes in the course of this march [against the Ethiopians—OEK], he separated out about 50,000 men of his army and instructed them to reduce the Ammonians to total slavery and to set fire to the oracle of Zeus.... (26) As for those dispatched from Thebes to wage war against the Ammonians, they travelled with guides, and it is known that they reached the city of Oasis (*Oasis polis*). This city belongs to the Samians said to be of the Aeschrionian tribe, and it lies a seven-days' journey through the desert sand from Thebes.... It is said that the troops reached this place, but no one except for the Ammonians and those who heard the report of the Ammonians is able to report anything more about them. Apparently they never reached the Ammonians, nor did they ever return to Egypt. The Ammonians themselves say that when the troops left Oasis, they marched across the sand until they stopped somewhere between Oasis and the Ammonians, and while they were having breakfast there, a strong wind of extraordinary force blew upon them from the south, such a way, it is said, that they completely disappeared. That, at least, is what the Ammonians claim to have happened to this army.<sup>30</sup>

This is the only record of the expedition of Cambyses into the Western Desert, but it seems credible in some of its basic facts. Nevertheless, a number of points raise questions. Firstly, the reason why Cambyses would want to attack the oases is unclear from Herodotus's report.<sup>31</sup> Secondly,

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30. Translation Andrea L. Purvis in R. B. Strassler, ed., *The Landmark Herodotus The Histories* (New York: Anchor Books, 2007), 356.

31. Ahmed Fakhry (*The Oases of Egypt I: Siwa Oasis* [Cairo: American University

the number of 50,000 soldiers seems excessively high, mainly because longer desert journeys are more effectively made with smaller caravans, carrying their own water and food. Thirdly, the starting point of the journey is unexpected: Thebes is not the obvious starting point for reaching the oasis of Siwa—the oasis of Ammon, or the Ammonians—because one would normally depart from Memphis or travel along the Mediterranean coast to reach Siwa.<sup>32</sup> Yet, the army is said to reach the town of Oasis after seven days, which is an accurate designation of the capital of Kharga Oasis and the time it takes to arrive there from Thebes.<sup>33</sup> We need to examine the possibility that Herodotus's Ammonians were not confined to the Siwa Oasis. Elsewhere in his *Histories*, Herodotus describes the Ammonians as follows:

The first of these peoples, at a ten-days' journey from Thebes, are the Ammonians. They have a sanctuary of Zeus derived from that of Theban Zeus which, as I mentioned earlier, has an image of Zeus with a ram's head. (4.181.2, trans. Purvis).

The distance from Thebes suggests that Herodotus's Ammonians are here the inhabitants of Dakhla, as was already concluded by Brugsch.<sup>34</sup> A cult of the Theban Amon is known in that oasis since the Eighteenth Dynasty.<sup>35</sup>

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in Cairo Press, 1973], 81) summarizes aptly: "We can easily understand why Cambyses wanted to conquer Ethiopia and Carthage, but as for Siwa, we cannot find a satisfactory explanation except perhaps that Cambyses held a grudge against its oracles."

32. Guy Wagner, *Les oasis d'Égypte à l'époque grecque, romaine et byzantine d'après les documents grecs* (BdÉ 100; Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1987), 150–51; G. B. Belzoni, *Narrative of the Operations and Recent Discoveries within the Pyramids, Temples, Tombs and Excavations in Egypt and Nubia, and of a Journey to the Coast of the Red Sea, in Search of the Ancient Berenice and Another to the Oasis of Jupiter Ammon*, London: John Murray, 1820), 399 speculated that Herodotus was mistaken and that the army left from Memphis instead of Thebes.

33. Wagner (*Les oasis d'Égypte*, 124 n. 5) adds that the term "Oasis city" is only ever applied to the Great Oasis, and never to Siwa.

34. H. Brugsch cited in Gerhard Rohlfs, *Drei Monate in der libyschen Wüste* (Cassel: Theodor Fischer, 1875), 332–33: "In der That, so wahnsinnig Kambyses auch gewesen sein mag, er war es schwerlich in dem Grade, dass er von Theben aus ein Heer mitten durch die Wüste nach der viel nördlicher gelegenen Oase Siuah gesandt haben sollte. Alles stimmt dagegen sehr gut, wenn die von Herodot hier gemeinte Ammons-Oase die Oase Dachle ist."

35. C. A. Hope, "Mut el-Kharab: Seth's city in Dakhleh Oasis," *EA* 27 (2005): 4

The fourth aspect that should be questioned is the manner of death reported for this army. Experienced Sahara travellers such as Théodore Monod confirm that a sand storm is highly unlikely to kill anyone.<sup>36</sup> People may die of thirst in the desert, but they will survive a sand storm. Moreover, Cambyses's army was very experienced in desert travel;<sup>37</sup> and they would not take needless risks.

In the light of the new evidence of the activities of Petubastis IV in Dakhla, we can better explain the strange story reported by Herodotus about the lost army. Cambyses sent part of his army into the Western Desert from Thebes, not in order to attack Siwa, but to confront Petubastis, who was preparing a rebellion in the Southern Oasis. The place of departure and the description of the route confirm that Dakhla was the target of the expedition.<sup>38</sup> Since none of the soldiers are said to have returned, we must conclude that the army was defeated by Petubastis. When news of this disaster reached Cambyses he managed to prevent it from becoming widely known, and after Darius I had restored full control, the shameful event was modified in public memory into the result of an unfortunate sandstorm.

I think we can lay to rest the myth of the lost army of Cambyses. The idea that Herodotus's report is to be taken literally and that the entire army of Cambyses was hit by bad weather and remains buried somewhere under a sand dune was overall too fantastic to be true.<sup>39</sup> The presence of a revolt

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[block not depicted]. There is no evidence as yet for a ram's head for Amun-Re at Dakhla before the Roman Period, but in Kharga, in the temple of Hibis, the ram's head is well attested already in the Persian period.

36. Théodore Monod, cited in Jean-François Sers, *Désert libyque* (Paris: Arthaud, 1994), 100–103: “Jamais, au grand jamais, un vent de sable n’a enseveli quelqu’un!” (p. 101). See already J. Leclant, “‘Per Africae Sitientia’: Témoignages des sources classiques sur les pistes menant à l’oasis d’Ammon,” *BIFAO* 49 (1950): 193–253 (215).

37. Leclant, “‘Per Africae Sitientia,’” 214.

38. Herodotus's reference to Samians inhabiting the oases may perhaps be explained by the name of the Libyan tribe of the Shamain that is attested in Dakhla around the time of the early Twenty-Fifth Dynasty, on which see Kaper and Demarée, “A donation stela in the name of Takeloth III,” 35.

39. Yet, serious expeditions have been mounted with the purpose of finding this treasure. Already Belzoni, *Narrative*, 399–400 reported finding the remains of the army. A later expedition in 1933 is reported in Orde Wingate, “In Search of Zerzura,” *The Geographical Journal* 83 (1934): 281–308. Almásy searched for it in April 1935 in the northern part of the Sand Sea, see Saul Kelly, *The Hunt for Zerzura: The Lost Oasis and the Desert War* (London: John Murray, 2003), 119–21; L. E. de Almásy,



in Dakhla provides a much more satisfactory explanation. Petubastis was indeed a formidable enemy, because he succeeded in reconquering a large part of the country, including the capital Memphis.

There are other places where Herodotus reports propaganda stories. In 2.141, he describes the flight of the Assyrian king Sennacherib from Egypt caused by “a horde of field mice,” who ate the army’s weapons and caused his retreat.<sup>40</sup> This seems to be on all accounts a comparable series of events.

More information on Petubastis’ revolt can be gleaned from the great inscription at Bisitun. According to this text in the name of Darius I,<sup>41</sup> there were nine revolts by “liar kings” at the beginning of his reign, one of which took place in Egypt. He is said to have crushed them all, in his first two years or so, bringing back their leaders in order to publicly execute them in Persia. No specifics are given about the Egyptian revolt or its leader, but with the new evidence about the extent of the revolt of Petubastis IV in mind, the Bisitun text should be read as referring to Petubastis IV, even though he is not mentioned by name. The suppression of the revolt may have taken several years, and probably the satrap of Egypt,

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*Récentes explorations dans le Désert Libyque (1932–1936)* (Cairo, 1936), 96; Michael Weese et al., eds., *Schwimmer in der Wüste: Auf den Spuren des “Englischen Patienten” Ladislaus Eduard von Almásy* (Eisenstadt: Landesmuseum Burgenland, 2012), 191. A planned second attempt by Almásy in 1950 did not come about; Gerhard L. Fasching, in Weese et al., eds., *Schwimmer in der Wüste*, 40. According to Hansjoachim von der Esch (*Weenak—Die Karawane ruft: Auf verschollenen Pfaden durch Ägyptens Wüsten* [2nd ed.; Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1943], 236–300) Cambyse’s vanished army was Almásy’s “Lieblingsproblem” (p. 225). In 1983–1984, Harvard University funded G. S. Chafetz in a fruitless and unpublished search. Fakhry, *Siwa*, 82 shows that the heart of the problem lies in our interpretation of Herodotus’ text: “While it is very possible that the number of the soldiers is greatly exaggerated, this does not change *the historical fact* [italics OEK] that an army sent by Cambyse in the year 524 BC was buried under the sands of the Libyan Desert at some place mid-way between Kharga and Siwa.”

40. Danèl Kahn, “The War of Sennacherib Against Egypt as Described in Herodotus II 141,” *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 6 (2014): 23–33 (25).

41. Heinz Luschey, “Studien zu dem Darius-Relief in Bisutun,” *AMI NS* 1 (1968): 63–94, pls. 29–42; Rykle Borger and Walther Hinz, “Die Behistun-Inschrift Darius’ des Grossen,” in *Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments*, vol. 1: *Historisch-chronologische Texte I* (ed. R. Borger; Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1984), 419–50. An Aramaic translation of the text was found at Elephantine dating from the time of Darius II; Jonas C. Greenfield and Bezalel Porten, *The Bisitun Inscription of Darius the Great: Aramaic Version* (London: Lund Humphries, 1982).



Aryandes, was the main player in this process.<sup>42</sup> Darius came to Egypt in 518 B.C.E., and it is even possible that the rebellion was not yet entirely crushed by then.

The Roman period author Polyænus (7.11.7) also mentions the revolt at the beginning of the reign of Darius I:

The Egyptians revolted, on account of the cruelties inflicted on them by Aryandes, their satrap. In order to reduce them to obedience, Darius himself marched through the Arabian Desert and arrived at Memphis, at the very time when the Egyptians were commemorating the death of Apis. Darius immediately made a proclamation, that he would give a hundred talents of gold to the man who could produce Apis. The Egyptians were so impressed by the piety of the king, that they took decisive action against the rebels, and entirely devoted themselves to the support of Darius.<sup>43</sup>

The revolt is linked to Aryandes and thus we can identify the rebel with Petubastis IV.<sup>44</sup> This late source suggests that when Darius arrived in Egypt in 518 B.C.E., the rebellion was still ongoing.

#### CONCLUSIONS

The new finds in Dakhla shed light on the history of the oasis in the wider historical context of the first major rebellion against Persian occupation. The new evidence from the temple at Amheida shows that Petubastis IV was no “puppet’ or vassal king.”<sup>45</sup> The combination of the archaeological data with the record of Herodotus indicates that Petubastis IV had probably established himself in Dakhla, away from the Nile Valley and away

42. See Richard A. Parker, “Darius and his Egyptian Campaign,” *AJSL* 58 (1941): 373–77.

43. See <http://www.attalus.org/translate/polyaenus7.html#11.1>, translation adapted from R. Shepherd, *Polyænus's Strategems of war: Tr. from the Original Greek* (London: G. Nicol 1793), 272.

44. As already John D. Ray, “Egypt 525–404 B.C.,” in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 4: *Persia, Greece and the Western Mediterranean c. 525 to 479 B.C.* (ed. John Boardman et al.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 254–86 (262, 266), but this identification is denied in Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 410.

45. Cruz-Urbe, “The Invasion of Egypt,” 56. Yet, on p. 60, he gives Petubastis III (read: IV) four years of reign, 525–522 B.C.E.

from control by the Persian army that occupied the country. He managed to defeat the army of Cambyses in ways that we cannot know, and he was successful in reaching Memphis, where Petubastis was crowned, assuming control of at least part of the country. The demotic document from year 1 that was sealed with his name demonstrates a regular maintenance of administrative control. Petubastis assumed a titulary that is modeled upon those of the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty kings, in particular Amasis. Eventually, Darius I managed to reestablish control and all references to Petubastis were deleted from the king lists. On the reverse of the Demotic Chronicle are noted the reigns of Amasis (year 44), Cambyses, and Darius I but not those of Psamtek III or Petubastis IV.<sup>46</sup>

The temple for Thoth in Amheida was destroyed and its blocks were reused in later structures. Remains of oil libations on the reliefs indicate that the temple functioned for a number of years. It is most likely that the reuse of the blocks took place under Darius I,<sup>47</sup> because no later structures have been found at the site until the Roman period and the reliefs do not show evidence of several centuries of exposure. At the same time, it is known that Darius invested heavily in the development of the southern oases. Apart from a small temple at Amheida, he built the large temple of Hibis, as well as a smaller stone temple at Ghueita in Kharga. This remarkable high level of interest in the oases, which remains unexplained,<sup>48</sup> can now be ascribed to the vital role of the southern oases in the large revolt

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46. W. Spiegelberg, *Die sogenannte Demotische Chronik des Pap. 215 der Bibliothèque Nationale zu Paris nebst den auf der Rückseite des Papyrus stehenden Texten* (Demotische Studien 7; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1914), 30–31, pl. VII; translation Didier Devauchelle, “Le sentiment anti-perses chez les anciens Égyptiens,” *Transeu* 9 (1995): 67–80 (74–75).

47. On this temple, see Olaf E. Kaper, “Epigraphic Evidence from the Dakhleh Oasis in the Late Period” (reference in n. 7 above), 167–76 (171–72).

48. John Coleman Darnell, David Klotz and Colleen Manassa, “Gods on the Road: The Pantheon of Thebes at Qasr el-Ghueita,” in *Documents de Théologies Thébaines Tardives* (D3T 2) (ed. C. Thiers; Cahiers Égypte Nilotique et Méditerranéenne 8; Montpellier: Université Paul Valéry, 2013), 1–31 (13) describe the significant increase of activity on the desert routes and in the oases in the Twenty-Seventh Dynasty, which they connect to the disastrous military campaign under Cambyses. On the Persian period sites in the Southern Oasis, see the overview in Michel Wuttmann and Sylvie Marchand, “Égypte,” in *Larchéologie de l’empire achéménide: Nouvelles recherches* (ed. P. Briant and R. Boucharlat; Persika 6; Paris: De Boccard, 2005), 97–128 (117–19). Kharga is described as having an “activité architecturale pendant l’époque perse qui nous semble sortir d’un quasi-néant.”

that had taken place. By organizing the agriculture of the region and its infrastructure, Darius I wished to make sure that a revolt could never come from the oases again.<sup>49</sup>

History is written by the victors. When Herodotus arrived some seventy-five years after the reign of Petubastis IV, the Persians had already obliterated all memory of the episode so that he did not hear anything about the rebellion whatsoever.

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49. Yet, when the revolt by Inaros took place in the delta between 462 and 453 B.C.E., the Kharga Oasis supported him, see n. 4 above.

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UDJAHORRESNET: THE FOUNDER OF THE SAITE-PERSIAN  
CEMETERY AT ABUSIR AND HIS ENGAGEMENT AS  
LEADING POLITICAL PERSON DURING THE  
TROUBLED YEARS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE  
TWENTY-SEVENTH DYNASTY

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The Great Chief of all foreign lands, Cambyses, came to Egypt, and the foreign people of every foreign land were with him. When he had conquered this land in its entirety, they established themselves in it, and he was Great Ruler of Egypt and Great Chief of all foreign lands. His Majesty assigned to me the office of chief physician. He made me live at his side as companion and administrator of the palace. I composed his titulary, to wit his name of King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Mesutire.<sup>1</sup>

This small part of a rather comprehensive autobiographical text engraved on the naophorus statue of the Egyptian nobleman Udjahorresnet, who served under the first two Persian kings Cambyses and Darius I, speaks openly about the relationship between Cambyses and Udjahorresnet.<sup>2</sup> These relations are respectful and correct, as much as possible, showing the desire for a peaceful coexistence profitable for both the conqueror and his subjects. With the complete titulary made for him by his adviser, the chief physician Udjahorresnet, Cambyses can be considered as an

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1. Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings*, vol. 3, *The Late Period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 37–38.

2. Georges Posener, *La première domination perse en Égypte: Recueil d'inscriptions hiéroglyphiques* (BdÉ 11; Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1936), 1–29, 164–71; Bernardus V. Bothmer, *Egyptian Sculpture of the Late Period, 700 B.C. to A.D. 100* (New York: Brooklyn Museum, 1960).

Egyptian king and legitimate heir of the Saite rulers. True, the conquest of Egypt in 525 B.C.E. by a large multinational Persian army heavily disturbed the country and resulted in violence and pillage, with Egypt losing its sovereignty. On the other hand, archaeological research on numerous localities all over Egypt and surviving written sources prove rather sufficiently that no systematic destruction was evident and order was reestablished with minimal negative consequences on the life of the country.<sup>3</sup> As a true statesman, Udjahorresnet knew very well the pros and cons of the process of the installation of the new Persian rulers and preferred—with other members of the Egyptian aristocracy—a peaceful “pharaonisation” of the foreigners on the Egyptian throne instead of permanent rebellions or open provocation of the Persian war-machine which had not only conquered most of the Near East but which marched ever further to the west, even intent upon expansion into Greece and Scythia.<sup>4</sup> In light of such unfavorable circumstances it is hardly acceptable to speak about collaboration; a pure pragmatism supported by experiences all over the Near East is more accurate.<sup>5</sup> Cambyses left Egypt in 522 B.C.E., perhaps accompanied by Udjahorresnet who consequently did not mention the situation in Egypt during the interregnum between Cambyses and Darius I.<sup>6</sup> This means that Cambyses stayed in the conquered state for almost three years to establish an enduring Persian domination over Egypt.<sup>7</sup> This seems a sufficiently long time for Udjahorresnet to function as his adviser and successfully transform him into an Egyptian king, making the turbulent time of the omnipresent national frustration following the defeat easier with

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3. José Miguel Serrano Delgado, “Cambyses in Sais: Political and Religious Context in Achaemenid Egypt,” *ChrEg* 79 (2004): 31–52 (39).

4. Günter Vittmann, *Ägypten und die Fremden im ersten vorchristlichen Jahrtausend* (Kulturgeschichte der antiken Welt 97; Mainz: von Zabern, 2003), 122–31; Bernadette Menu, “L’Apport des autobiographies hiéroglyphiques à l’histoire des deux domination perses,” *Transeu* 35 (2008): 143–63; Eugene Cruz-Urbe, “The Invasion of Egypt by Cambyses,” *Transeu* 25 (2003): 9–60.

5. Torben Holm-Rasmussen, “Collaboration in Early Achaemenid Egypt: A New Approach,” in *Studies in Ancient History and Numismatics Presented to Rudi Thomsen* (ed. E. Christiansen, A. Damsgaard-Madsen, and E. Hallager; Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1988), 29–38.

6. Pierre Briant, *Histoire de l’empire perse: De Cyrus à Alexandre* (Paris: Fayard, 1996), 489.

7. Stephen Ruzicka, *Trouble in the West: Egypt and the Persian Empire 525–332 BCE* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 19.

the general interest of the country in mind.<sup>8</sup> This pragmatic attitude was positively assessed by his compatriots (at least some of them) when his statue was restored and worshiped after 177 years by the priest Minirdis at Memphis.<sup>9</sup>

Udjahorresnet contributed in important ways to the working program of Cambyses, and consequently of Darius I as well, which in Egypt was characterized by a tolerant rule, a rather successful effort to make close alliances with loyal and still influential local elites, a respectful attitude towards the Egyptian gods and their cults, and last but not least also significant building activities across the country.<sup>10</sup> In contrast to later Greek writers, mainly Herodotus, Diodorus and Strabo, as well as a series of Egyptian and later Persian negative propagandistic documents, numerous Egyptian sources of the time mention Cambyses as a ruler of good reputation and a pious sovereign who restored some of the sanctuaries of the deities of Egypt; in this respect his policy can be characterized by a stress on conciliation and forbearance.<sup>11</sup> Let Udjahorresnet speak himself:

I made a petition to the majesty of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Cambyses, about all the foreigners who dwelled in the temple of Neith, in order to have them expelled from it, so as to let the temple of Neith be in all its splendor, as it had been before. His majesty commanded to expel all the foreigners [who] dwelled in the temple of Neith, to demolish all their houses and all their unclean things that were in the temple.

When they had carried [all their] personal [belongings] outside the wall of the temple, his majesty commanded to cleanse the temple of Neith and to return all its personnel to it, the ... and the hour-priests of the temple. His majesty commanded to give divine offerings to Neith-the-Great, the mother of the god, and to the great gods of Sais, as it had been before. His majesty commanded [to perform] all their festivals and all their processions, as had been before. His majesty did this because I

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8. Werner Huss, "Ägyptische Kollaborateure in persischer Zeit," *Tyche* 12 (1997): 131–43.

9. Rudolf Anthes, *Mit Rahineh* 1956 (Philadelphia: Museum Monographs, 1965), 98–100, pls. 36 a–b, 37 a–c.

10. Tytus Mikołajczak, "Some Remarks about the Religion of the Persians in Egypt," *Études et Travaux* 22 (2008): 128–46.

11. Alan B. Lloyd, "The Late Period, 664–323 BC," in *Ancient Egypt: A Social History* (ed. B. G. Trigger et al.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 279–348 (282–318).

had let his majesty known the greatness of Sais, that it is the city of all the gods, who dwell there on their seats forever.<sup>12</sup>

From a politico-religious, or better, a propagandist, point of view one might suppose that Cambyses would have reduced the endowments of the priest-hoods of certain wealth and of the influential sanctuaries, thus making enemies among this powerful Egyptian class.<sup>13</sup> A Serapeum stela dated to the sixth year of his rule proves that the bull, born in year 27 of Ahmose II, was buried with honor and piety in a granite sarcophagus donated by the Persian king. In this way he followed the indigenous pharaohs in performing adequate ritual duties. The next bull, born during his reign, died naturally in the fourth year of his successor Darius I, to mention but a few well-known written records.<sup>14</sup> Darius I, Cambyses's successor on the Egyptian throne, is also considered as a tolerant and intelligent ruler who fully restored order to the empire after a short period of revolts following the unexpected death of Cambyses. However, this loyalty was not long and was succeeded by a series of revolts after the reign of Darius I as a result of the repressive measures employed by his successor Xerxes I. Rather recently Ruzicka formulates very precisely the core of these measures:

Xerxes pressured by the bad situation in the Aegean campaigns completely abandon the collaborative approach to making Egypt in favour of direct control measures and involved the use of Egyptians in only the most subordinate administrative positions, a great increase in garrison forces, and the end of subsidies to Egyptian temples.<sup>15</sup>

More light is shed on the character of the aforementioned acceptance of Egyptian values and traditions by the results of Czech archaeological excavations on the rather small Saite-Persian cemetery at Abusir,<sup>16</sup> where Udjahorresnet's tomb has been discovered (fig. 1). Unfortunately,

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12. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 38.

13. Karol Myśliwiec, *The Twilight of Ancient Egypt: First Millennium B.C.E.* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), 131–58.

14. Posener, *Première Domination*, 30–46, pls. II, III.

15. Stephen Ruzicka, *Trouble in the West: Egypt and the Persian Empire 525/332 BCE* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 28.

16. Ladislav Bareš, “The Development of the Shaft Tomb Burials in Egypt during the Persian Period,” in *Studies Dedicated to the Memory of Eva Parday* (ed. M. Bárta and H. Küllmer; Prague: Czech Institute of Egyptology, 2013), 15–23.

the mummy was gone but the remains of his embalmer's deposit clearly proved that he was buried here.<sup>17</sup> The tombs represent only one of many facets of the archaizing tendencies typical for the Saite dynasty (the so-called *Saite Renaissance*). In general, the subterranean parts of those tombs seem to imitate the architectural disposition of the burial chamber under the famous Step Pyramid of king Djoser at nearby Northern Saqqara, of course on a much smaller scale.<sup>18</sup> The precise dating of these tombs is still uncertain,<sup>19</sup> but the reign of Psammetik II is widely accepted as the era when their construction started. Nevertheless, the real heyday, but also a retreat from a quite short period of glory of their construction on the vast Memphite necropolis, is dated to the more than forty years' long reign of Ahmose II (570–526 B.C.E.).

Based on our long-term archaeological research and thorough investigation, only the small group of huge shaft tombs unearthed at the westernmost part of Abusir necropolis can be dated a little more precisely, the more so since not one tomb was later reused as a secondary cemetery. They are perhaps the last structures of this kind of funerary architecture built on the vast Memphite necropolis. Our assemblage of finds comprised a broad variety of artefacts unearthed both from the super- and substructure of the tombs. On the surface of the limestone core masonry of the enclosure wall in the shaft tomb of Udjahorresnet, and on several loose blocks found at this spot, a rather considerable number of short demotic graffiti mentioning regnal years 41 or 42 were identified. Such unusually high regnal years can be ascribed to Ahmose II only, the more so as three small plaques of Egyptian faience with his name (Khnum-ib-Re) in cartouches were recovered as parts of the foundation deposits under the corners of Udjahorresnet's enclosure wall, clearly corroborating this

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17. Ladislav Bareš, Květa Smoláriková, and Eugen Strouhal, "The Saite-Persian Cemetery at Abusir in 2003," *ZÄS* 132 (2005): 95–106.

18. Louise Gestermann, "Das spätzeitliche Schachtgrab als memphitischer Grabtyp," in *Jn.t dr.w. Festschrift für Friedrich Junge* (ed. G. Moers, H. Behlmer, K. Demuß, and K. Widmaier; Göttingen: Seminar für Ägyptologie, 2006), 195–206 (200–205); Jean-Philippe Lauer, *Les pyramides de Sakkarah* (5th rev. ed.; Bibliothèque Générale 3; Cairo: IFAO, 1977), 12–13; Květa Smoláriková, "The Step Pyramid: A Constant Inspiration to the Saite Egyptians," in *Abusir and Saqqara in the Year 2005: Proceedings of the Conference Held in Prague (June 27–July 5, 2005)* (ed. M. Bárta, F. Coppens, and J. Krejčí; Prague: Czech Institute of Egyptology, 2006), 42–43.

19. Michael Stammers, *The Elite Late Period Egyptian Tombs of Memphis* (BAR International Series 1903; Oxford: Archaeopress, 2009), 28–30.

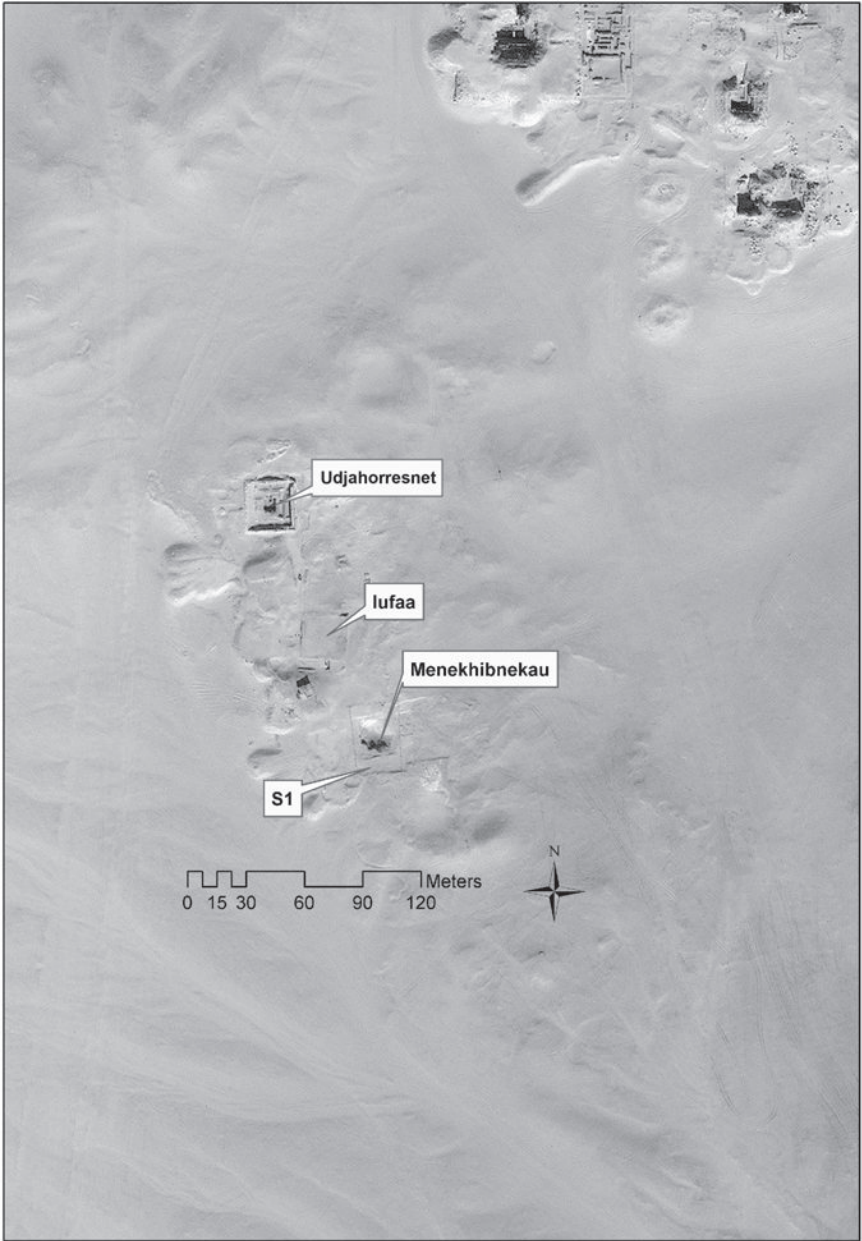


Figure 1: Saite-Persian cemetery at Abusir. Photograph used by permission of the Laboratory of Geoinformatics, J. E. Purkyně University.



dating. Thus, the building of the tomb of this prominent Saite dignitary started around 530 B.C.E. Judging from the obtained archaeological data, for example, the horizontal stratigraphy, its position at the highest point in the area or its location directly to the center of the cemetery, this tomb seems to be the oldest structure built here and Udjahorresnet can be considered as the founder of this cemetery. Although no similar dates were found on the masonry in any other shaft tomb that has been unearthed at Abusir so far (simply because their superstructures did not survive), we have many reasons to consider those tombs as roughly contemporary or only slightly younger than the burial place of Udjahorresnet. Except for the series of unique graffiti connected with the founder of this small cemetery, a significant number of well-dated artifacts were discovered in this part of the Abusir cemetery: in the nearby situated shaft tomb belonging to an otherwise unknown priest named Iufaa, a loose limestone block with a graffito mentioning “year 42, 2nd month of the *akhet* season, day 25” and a pottery storage jar inscribed with “year 15, 2nd month of the *akhet* season, day 11(?)” came to light in the sand fill of the huge main shaft.<sup>20</sup> Unique is also the discovery of two unpublished fragments of papyri with clearly indicated dates—“year 21” and “year 17, month 1 of the *akhet* season”—obtained from the rooms of a mortuary complex situated in front of the eastern façade of Iufaa’s mud-brick enclosure.

In addition to the above-mentioned Egyptian written sources, the assemblage of well- or fragmentary preserved pieces of imported Eastern Greek amphorae is also of high chronological significance. They were reused by the Egyptian builders as containers for water (?) and were left behind after the work at a depth of circa 27 meters was finished. They have been found *in situ*, at the foot of Iufaa’s main shaft around his burial chamber, and can be dated to the last quarter of the sixth century B.C.E. or a bit later.<sup>21</sup> Of special interest are those of Lesbian provenance, because the

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20. Ladislav Bareš, “Demotic Sources from the Saite-Persian Cemetery at Abusir: A Preliminary Evaluation,” in *Acts of the Seventh International Conference of Demotic Studies, Copenhagen, 23–27 August 1999* (ed. K. Ryholt; Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum, 2002), 35–38.

21. Květa Smoláriková, *Greek Imports in Egypt: Græco-Egyptian Relations during the First Millennium B.C.* (Abusir 7; Prague: Czech Institute of Egyptology, 2002), 37–42; Smoláriková, “The Anonymous Tomb R3,” in *Lesser Late Period Tombs at Abusir: The Tomb of Padihor and the Anonymous Tomb R3* (ed. F. Coppens and K. Smoláriková; Abusir 20; Prague: Czech Institute of Egyptology, 2009), 85–110 (98–104).

manufacture of Lesbian amphora type *en phi* started around the last quarter of the sixth century B.C.E.,<sup>22</sup> and if we allow time for the trade with Egypt to develop, and for the transport amphorae to find their way to Memphis and to be used in some way by Greeks and/or Egyptians, such contexts are unlikely to be earlier than about 510–500 B.C.E. As a consequence, the dating of the tomb of Iufaa to the beginning of the Persian dynasty has been widely accepted by the scholarly community.<sup>23</sup> Some even proposed that all the Abusir tombs of this kind should be dated to the early Twenty-Seventh Dynasty, namely the reign of Darius I,<sup>24</sup> but the already mentioned foundation deposits with the name of Ahmose II, discovered in the corners of Udjahorresnet's enclosure wall, clearly argue against this hypothesis. In the course of the archaeological work in the subterranean structure of the huge shaft tomb belonging to the general Menekhibnekau, fragments of two pottery vessels, each bearing the date "year 22, month 4 of *shemu* season," were found in the fill of the burial chamber; evidently some activities must have been carried out here closely connected with this date. Because of that, one cannot exclude the possibility that this person might have been buried shortly before 500 B.C.E. Furthermore, on the neck of a transport amphora from the Greek island Samos a demotic inscription is preserved that mentions "regnal year 39, month 2 of *akhet* season." This was found among more than 320 Egyptian amphorae in a small subterranean structure, actually, an embalmer's deposit, situated in the south-west corner of Menekhibnekau's enclosure. Such a high date should again be connected with the already mentioned Egyptian king Ahmose II. Another imported vessel represents a Phoenician storage jar (Exc. No. 826/S/10) secondarily used in the embalmer's deposit. This bears at least four short inscriptions: three Phoenician ones written in ink and a fourth one, in Aramaic script, written in tar. On paleographical grounds all these inscriptions can be dated approximately to the end of the sixth or the early fifth century B.C.E., that is, to the period of the First Persian Domination.<sup>25</sup> These

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22. Pierre Dupont and Jean-Claude Goyon, "Amphores grecques archaïques de Gournia: À propos d'une publication récente," in *Sesto Congresso Internazionale di Egittologia-Atti* (Torino: Società Italiana per il Gas, 1992), 153–66.

23. Louise Gestermann, *Die Überlieferung ausgewählter Texte altägyptischer Totenliteratur („Sargtexte“) in spätzeitlichen Grabanlagen* (ÄA 68; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005), 404–5.

24. Stammers, *Elite Late Period Egyptian Tombs*, 29–30.

25. Jan Dušek and Jana Mynářová, "Phoenician and Aramaic Inscriptions on

inscriptions indicate the content of the jar “new wine” and, in the case of inscription number 3, perhaps the winemaker, the seller or another person involved in the distribution of the wine. One can suppose that the three Phoenician inscriptions were written in the Phoenician homeland. The lower-most inscription, which supposedly consists of two Egyptian words written in Aramaic script, was probably written in the land into which the wine was exported, that is, in Egypt itself.

Taking all the above-mentioned finds into account we can say that while the demotic graffito with the “year 42” and the inscription on the Samian amphora (“regnal year 39”) clearly refer to the period of the long reign of the Egyptian king Ahmose II, the other dated fragments that have been found in the shaft tombs at Abusir could hardly be attributed to that king, as there is no obvious reason why the items, the fragile papyri from Iufaa’s tomb, and the pottery vessels from Menekhibnekau’s tomb should have been used in the burial ceremonies or mortuary cult about twenty years later. It seems more likely that the dates ranging between regnal years 15 and 21/22 should be ascribed to another king who ruled long enough and who succeeded him—the Persian King Darius I whose name, moreover, is noted in a contract on one of the papyri (Excav. No. 124/R/01) found in the debris of the above-mentioned complex of cultic rooms situated in front of the tomb of Iufaa. If this is correct, the mortuary cult of the deceased owners and other funeral activities must have persisted—without evident interruption—until the very end of the sixth century B.C.E., or most probably somewhat longer. It should be noted, in this connection, that even Udjahorresnet might have died and been buried in his (unfinished) tomb at Abusir at about the same time, that is, the last decade of the sixth century B.C.E.,<sup>26</sup> but certainly after his return from Persia:

The Majesty of the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Darius, ever living, commanded me to return to Egypt—when his majesty was in Elam and was Great Chief of all foreign lands and Great Ruler of Egypt—in order to restore the establishment of the House of Life..., after he had decayed.

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a Phoenician Storage Jar (Excav. no. 826/S/10): A Preliminary Report,” in *The Shaft Tomb of Menekhibnekau*, vol. 1, *Archaeology* (ed. L. Bareš and K. Smoláriková; Abusir 25; Prague: Czech Institute of Egyptology, 2011), 179–81.

26. Ladislav Bareš, *The Shaft Tomb of Udjahorresnet at Abusir* (Abusir 4; Prague: Karolinum, 1999), 42–43; Květa Smoláriková, “Embalmer’s caches in the shaft tombs at Abu Sir,” *EA* 36 (2010): 33–35.

The foreigners carried me from country to country. They delivered me to Egypt as commanded by the Lord of the Two Lands. I did as his majesty has commanded me.<sup>27</sup>

So, according to surviving written documents, Udjahorresnet is the only one among all the builders of the huge Late Period shaft tombs who certainly lived under Cambyses and Darius I during the First Persian Domination of Egypt.<sup>28</sup> When exactly the builders of the other huge shaft tombs situated at Abusir died and were buried in their funerary complexes can hardly be ascertained with any precision at the moment due to the paucity of our sources, both written and archaeological. Taking in consideration the economic prosperity in the whole of the Persian Empire during the later years of Darius I, it cannot be ruled out that the work at the construction of those tombs or their decoration continued until that time, although the mostly unfinished decoration of the burial chambers of Udjahorresnet and partly also of the inner walls of Iufaa's chamber seems to contradict this. On the other hand, the exquisite relief decoration of the walls of the vaulted Menekhibnekau's burial chamber was almost completely finished. Unfortunately, we can only guess how long the construction of such huge tombs took, or even how much time passed between the construction of a tomb and the burial of its owner. Very special cases are, in this respect, some of the smaller burial chambers that exist in the lateral shafts of the huge shaft tombs and that might have been either built or used after 525 B.C.E.<sup>29</sup> Bearing in mind our present knowledge connected with the enormous financial burden of such labor-intensive work, a couple of good reasons can be mentioned for the gradual cessation of their building. Mainly, it is not certain that the previous building activities across the country could have continued to this extent during the short but turbulent period of the reign of Cambyses.<sup>30</sup> Egypt lost its political independence and became a province (satrapy) of a world-empire, albeit religious and cultural expression changed only imperceptibly. One cannot ignore the fact

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27. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 39–40.

28. Posener, *Première Domination*, 1–26.

29. Ladislav Bareš, "Lesser Burial Chambers in the Large Late Period Shaft Tombs and Their Owners," in *The Archaeology and Art of Ancient Egypt: Essays in Honor of David B. O'Connor* (ed. Z. A. Hawwas and J. E. Richards; ASAE 36.1; Cairo: Conseil Suprême des Antiquités de l'Égypte, 2007), 87–97 (67–68).

30. Didier Devauchelle, "Le sentiment anti-Perse chez les anciens Égyptiens," *Transeu* 9 (1995): 67–80.

that a rather harmonious mutual atmosphere between the Persian rulers of the country and members of the Egyptian aristocracy might have changed to almost its opposite following the end of the tolerant rule of Darius I who regarded Egypt as one of his favourite satrapies and the focus of his special attention both politically and personally;<sup>31</sup> some speak even about Darius's Egyptomania.<sup>32</sup> Afterwards the situation changed and it seems that in the next generation of Egyptian officials there were no men like Udjahorresnet (or other dignitaries like Ptahhotep, Chnumhotep, Amasis) who, serving Egyptian national interests, would be able to act both in Egypt and Persia as successful mediators between two antagonistic ideologies and amidst constant mutual tensions.<sup>33</sup> Only much later a series of rebellions against the Persian rulers were to reveal new powerful groups of Egyptian elites who proclaimed themselves king of Upper and Lower Egypt ... at least to the Second Persian Domination. In the light of our above-discussed finds from the Saite-Persian cemetery at Abusir, it would be accurate to finish this article with Donker van Heel's statement:

If there is one thing we learn from Egyptian history, it is that the Egyptians had very long memories, and they had a perfect way to ensure that Udjahorresnet's existence would be obliterated from this world and the next: simply destroy all material traces and erase his name and titles wherever they were found. But the Vatican statue is largely intact, apart from the head and part of the arm, and his Abusir tomb was not vandalized, except by tomb robbers.<sup>34</sup>

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31. Ruzicka, *Trouble in the West*, 23–25.

32. Delgado, "Cambyse in Sais," 32.

33. John D. Ray, "Egypt 525–404 B.C.," in *The Cambridge Ancient History IV* (ed. J. Boardman et al.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 254–86 (264); Bareš, *Shaft Tomb of Udjahorresnet*, 31–43.

34. Koenraad Donker van Heel, *Mrs. Thenhor: A Female Entrepreneur in Ancient Egypt* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2014), 57.

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# MEMORIES OF THE SECOND PERSIAN PERIOD IN EGYPT\*

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## THE SECOND PERSIAN PERIOD

The study of Achaemenid Persian rule of Egypt usually focuses on the period between the invasion of Cambyses ca. 525 B.C.E. and the revolt of Amyrtaeus in 405/4, Manetho's Twenty-Seventh Dynasty. There is good reason for this: as one of the earliest sustained periods of foreign rule there it provides an invaluable opportunity for examining the social, cultural and economic impacts of imperialism and interaction in Egypt. But there was also a "Second Persian Period," a brief resumption of Achaemenid rule during the fourth century B.C.E., identified in the appendix to Manetho as the "Thirty-First Dynasty." This period, beginning with the invasion of Egypt by Artaxerxes III Ochus in 343 B.C.E. and ending with the arrival of Alexander in 332 B.C.E., is usually regarded by historians as a time of destruction, violence and turmoil.<sup>1</sup> The modern understanding of this

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1. Depuydt has recently argued that a date of 340/39 for the invasion of Artaxerxes is a better fit for the evidence provided by Manetho, as well as the demotic evidence for the length of the reign of Nectanebo II; see Leo Depuydt, "New Date for the Second Persian Conquest of Egypt, End of Pharaonic and Manethonian Egypt: 340/339 B.C.E.," *Journal of Egyptian History* 3 (2010): 191–230. Whether the invasion occurred in 343 or 340/39 is immaterial to the purposes of this paper.

period, however, derives almost exclusively from a Greek historical tradition. This tradition is imbued with Greek preconceptions about the Persians. The memories it preserves have been colored by early Ptolemaic ideology and propaganda, which sought to cast Ptolemy as a pious restorer, in contrast to the impious and wanton Persians. Thus this tradition obscures the complex realities of Achaemenid rule during this period, complexities which can only be brought out by an examination of Egyptian memories of the Second Persian Period.

The *locus classicus* for the history of this period is a passage in Diodorus Siculus describing the immediate aftermath of the Persian invasion:

Artaxerxes, after taking over all Egypt and demolishing the walls of the most important cities, by plundering the shrines gathered a vast quantity of silver and gold, and he carried off the inscribed records from the ancient temples, which later on Bagoas returned to the Egyptian priests on the payment of huge sums by way of ransom. (Diodorus Siculus 16.51.2 [Oldfather, LCL])

This passage invariably serves as the foundation for any general statement concerning the Second Persian Period. For example, in his classic study of the history of the Egyptian Late Period, Friedrich Karl Kienitz essentially translates it and presents it as part of his narrative:

Die Mauern der wichtigeren Städte wurden geschleift. Den Tempeln wurde ihr Gold und Silber ... abgenommen. Alte heilige Urkunden wurden beschlagnahmt, nur um schweres Geld konnten die Priester sie später wieder bei Bagoas einlösen.<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, the relevant chapter of the second edition of the *Cambridge Ancient History* follows Kienitz (and thus Diodorus) very closely:

Once Ochus gained control, he pulled down the walls of the major cities, plundered the temples, and amassed a large quantity of gold and silver. He also carried off Egyptian sacred writings, though his minion Bagoas subsequently sold them back to the priests.<sup>3</sup>

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2. Friedrich Karl Kienitz, *Die politische Geschichte Ägyptens vom 7. bis zum 4. Jahrhundert vor der Zeitwende* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1953), 107.

3. Alan B. Lloyd, "Egypt, 404–332 B.C.," in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 6:

Finally, a recent and well-informed study of the relations between the Achaemenid Empire and Egypt in the fourth century attempts to make sense of the passage, but does so on the assumption that it represents unvarnished historical truth:

In other words, where the victorious Persian king did not destroy temples, he removed their contents and deprived them also of the texts which certified their power. Diodorus' report that Artaxerxes had the fortifications of "the most important cities" demolished may allow us to see that he targeted dynastic centers in particular.<sup>4</sup>

The indebtedness of modern scholars to Diodorus for our knowledge of the Second Persian Period is readily apparent. But there has been little critical assessment of this passage in particular or of how early Ptolemaic manipulations of the memory of Achaemenid rule have informed the historical tradition of which it was a part.

Diodorus wrote in the first century B.C.E., centuries after Ptolemy set himself up as king of Egypt. Ephorus and Theopompus are usually thought to be his main sources for Achaemenid history during the fourth century, but as the works of both historians survive only in fragments it is impossible to determine the extent to which Diodorus used either for the Second Persian Period.<sup>5</sup> It is entirely possible that he relied on either or both for his detailed account (16.46.4–51.1) of Artaxerxes's invasion of Egypt, including his descriptions of the siege of Pelusium and the surrender of Bubastis.<sup>6</sup> But the passage in question is a clear departure in tone and content from those preceding it. It is generic, and suggests a transition in source and tone from a detailed historical narrative to a stereotyped vision of Achaemenid rule current during the first century B.C.E. For this passage in particular all that is certain is that it postdates the establishment of the Ptolemaic dynasty. As a result it is impossible to distinguish the influences

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*The Fourth Century BC* (ed. D. M. Lewis et al.; 2nd ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 337–60 (344).

4. Stephen Ruzicka, *Trouble in the West: Egypt and the Persian Empire 525–332 BCE* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 195.

5. Ruzicka, *Trouble in the West*, 179; N. G. L. Hammond, "The Sources of Diodorus XVI," *CQ* 31 (1937): 79–91; 32 (1938): 137–51.

6. Ruzicka, *Trouble in the West*, 177–98; D. Agut-Labordère, "Les frontières intérieures de la société militaire égyptienne: L'invasion de l'Égypte par Artaxerxès III à travers Diodore XVI. 46.4–51.3," *Transeu* 35 (2008): 17–27.

of Ptolemaic ideology from actual memories of Achaemenid rule in the Greek historical tradition.

This paper has two objectives. The first is to identify how Ptolemy I manipulated the memory of Achaemenid rule during the Second Persian Period to further his own political goals and legitimize his nascent rule of Egypt. This manipulation is illustrated by the Satrap Stela, in which Ptolemy contrasts his royal piety with the wanton impiety of the Persians. This doctored memory subsequently became part of Greek historical tradition, appearing in the work of Diodorus, as well as other authors such as Plutarch and Aelian. The second objective is to gain access to a different set of memories of Achaemenid rule, memories which have not been filtered through Ptolemaic ideology. In this respect the tomb of Petosiris at Tuna el-Gebel, constructed in the last quarter of the fourth century B.C.E., provides a useful case study of the complexities of Egyptian memories of the Second Persian Period.

#### PTOLEMAIC IDEOLOGY AND PROPAGANDA

When Ptolemy took control of Egypt after the death of Alexander in 323 B.C.E., the only basis for his rule was his position as satrap, ruling on behalf of Kings Philip III and Alexander IV. In order to bolster his position as ruler of Egypt, he developed a political ideology that linked him in no uncertain terms to Alexander.<sup>7</sup> This ideology was made manifest in several ways. First, Ptolemy took Alexander's corpse from Babylon to Memphis, and then ultimately to Alexandria.<sup>8</sup> Whether this was a straightforward matter, as indicated by Diodorus (18.28.2–3), or an elaborate heist, as Aelian would have it (*VH* 12.64), is unclear, but it certainly seems to have been an act of bald appropriation. The body was entombed in splendor in Alexandria, in a district of the city which by Strabo's (17.1.18) day was the site of royal palaces and the burial place of the Ptolemaic kings. This association suggests that for the Ptolemies, Alexander was not only

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7. Margarita Lianou, "The Role of the Argeadai in the Legitimation of the Ptolemaic Dynasty: Rhetoric and Practice," in *Philip II and Alexander the Great: Father and Son, Lives and Afterlives* (ed. E. Carney and D. Ogden; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 123–33; Jean Bingen, *Hellenistic Egypt: Monarchy, Society, Economy, Culture* (ed. R. S. Bagnall; Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2007), 15–30.

8. Andrew Erskine, "Life after Death: Alexandria and the Body of Alexander," *GR* NS 49 (2002): 163–79.

the founder of the city of Alexandria; he was also the founder of the Ptolemaic dynasty.

Second, Alexander featured prominently in the early coinage of Ptolemy.<sup>9</sup> His earliest issue, struck in the late 320s B.C.E., retained the types of Alexander's coinage: a youthful head of Heracles on the obverse, and Zeus enthroned on the reverse. Around 319 B.C.E. Ptolemy introduced a new series of tetradrachms, on which Heracles was replaced by Alexander, shown with an elephant headdress and the horn of Ammon. The horn of Ammon indicates Alexander's divine status as the son of Zeus-Ammon, and the elephant headdress is usually interpreted as a reference to India, and therefore signifies the breadth of Alexander's conquests. Catharine Lorber has recently proposed that it might also evoke the memory of the New Kingdom pharaoh Thutmose III, whose throne name "Meryamun Setepenra" Alexander adopted for himself.<sup>10</sup> Thutmose campaigned in Syria for nearly twenty years, and celebrated his victories with elephant hunts. Thus the coin type emphasized Alexander's conquest of Asia in both Greek and Egyptian terms. In 311 a new reverse type was introduced, featuring Athena in a fighting pose (fig. 1). Some coins of this issue also featured the legend ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΕΙΟΝ ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙΟΥ, meaning "Ptolemy's (coin) of Alexander," or just ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΕΙΟΝ. Alexander continued to appear as the obverse type of Ptolemy's coins down into the 290s, when he was finally replaced by images of Ptolemy himself.

Alexander's most illustrious achievement was, of course, the conquest of the Achaemenid Empire. This invasion was represented as a panhellenic undertaking, whose objectives were to free the Greeks of Asia from Persian rule and to punish the Persians for the invasion of the Greek mainland back in 480 B.C.E.<sup>11</sup> To some extent this panhellenism was politically expedient, providing justification and legitimacy for Alexander's actions. But it was also informed by other factors, including Alexander's megalomania and broader currents among Greek intellectuals of the fourth

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9. Catharine C. Lorber, "The Coinage of the Ptolemies," in *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Coinage* (ed. W. E. Metcalf; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 211–34 (211–13).

10. Catharine C. Lorber, "An Egyptian Interpretation of Alexander's Elephant Headdress," *AJN* 24 (2012): 21–31.

11. Michael Flower, "Alexander the Great and Panhellenism," in *Alexander the Great in Fact and Fiction* (ed. A. B. Bosworth and E. J. Baynham; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 96–135.



Figure 1: Silver tetradrachm of Ptolemy I, minted at Alexandria, Egypt, ca. 310–295 B.C.E. Obverse: Head of Alexander the Great wearing an elephant headdress, facing right. Reverse: Athena standing right, with spear and shield upraised, eagle and Corinthian helmet are in terminal field to right; legend: ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ (“of Alexander”). Ann Arbor, Kelsey Museum of Archaeology KM 88413. Reproduced courtesy of the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, University of Michigan.

century B.C.E.. Notably, Isocrates wrote to Philip II to encourage him “to champion the cause of concord among the Hellenes and of a campaign against the barbarian” (*Phil.* 16 [Norlin, LCL]). Likewise Aristotle, who was Alexander’s tutor and perhaps also Ptolemy’s, espouses the view that on account of their general superiority the Greek race was “capable of ruling all mankind if it attains constitutional unity” (*Pol.* 7.1327b [Rackham, LCL]). The extent to which Alexander may have actually believed in this panhellenic ideology and rhetoric is ultimately immaterial, since it is clear that his invasion of the Achaemenid Empire was couched in panhellenic terms by contemporary and subsequent writers, and by Alexander himself. Indeed, the official historian of the expedition, Callisthenes of Olynthus, was a relative of Aristotle, and while his history survives only in fragments, its panhellenic character is apparent.<sup>12</sup>

The most central feature of the panhellenism of Alexander and his contemporaries was the explicit contrast with a barbarian “other.” This contrast originated at least as early as the Persian Wars, a critical moment

12. Andrea Zambrini, “The Historians of Alexander the Great,” in *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography* (ed. J. Marincola; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2007), 210–20 (219–20).



in the development of panhellenic ideology. One of its earliest and most prominent occurrences is in Aeschylus's *Persians*, in which the slavish, decadent and effeminate barbarians are compared to the free, rational, and manly Greeks. This "proto-orientalism," as it is sometimes called, subsequently became a regular part of Greek thinking about the Persians.<sup>13</sup> For example, in the passage quoted above Aristotle states that "the peoples of Asia on the other hand are intelligent and skillful in temperament, but lack spirit, so that they are in continuous subjection and slavery" (*Pol.* 1327b [Rackham, LCL]). One finds similar sentiments in texts such as Ctesias's *Persica*, Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, and the Hippocratic treatise *On Airs, Waters and Places*. These attitudes persisted even after Alexander's conquest of the Achaemenid Empire among both Greeks and Romans.<sup>14</sup>

This contrast seems to have guided Alexander's actions in Egypt. Following the siege and capture of Gaza, he entered Egypt in 332 B.C.E. The satrap Mazaces surrendered without a fight because the bulk of the satrapy's forces had been dispatched to Issus and defeated there the previous year. According to Arrian (*Anab.* 3.1.4) Alexander made sacrifices to the Apis bull in Memphis, and both Arrian (*Anab.* 3.3–4) and Diodorus (17.49.2–51.4) say he visited the temple of Ammon in the Siwa Oasis. Both of these actions have clear precedents in Herodotus's account (3.27–9) of Cambyses's invasion ca. 525. As is well known, Herodotus has Cambyses send a force of 50,000 into the western desert in order to subdue the "Ammonians." Until recently this was understood to mean the Siwa Oasis, where the temple of Ammon was located.<sup>15</sup> This force was buried by a sandstorm before reaching its destination, and Cambyses, in a fit of madness, subsequently killed an Apis bull.<sup>16</sup> Accordingly, Alexander, guided

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13. Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004), 257–303.

14. Alesandr V. Makhelaiuk, "Memory and Images of Achaemenid Persia in the Roman Empire," this volume.

15. Recent research in the Dakhla Oasis has significantly altered our understanding of this passage in Herodotus; see Kaper, "Petubastis IV in the Dakhla Oasis: New Evidence about an Early Rebellion against Persian Rule and Its Suppression in Political Memory," this volume.

16. There has been much discussion of the historicity of this incident, none of it probative. All that is certain is that this episode suited the objectives of Herodotus' narrative, i.e., the depiction of Cambyses as a hubristic madman. For an important new examination see John Dillery, "Cambyses and the Egyptian *Chaosbeschreibung* Tradition," *CQ* NS 55 (2005): 387–406.

by his reading of Herodotus, made sure to pay his respects to the Apis bull, and safely conducted his army to the temple of Ammon in Siwa, thus exceeding Cambyses in terms of both piety and ambition.<sup>17</sup> This contrast was mainly ideological; it seems that Alexander's administration of Egypt was marked as much by continuity with Achaemenid rule as by any distinctive departure from it.<sup>18</sup> Given his brief tenure in Egypt it is impossible to say how this ideology was put into practice, or what the Egyptians may have thought of it.

Ptolemy was an active participant in Alexander's campaigns, holding several commands beginning around 331 B.C.E., and by the time of Alexander's death in 323, he was important enough to be assigned the satrapy of Egypt in the Partition of Babylon.<sup>19</sup> His precise role in the formation and implementation of Alexander's panhellenic ideology cannot be ascertained, but in representing himself as Alexander's successor he effectively inherited that ideological program. The foundation of the library of Alexandria is perhaps the clearest statement of Ptolemaic panhellenic pretensions.<sup>20</sup> In seeking to collect the entirety of Greek literature and to establish authoritative editions of that literature, he sought to make Alexandria the cultural successor to Classical Greece. In doing so, it provided access to both the intellectual underpinnings of panhellenism, as well as to the

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17. For Alexander's reading of Herodotus, see G. W. Bowersock, "Herodotus, Alexander, and Rome," *American Scholar* 58 (1989): 407–14 (410–11).

18. Stanley M. Burstein, "Alexander in Egypt: Continuity or Change," in *Continuity and Change: Proceedings of the Last Achaemenid History Workshop, April 6–8, 1990, Ann Arbor, Michigan* (ed. H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg et al.; Achaemenid History 8; Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1994), 381–87; Burstein, "Alexander's Organization of Egypt: A Note on the Career of Cleomenes of Naucratis," in *Macedonian Legacies: Studies in Ancient Macedonian History and Culture in Honor of Eugene N. Borza* (ed. T. Howe and J. Reames; Claremont, Calif.: Regina, 2008), 183–94.

19. For his career under Alexander see Waldemar Heckel, *Who's Who in the Age of Alexander the Great: Prosopography of Alexander's Empire* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2006), 235–38.

20. Bingen, *Hellenistic Egypt*, 25–27; Andrew Erskine, "Culture and Power in Ptolemaic Egypt: The Museum and Library of Alexandria," *GR NS* 42 (1995): 38–48; Herwig Maehler, "Alexandria, the Museion, and Cultural Identity," in *Alexandria, Real and Imagined* (ed. A. Hirst and M. Silk; Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 1–14. It is uncertain when the library was founded, as the sources for its foundation are all late and problematic in various ways; see Roger S. Bagnall, "Alexandria: Library of Dreams," *APSP* 146 (2002): 348–62 (at 348–51). The *communis opinio* is that Ptolemy I was responsible for its conception, if not its foundation.

literary manifestations of Greek proto-orientalist prejudices against the Persians. Although the famous story of a Ptolemaic king stealing the official editions of the works of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides may not be literally true, there can be no doubt that Aeschylus's *Persians* was part of the library's holdings, along with the works of Ctesias, Aristotle, Isocrates and many others.<sup>21</sup> The inclusion of such texts in the library was not an endorsement of their content on the part of Ptolemy, but it did preserve Classical ideas about the differences between Greeks and Persians, ideas that played an important role in the creation of early Ptolemaic ideology.

One of the best examples of Ptolemy's ideology put into action is provided by the so-called Satrap Stela (fig. 2).<sup>22</sup> This granite hieroglyphic stela was discovered reused in a Cairo mosque in 1870, but its text implies it was most likely originally set up in Buto in the Nile Delta. It dates to the seventh year of Alexander IV, that is, 311 B.C.E., a decade into Ptolemy's rule of Egypt and a few years prior to his assumption of the title of king. The inscription pays lip service to King Alexander by using his name in the dating formula and listing his royal titles. But Ptolemy, identified in the text as "a great prince in Egypt," is the central figure in the narrative. The lunette of the stela features images of the king making offerings to the gods Horus and Edjo, but it is not clear whom this king is meant to represent, because the accompanying cartouches are empty. This ambiguity must be deliberate, and provides evidence for Ptolemy's gradual transition from satrap to monarch. Ptolemy's royal pretensions are further suggested by the epithets used to describe him, many of which have precedents in New Kingdom royal phraseology.<sup>23</sup> Thus, while not a "royal" monument in the

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21. The story is told by Galen in his commentary on Hippocrates's *Epidemics* 3 (CMG 5.10.2.1 [ed. E. Wenkebach; Leipzig: Teubner, 1936], 79–80); see now Michael W. Handis, "Myth and History: Galen and the Alexandrian Library," in *Ancient Libraries* (ed. J. König et al.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 364–76.

22. Cairo CG 22812; Donata Schäfer, *Makedonische Pharaonen und hieroglyphische Stelen: Historische Untersuchungen zur Satrapenstele und verwandten Denkmälern* (Studia Hellenistica 50; Leuven: Peeters, 2011); translation by Robert Ritner in *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies, and Poetry* (ed. W. K. Simpson; 3rd ed.; New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2003), 392–97.

23. Schäfer, *Makedonische Pharaonen*, 66–74; Boyo G. Ockinga, "The Satrap Stele of Ptolemy: A Reassessment," in *Ptolemy I Soter and the Transformation of Egypt, 404–282 BC* (ed. P. McKechnie and J. M. Cromwell; Leiden: Brill, forthcoming).



Figure 2: Granite “Satrap Stela” of Ptolemy I, probably originally from Buto, Egypt, 311 B.C.E. Cairo CG 22182. Public domain image from Ahmed Bey Kamal, *Stèles ptolémaïques et romaines* (Cairo: Institut français d’archéologie orientale, 1904–1905), pl. 56.



strictest sense, the Satrap Stela is nevertheless an important early iteration of Ptolemaic ideology.

The inscription makes reference to several of Ptolemy's exploits as ruler of Egypt. Two of these are of particular importance for this paper. First, the narrative portion of the inscription begins by saying that Ptolemy "brought back the sacred images of the gods which were found within Asia, together with all the ritual implements and all the sacred scrolls of the temples of Upper and Lower Egypt, so he restored them in their proper places" (ll. 3–4 [Ritner, *op. cit.*]). Second, the bulk of the inscription narrates a sort of dialogue between Ptolemy and "the grandees of Lower Egypt" concerning a marshland called "the Land of Edjo." Because of the ambiguities around Ptolemy's royal status it is not always clear who is meant by the phrase "his majesty"; however, the storyline is reasonably straightforward to follow. The grandees of Lower Egypt inform Ptolemy that when Pharaoh Khaba-bash was surveying the defenses of the Nile Delta he gave the Land of Edjo to the gods of Pe and Dep (i.e., Buto).

This donation was subsequently revoked by someone called "enemy *Hšryš*." The narrative ends with Ptolemy renewing the donation in a passage that is functionally a royal decree. Both of these exploits are acts of pious restoration on the part of Ptolemy, made necessary by the impious behavior of the Persians. "Enemy *Hšryš*" is usually identified as Xerxes, since it is reasonably good phonetic match for how Xerxes's name would have been pronounced in both Old Persian and Egyptian.<sup>24</sup> The removal of statues, ritual implements, and sacred texts is not attributed directly to the Persians in this inscription, but it is implied. According to the text the statues were recovered from *st.t*, a term referring to the lands northeast of Egypt, that is, the Levant, Mesopotamia, Anatolia and Iran.<sup>25</sup> This corresponds to the former Achaemenid Empire. Furthermore, the Persians are

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24. Schäfer, *Makedonische Pharaonen*, 146–51; Ivan A. Ladynin, "'Adversary *Hšryš*(3)': His Name and Deeds according to the Satrap Stela," *ChrEg* 80 (2005): 87–113; Ladynin, "Two Instances of the Satrap Stela: Tokens of the Graeco–Egyptian Linguistic and Cultural Interrelation at the Start of the Hellenism?" in *Moving across Borders: Foreign Relations, Religion, and Cultural Interactions in the Ancient Mediterranean* (ed. P. Kousoulis and K. Magliveras; OLA 159; Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 337–54 (340–45).

25. Schäfer, *Makedonische Pharaonen*, 63–64, 75; Schäfer, "Persian Foes—Ptolemaic Friends? The Persians on the Satrap Stela," in *Organisation des pouvoirs et contacts culturels dans les pays de l'empire achéménide* (ed. P. Briant and M. Chauveau; Persika 14; Paris: De Boccard, 2009), 143–52 (145).

explicitly connected with the removal of statues in decrees dating to the reigns of Ptolemy III and IV.<sup>26</sup> For example, the Greek text of the Canopus decree, dating to 238 B.C.E., says: “the king on campaign abroad brought back to Egypt the sacred statues that had been taken out of the country by the Persians and restored them to the temples from which they had initially been taken” (OGIS 56, Austin).<sup>27</sup> The hieroglyphic text of the same decree even describes the Persians as “vile” (*hsj.w n.w Prs*). This implies that for the Ptolemies references to the recovery of statues of the gods were associated with Achaemenid looting of temples, even if the connection was not always made explicit, as on the Satrap Stela. Modern scholars have drawn this conclusion as well.<sup>28</sup> The piety and munificence of Ptolemy is thus contrasted with the impiety and wantonness of the Persians, a contrast consistent with both the political ideology Ptolemy inherited from Alexander and with contemporary Greek stereotypes of the nature of Achaemenid rule.

There are clear historical problems with the narrative presented in the text of the Satrap Stela. First, the identification of “enemy *Hšrys*” with Xerxes is undermined by the lack of any other evidence for Xerxes’s physical presence in Egypt. More importantly, there is a significant chronological gap between the reign of Xerxes (ca. 486–465 B.C.E.) and that of Khababash, a rebel pretender about whom very little is known. He does not appear in Manetho’s king-list, and the evidence for the date of his reign

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26. Jan Krzysztof Winnicki, “Carrying Off and Bringing Home the Statues of the Gods: On an Aspect of the Religious Policy of the Ptolemies toward the Egyptians,” *JJP* 24 (1994): 149–90 (169–86); Pierre Briant, “Quand les rois écrivent l’histoire: La domination achéménide vue à travers les inscriptions officielles lagides,” in *Événement, récit, histoire officielle: L’écriture de l’histoire dans les monarchies antiques* (ed. N. Grimal and M. Baud; Études d’Égyptologie 3; Paris: Cybèle, 2003), 173–86; Roberto B. Gozzoli, *The Writing of History in Ancient Egypt during the First Millennium BC (ca. 1070–180 BC): Trends and Perspectives* (Egyptology 5; London: Golden House, 2006), 126–36; Schäfer, “Persian Foes.”

27. M. M. Austin, *The Hellenistic World from Alexander to the Roman Conquest: A Selection of Ancient Sources in Translation* (2nd ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 470–75.

28. E.g., Kienitz, *Politische Geschichte*, 107 n. 5; Winnicki, “Carrying Off”; D. Devauchelle, “Le sentiment anti-perses chez les anciens Égyptiens,” *Transeu* 9 (1995): 67–80 (71–72); Alan B. Lloyd, “From Satrapy to Hellenistic Kingdom: The Case of Egypt,” in *Creating a Hellenistic World* (ed. A. Erskine and L. Llewellyn-Jones; Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2010), 83–105 (84).

is limited. A demotic legal document, Papyrus Libbey, is dated to his first year. One of the witnesses to this document appears again in P. Strasbourg dem. 1, dated to the ninth year of Alexander the Great, that is, 324 B.C.E. This puts Khababash's reign in the second half of the fourth century B.C.E., and since it is usually assumed that he rebelled against Achaemenid rule, his reign is placed during the Second Persian Period, over a century later than the death of Xerxes.<sup>29</sup> So it is quite impossible for Xerxes to have revoked a donation made by Khababash.<sup>30</sup> This has prompted suggestions that *Hšryš* should be identified as Artaxerxes III rather than Xerxes. This makes better chronological sense to be sure, but the names "Xerxes" and "Artaxerxes" are not as similar in Egyptian and Old Persian as they are in Greek, so simple confusion is unlikely.<sup>31</sup> Another possibility is "Arses," the birth name of Artaxerxes IV.<sup>32</sup> But this name is not attested in any other hieroglyphic source, save for perhaps a cartouche of uncertain provenance and reading, and it is unlikely that a personal name would be used in place of a throne name.<sup>33</sup> Finally, it has been suggested that "Xerxes" is meant as a generic term for Persian kings.<sup>34</sup> This suggestion cannot be proven, but it does fit *Hšryš*'s role as a destructive, evil force in the stela's inscription, especially if it stems from a Greek tradition that remembered Xerxes as an invader and the destroyer of Athens.<sup>35</sup>

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29. Stanley M. Burstein, "Prelude to Alexander: The Reign of Khababash," *Ancient History Bulletin* 14 (2000): 149–54.

30. Schäfer, "Persian Foes," 146–47, resolves this difficulty by identifying all occurrences of "his majesty" in the text as Khababash rather than Ptolemy, meaning that it is Khababash who learns of the revocation of the donation by *Hšryš* from the priests of Pe and Dep. This, however, makes for a disjointed narrative (see remarks by Ritner in Simpson, *Literature*, 394 n. 6). It also eliminates the apparent need for Ptolemy to restore the donation, which is the *raison d'être* for the stela.

31. Ladynin, "Adversary *Hšryš*(3)," 98–103; Ladynin, "Satrap Stela," 340–45.

32. Hans Goedicke, "Comments on the Satrap Stela," *Bulletin of the Egyptological Seminar* 6 (1985): 33–54 (39).

33. D. Devauchelle, "Réflexions sur les documents égyptiens datés de la Deuxième Domination perse," *Transeu* 10 (1995): 35–43 (40).

34. Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander: History of the Persian Empire* (trans. P. T. Daniels; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 1018; Schäfer, *Makedonische Pharaonen*, 151.

35. Hilmar Klinkott, "Xerxes in Ägypten: Gedanken zum negativen Perserbild in der Satrapenstele," in *Ägypten unter fremden Herrschern zwischen Satrapie und römischer Provinz* (ed. S. Pfeiffer; Oikumene 3; Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Antike, 2007), 34–53.



Second, Ptolemy's claim to have recovered statues of gods taken from Egypt by the Persians cannot be reconciled with the events of the Diadochi Wars as they are currently understood. Presumably the Persians would have brought the booty obtained from Artaxerxes's invasion to a major imperial center, such as Persepolis, Susa, Ecbatana, or Babylon. Ptolemy invaded Syria twice prior to 311 B.C.E., once ca. 320/19 B.C.E. and once more ca. 312/11 B.C.E.<sup>36</sup> The Satrap Stela even refers to the second of these invasions. There the term used is *p3 t3 n3 ḥ3r.w* ("the land of the Syrians"), which refers specifically to Syria.<sup>37</sup> There are no references to Ptolemy penetrating as far as Mesopotamia, let alone Persia. It is entirely possible that some booty from Artaxerxes's invasion, including statues, remained at Levantine sites, but there were no major imperial centers in the province of Eber-Nari ("Across the River"), nor any specific reason to think that the spoils of war were deposited there. The claims made by Ptolemy II and Ptolemy IV about bringing back statues taken by the Persians have the same difficulty.<sup>38</sup> A reference in the Babylonian Chronicles indicates that Ptolemy III did reach Babylon during the Third Syrian War (246–242 B.C.E.), in which case he may have actually had the opportunity to recover Egyptian statues captured by the Persians. In a decree recently discovered at Akhmim he also claims to have recovered statues from Syria, Cilicia, Persia and Susa.<sup>39</sup> Cilicia, like Eber-Nari, was unlikely to have been a major repository of booty from Artaxerxes's invasion, and there is no other indication that Ptolemy III penetrated any further east than Babylon. Indeed, his claim in the Adulis Decree to have gone as far as Bactria casts doubt

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36. The chronology of the Diadochi Wars remains subject to debate; for a recent overview see T. Boiy, *Between High and Low: A Chronology of the Early Hellenistic Period* (Oikumene 5; Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Antike, 2007). The precise chronology of Ptolemy's actions is not directly relevant to the topic of this paper.

37. Schäfer, "Persian Foes," 145.

38. David Lorton's suggestion ("The Supposed Expedition of Ptolemy II to Persia," *JEA* 57 [1971]: 160–64) that in the Pithom Stela of Ptolemy II *ṣṭ.t* refers to Palestine instead of Persia or Asia more broadly does not solve the historical problems discussed here. Indeed, given the propagandistic nature of the stela, as well as the exaggerated geographical claims made by Ptolemy III in his own decrees, a reading of "Asia" for *ṣṭ.t* is perhaps most appropriate.

39. Hartwig Altenmüller, "Bemerkungen zum Ostfeldzug Ptolemaios' III nach Babylon und in die Susiana im Jahre 246/245," in *Festschrift für Gernot Wilhelm anlässlich seines 65. Geburtstages am 28. Januar 2010* (ed. J. C. Fincke; Dresden: ISLET, 2009), 27–44.

on his claims of eastward movement.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, it is not clear how, a century after the fact, Ptolemy III would have identified those statues that had specifically been looted by the Persians.

These historical problems show that the text of the Satrap Stela is not a straightforward historical account of actual events. Rather, it is propaganda, serving Ptolemy's need for political legitimation. The propagandistic nature of the text is further suggested by its stereotyped features. As discussed earlier, the epithets describing Ptolemy at the beginning of the text have precedents that go back to New Kingdom royal inscriptions.<sup>41</sup> There are also allusions to Middle Kingdom literary texts such as the *Story of Sinhue* and the *Prophecy of Neferti*, which may also serve an ideological purpose by presenting Ptolemy's rule in an Egyptian idiom.<sup>42</sup> The main narrative of the text also evokes a well-known genre of Egyptian royal inscription, the *Königsnovelle*, attested as far back as the Middle Kingdom.<sup>43</sup> In this type of inscription the king, while going about his business, is alerted to a problem by his advisors. He then conceives of a solution to that problem and issues the appropriate commands to implement it. It is an ideological depiction of the king in action rather than a historical record of specific events.

Finally, as already mentioned above, the recovery of images of the gods and other sacred objects is a common trope in Ptolemaic royal inscriptions of the third century B.C.E. In addition to the Satrap Stela it also occurs in the Pithom stela of Ptolemy II, the Canopus, Akhmim and Adulis decrees of Ptolemy III, and the Raphia decree of Ptolemy IV.<sup>44</sup> With

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40. OGIS 54.

41. Schäfer, *Makedonische Pharaonen*, 66–74; Ockinga, “Satrap Stele.”

42. Ockinga, “Satrap Stele”; Ludwig D. Morenz, “Alte Hüte auf neuen Köpfen: die Inszenierung des Satrapen Ptolemaios als ägyptischer Heilskönig,” in *Literatur und Religion im alten Ägypten: Ein Symposium zu Ehren von Elke Blumenthal* (ed. H.-W. Fischer-Elfert and T. S. Richter; ASAW Philologisch-Historische Klasse 81.5; Stuttgart: Sächsische Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, 2011), 110–25.

43. Schäfer, *Makedonische Pharaonen*, 39–41, 194; Ritner in Simpson, *Literature*, 392. For the *Königsnovelle* see most recently Beate Hofmann, *Die Königsnovelle: Strukturanalyse am Einzelwerk* (Ägypten und Altes Testament 62; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005).

44. Pithom stela: Christophe Thiers, *Ptolémée Philadelphie et les prêtres d'Atoum de Tjékou: Nouvelle édition commentée de la “stèle de Pithom”* (CGC 22183) (*Orientalia Monspeliensia* 17; Montpellier: Université Paul-Valéry Montpellier III, 2007), 100–106; Canopus decree: Stefan Pfeiffer, *Das Dekret von Kanopos (238 v. Chr.): Kommen-*

the exception of Ptolemy III none of these kings ever reached a major Achaemenid center while on campaign, and some of Ptolemy III's claims are clearly exaggerated. It is also worth noting that this motif occurs in the *Oracle of the Potter*, an Egyptian apocalyptic literary text originally written in demotic during the second half of the second century B.C.E., though surviving only in later Greek translations.<sup>45</sup> It says "the city of the girdle-wearers will be abandoned like my kiln because of the crimes which they committed against Egypt. The cult images which had been transported there will be brought back again to Egypt" (Burstein).<sup>46</sup> The city in question is Alexandria, and the entire oracle is distinctly anti-Greek in its tenor.<sup>47</sup> The implication is that the return of images of the gods is a motif, linked to Egyptian ideas about the maintenance of cosmic order, rather than a specific reference to Achaemenid rule. Ptolemy I used this motif in his efforts to present his rule in an Egyptian idiom. Indeed, all of these features point to the ideological nature of the stela, and while that does not preclude its text being historically accurate, it does mean that the stela's purpose was not to present an objective historical account.

None of this means that the Persians did not loot Egyptian temples. Looting invariably occurs during invasions, and the invasions of Egypt by Cambyses and Artaxerxes are no exception. No doubt looting also took place during the revolts of Amyrtaeus and Khababash. It is also entirely possible that Ptolemy (and his successors) physically returned statues to Egypt, though for the most part it is pretty unlikely these were the same statues looted by the Persians. But every claim to have returned statues does not necessarily correspond to a specific incident of looting. Rather,

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*tar und historische Auswertung eines dreisprachigen Synodaldekrets der ägyptischen Priester zu Ehren Ptolemaios' III. und seiner Familie* (APF Beiheft 18; Munich: K. G. Saur, 2004), 84–88; Akhmim decree: Yahia El-Masry et al., *Das Synodaldekret von Alexandria aus dem Jahre 243 v. Chr.* (Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur Beiheft 11; Hamburg: Buske, 2012), 54–55; Adulis decree: OGIS 54; Raphia decree: Heinz-Josef Thissen, *Studien zum Raphiadekret* (Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie 23; Meisenheim am Glan: Anton Hain, 1966), 59–60.

45. L. Koenen, "Die Prophezeiungen des 'Töpfers,'" *ZPE* 2 (1968): 178–209; for the date, see Koenen, "A Supplementary Note on the Date of the Oracle of the Potter," *ZPE* 54 (1984): 9–13.

46. Stanley M. Burstein, *The Hellenistic Age from the Battle of Ipsos to the Death of Kleopatra VII* (Translated Documents of Greece and Rome 3; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 136–39.

47. Gozzoli, *Writing of History*, 297–99.

the purpose of such claims, and of the Satrap Stela, was to promote and legitimize Ptolemy's status as ruler of Egypt, a status he achieved in significant part by virtue of his association with Alexander. He did this by emphasizing his piety and fitness to rule, in explicit contrast with the wantonness and impiety of the Persians, a contrast he had learned well before he ever came to Egypt and did not necessarily have anything to do with the events of the Second Persian Period.

### THE GREEK HISTORICAL TRADITION

According to the passage of Diodorus Siculus cited at the beginning of this paper, in the wake of his invasion of Egypt Artaxerxes III "gathered a vast quantity of silver and gold by plundering the shrines, and he carried off the inscribed records from the ancient temples" (Diodorus Siculus 16.51.2 [Oldfather; LCL]). This is remarkably similar to Ptolemy's depiction of the Persians in the Satrap Stela. This similarity cannot be mere coincidence; rather, Ptolemy's propaganda has clearly influenced the subsequent Greek historical tradition regarding the Second Persian Period. This does not mean that Diodorus used the Satrap Stela directly as a source; the influence was more indirect than that. As mentioned above, Ptolemy was a patron of the literary arts, including history, and likely established the Library of Alexandria. The historian Theopompus, probably one of the sources used by Diodorus, even spent his final years at Ptolemy's court.<sup>48</sup> The literary apparatus founded and supported by Ptolemy did not exist specifically to disseminate his ideology, but given that it sought to produce authoritative texts of Greek works of literature it is not difficult to see how this institution upheld and propagated the contrast between Greeks and Persians, the contrast on which Ptolemy's ideology relied in significant part.

By Diodorus's day, that is, the first century B.C.E., Ptolemaic propaganda was the most prominent and accessible memory of Achaemenid rule in Egypt. It also matched the stereotyped portrayals of the Persians

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48. John Marincola, "Universal History from Ephorus to Diodorus," in *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography* (ed. J. Marincola; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2007), 171–79 (at 174). Ptolemy himself wrote a history of Alexander's campaigns which survives only in fragments (Zambrini, "Historians of Alexander," 217–18). It does not seem to have addressed the Second Persian Period directly, but it does point to the intersection between royal power and historical writing in the early Ptolemaic court.

from the Classical period. For Diodorus these two factors mutually reinforced each other; the Ptolemaic version of the history of the Second Persian Period matched his own expectations as to how the Persians behaved. This is suggested as well by his remark that the eunuch Bagoas ransomed Egyptian temple records to the priests. For the Greeks eunuchs were the epitome of the unmanned oriental barbarian. Bagoas in particular is portrayed by both Diodorus and Plutarch as cruel and effeminate.<sup>49</sup> He was in fact a real person, and was complicit in the murder of Artaxerxes III, as suggested by a reference to him in the late fourth century B.C.E. Akkadian text known as the Dynastic Prophecy.<sup>50</sup> But much else has been attributed to him by Greek (and even Latin) authors, in a manner suggestive of stereotype rather than history. His presence in this passage is cause for caution.

Later authors furthered this stereotype of the Second Persian Period. Plutarch (*De Is. et Os.* 11) and Aelian (*NA* 10.28; *VH* 4.8, 6.8) both claim that Artaxerxes slew an Apis bull. This suggests that by the second century C.E. Artaxerxes had been assimilated to Cambyses, or simply confused with him.<sup>51</sup> The *Suda* (s.v. Ἀπίδες; Ὠχος) adds the colorful detail that he subsequently had the bull's corpse butchered and prepared for dinner. Plutarch (*De Is. et Os.* 31) makes the very interesting remark that Artaxerxes was called a donkey by the Egyptians out of their hatred for him, because the donkey was associated with Typhon (i.e., Seth), a transgressive and destructive figure in Egyptian thought. The *Oracle of the Potter* also makes reference to Typhon, this time in reference to the Greeks.<sup>52</sup> It seems that the association with Typhon was a way to refer to foreign rulers of Egypt, perhaps as a means of locating these rulers within Egyptian cosmology.<sup>53</sup> But it has little to do with the actual actions of any particular king.

On present evidence it is largely impossible to disentangle the events of the Second Persian Period from Greek stereotypes of the Persians.

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49. Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 774–76.

50. Robartus J. van der Spek, "Darius III, Alexander the Great and Babylonian Scholarship," in *A Persian Perspective: Essays in Memory of Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg* (ed. W. Henkelman and A. Kuhrt; Achaemenid History 13; Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2003), 289–346 (316–17).

51. Lloyd, "Satrapy," 85.

52. Gozzoli, *Writing of History*, 297–99.

53. Jan Assmann, *The Mind of Egypt: History and Meaning in the Time of the Pharaohs* (trans. I. Jenkins; New York: Metropolitan Books, 2002), 389–93.

Early Ptolemaic ideology and propaganda refashioned the memory of that period to match the negative perspective of the Persians developed in the Classical period. Later writers, from Diodorus to Kienitz, were all too ready to accept this version of history, since it matched their own preconceptions of Achaemenid rule.<sup>54</sup>

#### EGYPTIAN MEMORIES

In order to correct for the effects of Ptolemaic ideology it is necessary to access a memory of the Second Persian Period that has survived outside of the Greek historical tradition. This is a difficult proposition, since owing to its brevity there is very little documentary evidence or material culture surviving from the period.<sup>55</sup> In this respect the tomb of Petosiris at Tuna el-Gebel is especially valuable.<sup>56</sup> The tomb was built sometime in the last quarter of the fourth century B.C.E. by a high priest of Thoth at nearby Hermopolis whose career apparently spanned the Second Persian Period.<sup>57</sup> The inscriptions and reliefs in the tomb both make reference to Achaemenid rule, albeit in different ways. Thus they preserve a memory of the Second Persian Period, one that complicates the purely negative memory presented in the Greek historical tradition.

The superstructure of the tomb is in the shape of a small temple, perhaps modeled on the temple of Thoth in Hermopolis. Its interior features several inscriptions, including selections from the Pyramid Texts and Book of the Dead. There are also numerous painted reliefs depicting

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54. In the preface to his *Anabasis* Arrian writes that he considered Ptolemy's account of Alexander's campaigns to be especially trustworthy because "as he himself was a king, mendacity would have been more dishonourable for him than for anyone else" (pref. 2 [Brunt, LCL]). If this view is typical of Ptolemy's reputation in antiquity it may help to explain why his propaganda was so readily adopted as history. See Briant, "Quand les rois," 181–82.

55. Devauchelle, "Reflexions;" Lloyd, "Satrapy," 84–86.

56. The tomb is published by G. Lefebvre, *Le tombeau de Petosiris* (3 vols.; Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1923–1924); see also Nadine Cherpion et al., *Le tombeau de Pétosiris à Touna el-Gebel: relevé photographique* (Bibliothèque générale 27; Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 2007).

57. Gerard P. F. Broekman, "The 'High Priests of Thot' in Hermopolis in the Fourth and Early Third Centuries B.C.E.," *ZÄS* 133 (2006): 97–103 (99–100); Bernadette Menu, "Le tombeau de Pétosiris: nouvel examen," *BIFAO* 94 (1994): 311–27 (321–25). For the tomb's date see Cherpion et al., *Pétosiris*, 2 n. 7.

scenes of agriculture and craft production, presumably meant to provision Petosiris and his family for the afterlife. In the main chamber there are scenes of processions of priests and gods, and of mourners making offerings. Certain features of the representation, such as frontal faces and modeled musculature, have been interpreted as indications of Greek influence. This is an oversimplification; all of these features have precedents in the Egyptian visual repertoire, and their combination in this tomb's reliefs reflects the cosmopolitan character of Egypt in the early Ptolemaic period.<sup>58</sup> More importantly, the choices made by Petosiris about the content and form of the tomb were determined by his conception of what was appropriate to his identity and status as a high priest and leading citizen of Hermopolis. These choices were governed not only by his personal preferences and self-conception, but also by his expectations of how they would be received and understood by his audience. So his inclusion of references to the Persians provides evidence not only for his own memories of the Second Persian Period, but also for the broader social context of those memories, at least in the area of Hermopolis.

Among the tomb's inscriptions is a lengthy "autobiographical" inscription of Petosiris.<sup>59</sup> Such inscriptions are a well-known feature of Egyptian tombs throughout pharaonic history. These texts are not autobiographical in the modern sense. While they purport to list the major achievements of an individual's life, their purpose is not to present a historical account of that life. Rather, their main feature is what Miriam Lichtheim has called the "moral self-presentation," consisting of formulaic lists of virtuous acts intended to demonstrate the individual's worthiness of divine and earthly support in the afterlife.<sup>60</sup> As a result the language of these inscriptions is stereotyped, and historical details are obscured. That said, autobiographical texts need some foundation in reality in order for them to achieve their purpose, meaning they do provide some insight into the periods in

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58. Christina Riggs, "The Tomb of Petosiris," *CR NS* 59 (2009): 244–47; John Baines, "Egyptian Elite Self-Presentation in the Context of Ptolemaic Rule," in *Ancient Alexandria between Egypt and Greece* (ed. W. V. Harris and Giovanni Ruffini; Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition 26; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 33–61 (45–46).

59. Lefebvre, *Petosiris* 2:53–60 (no. 81); translation in Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings, Volume 3. The Late Period* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1980), 45–49.

60. Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Autobiographies Chiefly of the Middle Kingdom: A Study and an Anthology* (OBO 84; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1988), 6.



which they were composed. For example, the disintegration of royal power during the First Intermediate Period is clearly reflected in the autobiographical texts of the period, in which various local officials make claims of restoring order and saving their respective towns. These claims are not all literally true, but they arose from contemporary political, social, and economic developments.<sup>61</sup>

A passage in Petosiris's autobiographical inscription is frequently interpreted as a reference to the Second Persian Period. In the inscription Petosiris says:

I spent seven years as controller for this god,  
Administering his endowment without fault being found,  
While the Ruler-of-foreign-lands was Protector in Egypt,  
And nothing was in its former place,  
Since fighting had started inside Egypt,  
The South being in turmoil, the North in revolt;  
The people walked with head turned back,  
All temples were without their servants,  
The priests fled, not knowing what was happening. (Lichtheim)

The "Ruler-of-foreign-lands" is usually understood to refer to Artaxerxes III. This interpretation is based on the assumption that Petosiris would not have described Alexander's tenure in Egypt in negative terms, for two reasons.<sup>62</sup> First, as discussed above, in the early years of his reign Ptolemy regarded Alexander his predecessor and the founder of his dynasty, and Petosiris would not have risked offending Ptolemy. Second, the names of Alexander and Philip Arrhidaeus appear at the temple of Thoth in Hermopolis. This implies that they were recognized as pharaohs, at least at Hermopolis, making it unlikely either would have been referred to as the Ruler-of-foreign-lands. Neither of these arguments is airtight, and uncertainties remain in the interpretation. For example, the term "protector in Egypt," used to refer to the Ruler-of-foreign-lands in Petosiris's inscription, is used to describe the future Ptolemy V in the Rosetta Stone, indicating that its connotations are not strictly negative.<sup>63</sup> Also, given

61. François-René Herbin, "Un texte de glorification," *Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur* 32 (2004): 171–204; Assmann, *Mind of Egypt*, 93–105.

62. Bernadette Menu, "Le tombeau de Pétosiris (4): le souverain de l'Égypte," *BIFAO* 98 (1998): 247–62.

63. Broekman, "High Priests of Thot," 99–100. Broekman's assumption that

the stereotyped nature of this and all biographical inscriptions it is not a straightforward matter to identify specific historical figures such as Artaxerxes. But assuming that some degree of historical reality underlies Petosiris's autobiographical inscription, Artaxerxes is the most obvious candidate for the Ruler-of-foreign-lands. And it is difficult to see how Petosiris might have intended to refer to anyone else.

The purpose of this inscription was to proclaim Petosiris's moral values for all time. To do this he depicted himself as a savior during a time of crisis, a crisis implied as being the conquest of Egypt by Artaxerxes. His description of that crisis provides no details about the actual nature of Achaemenid rule during the Second Persian Period, since, as Jan Assmann notes, "the greater the crisis, the greater the savior."<sup>64</sup> It is rhetorical rather than factual. Nevertheless, Petosiris's use of this as the platform for his moral self-presentation suggests that he, and his intended audience, remembered it in negative terms. This is unsurprising, as invasions are rarely remembered fondly. The reliefs of the tomb of Petosiris, however, present a somewhat different memory of the Second Persian Period.

As noted earlier, the tomb features painted reliefs depicting scenes of agriculture and craft production; the inscriptions accompanying these scenes confirm this interpretation. These scenes represent an idealized estate, whose purpose is to supply Petosiris and his family with the necessities they require in the afterlife, a common motif in Egyptian tomb decorations. It is then all the more interesting that some of these scenes feature the production of vessel types associated with the Achaemenid Empire. On the north wall of the *pronaos*, to the west side of the doorway, there are four scenes of craftsmen making metal vessels, including several *rhyta* and two Achaemenid bowls (figs. 3–4).<sup>65</sup> Additionally, two other reliefs on this same wall have scenes in which *rhyta* are carried or presented.<sup>66</sup> The term *rhyton* (from the Greek ῥέω, meaning "flow") properly refers to a vessel through which liquid flows, that is, a vessel with a large opening at the top and a spout or drain at the bottom. In the Achaemenid period they frequently took the form of a drinking horn, with an animal

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the language of this inscription must be consistent with that of the Satrap Stela is unwarranted.

64. Assmann, *Mind of Egypt*, 104.

65. Cherpion et al., *Pétosiris*, 34–38 (Scenes 30–1, 35–6); Lefebvre, *Petosiris*, pls. 7–9.

66. Cherpion et al., *Pétosiris*, 36 (Scenes 33–4); Lefebvre, *Petosiris*, pl. 8.

or composite creature protome comprising the lower section, and this is the form that appears in Petosiris's tomb reliefs. The Achaemenid bowls are readily recognizable by their carinated shoulders and everted rims. None of these three vessel types are attested in Egypt prior to the Twenty-Seventh Dynasty, and their occurrence on the tomb of Petosiris must be a consequence of Achaemenid rule in some way.

*Rhyta* have long been associated with the Achaemenid Empire, even though very few excavated examples are known. There are, however, some good reasons supporting this association. First, zoomorphic vessels have a long history in Iran, going back to the late second millennium B.C.E., a history unparalleled elsewhere in the Mediterranean and Near East.<sup>67</sup> The Achaemenid *rhyton* was most likely a descendent of these early vessels. Second, a number of extant *rhyta* feature imagery resonant with Achaemenid iconography, especially composite creatures such as griffins and winged lions.<sup>68</sup> Hardly any of these *rhyta* have clear provenance, and some are undoubtedly modern fakes, but it is worth noting that one of the few excavated examples, a glass *rhyton* with a lion-and-bull protome, was found at Persepolis in 1957 in the course of controlled excavations.<sup>69</sup> A *rhyton* also appears in a seal impression (PFS 1601\*) preserved on a tablet from the Persepolis Fortification Archive showing a banqueting scene.<sup>70</sup> The Elamite text on the tablet (PF 2028) records a transaction dated to 498 B.C.E.<sup>71</sup> Third, while the adaptation of the *rhyton* by Athenian potters began in the late sixth century it enjoyed a significant boost in popularity following the Persian Wars, most likely on account of Achaemenid precious metal vessels captured as booty from the Persians.<sup>72</sup> Certainly in

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67. R. Ghirshman, "Notes iraniennes XI: Le rhyton en Iran," *Artibus Asiae* 25 (1962): 57–80.

68. St. John Simpson, "The Royal Table," in *Forgotten Empire: The World of Achaemenid Persia* (ed. J. Curtis and N. Tallis; Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2005), 104–31 (121–23).

69. Simpson, "Royal Table," no. 121; Ghirshman, "Rhyton," fig. 26.

70. PFS 535\* may also feature an image of a *rhyton*, albeit of a zoomorphic type in which a cup emerges from the back of an animal, in this case a goat or bull. PFS 535\* and PFS 1601\* will be published in Mark B. Garrison and Margaret Cool Root, *Seals on the Persepolis Fortification Tablets, Volume 2: Images of Human Activity* (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, forthcoming).

71. Richard T. Hallock, *Persepolis Fortification Tablets* (OIP 92; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 627.

72. Margaret C. Miller, *Athens and Persia in the Fifth Century BC: A Study in*

antiquity the Athenians associated the *rhyton* with the Persians.<sup>73</sup> All of this points to the Achaemenid Empire as the major locus for the production and use of *rhyta* during the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E.

The two bowls depicted in the tomb reliefs each have an everted rim and a carinated shoulder, a combination explicitly linked with the Achaemenid Empire. One of the bowls on Petosiris's tomb (fig. 3, top right) is a *phiale*, a wide, shallow bowl with a flattened base. This bowl is a close match to a silver *phiale* discovered at Susa in the burial of a woman dated on numismatic grounds to the end of the fifth century B.C.E.<sup>74</sup> Several other Achaemenid *phialai*, made of a variety of materials including gold, silver, glass and clay, are also extant, though many without known provenance.<sup>75</sup> Four silver *phialai*, supposedly from Hamadan in Iran, have an Old Persian inscription naming Artaxerxes, and another silver *phiale*, now in the Miho Museum in Japan, has inscriptions in Old Persian and Babylonian Akkadian naming the same ruler.<sup>76</sup> The other bowl depicted on

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*Culture Receptivity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 141–4; Herbert Hoffmann, "The Persian Origin of Attic Rhyta," *Antike Kunst* 4 (1961): 21–26.

73. Miller, *Athens and Persia*, 143.

74. Françoise Tallon, "The Achaemenid Tomb on the Acropole," in *The Royal City of Susa: Ancient Near Eastern Treasures in the Louvre* (ed. P. O. Harper et al.; New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992), 242–52 (no. 170). For the date of the tomb see J. Elayi and A. G. Elayi, "Nouvelle datation d'une tombe achéménide de Suse," *Studia Iranica* 21 (1992): 265–70.

75. Simpson, "Royal Table," 113–16.

76. Ann C. Gunter and Margaret Cool Root, "Replicating, Inscribing, Giving: Ernst Herzfeld and Artaxerxes' Silver *Phiale* in the Freer Gallery of Art," *Ars Orientalis* 28 (1998): 2–38; J. E. Curtis et al., "A Silver Bowl of Artaxerxes I," *Iran* 33 (1995): 149–53; Simpson, "Royal Table," no. 103; Nicholas Sims-Williams, "The Inscription on the Miho Bowl and Some Comparable Objects," *Studia Iranica* 30 (2001): 187–98. The provenance of these bowls is clearly problematic. 'Hamadan' is often given as the findspot for objects which have been looted or forged, and little controlled excavation has taken place there until comparatively recently; see Oscar White Muscarella, "Excavated and Unexcavated Achaemenian Art," in *Ancient Persia: The Art of an Empire* (ed. D. Schmandt-Besserat; Invited Lectures on the Middle East at the University of Texas at Austin 4; Malibu, Calif.: Undena, 1980), 23–42 (at 31–7). While it is impossible to say where these *phialai* were actually found, their authenticity is supported by the means of their construction, their metal content, and the combined weight of the set, which makes a round number of Persian *sigloi*. The authenticity of the inscription itself has also been challenged, most recently by Sims-Williams, "Miho Bowl." This challenge is based on the presence of a *hapax legomena* in the inscription, which is hardly surprising given the small size of the extant Old Persian lexicon. Also, the ves-

Petosiris's tomb (fig. 3, bottom right) is another characteristic Achaemenid form, usually called simply the "Achaemenid bowl." It is deeper than a typical *phiale*, and has higher sides, but was probably also used for drinking. Bowls of this type appear in the Apadana reliefs at Persepolis, where they are carried by members of six geographically and culturally disparate delegations (the Babylonians, Lydians, Cilicians or Syrians, Ionians, Parthians, and Bactrians), suggesting that this form was not specific to any one region of the empire.<sup>77</sup> Indeed, versions of this type of bowl have been found at sites throughout the empire, made of a variety of materials.<sup>78</sup> Finally, it is worth noting that a fluted gold bowl with a carinated shoulder and everted rim, purportedly from Hamadan, has a trilingual inscription in Old Persian, Babylonian and Elamite naming Xerxes.<sup>79</sup>

Both of these bowl types have antecedents in Mesopotamia and Iran, but they became widespread in the eastern Mediterranean under the Achaemenid Empire. Their appearance in the Apadana reliefs, where they are carried by members of several delegations, suggests that they symbolized unity and participation in the empire.<sup>80</sup> They were not specific to any one region or people, and disperse groups were visually united by carrying these bowls. This interpretation is further supported by the four *phialai* with Old Persian inscriptions naming Artaxerxes. These inscriptions read: "Artaxerxes, the great king, king of kings, king of lands, son of Xerxes the king, Xerxes son of Darius the king, an Achaemenid: in/for his house this silver bowl was made" (Kuhrt).<sup>81</sup> These inscriptions place the production of these *phialai* squarely in an Achaemenid royal context. There are similar inscriptions on other precious metal table vessels as well. The significance of these inscriptions likely derives from the use of these vessels as

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sels were first published in 1935, at which time there were relatively few individuals capable of forging an inscription in Old Persian (though Ernst Herzfeld, who acquired and first published the vessels, was certainly one of them).

77. Peter Calmeyer, "Die Gefässe auf den Gabenbringer-Reliefs in Persepolis," *AMIS* 26 (1993): 147–60.

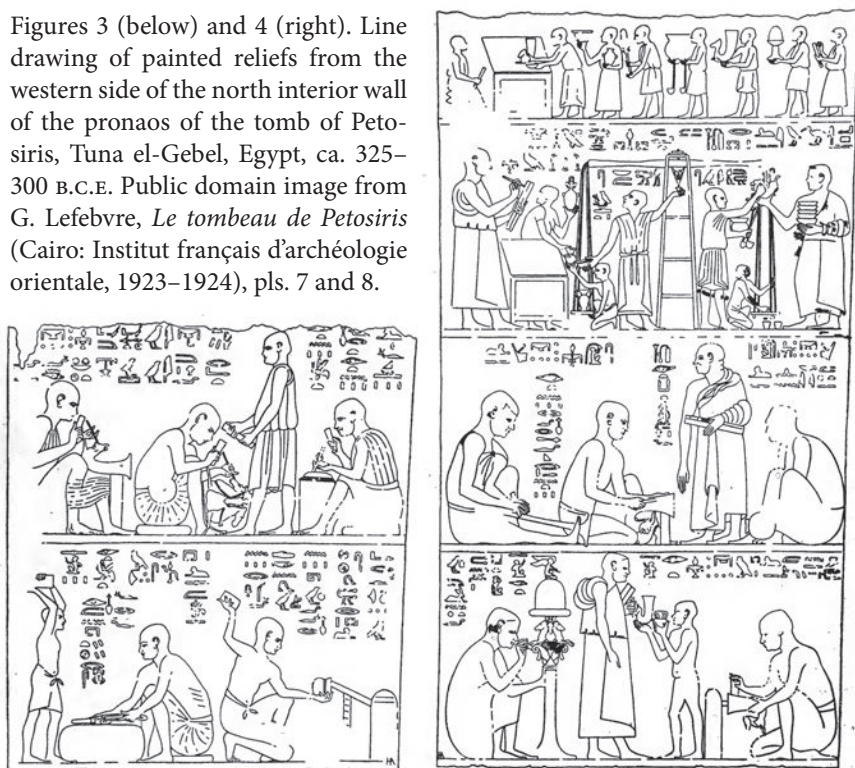
78. Elspeth R. M. Dusinger, "Satrapal Sardis: Achaemenid Bowls in an Achaemenid Capital," *AJA* 103 (1999): 73–102.

79. Simpson, "Royal Table," no. 97. As always the 'Hamadan' provenance requires caution, but the likelihood is that the bowl itself is genuine, as the significance of the idiosyncratic Achaemenid bowl shape was only recently recognized.

80. Calmeyer, "Gefässe."

81. Amélie Kuhrt, *The Persian Empire: A Corpus of Sources from the Achaemenid Period* (London: Routledge, 2007), 316.

Figures 3 (below) and 4 (right). Line drawing of painted reliefs from the western side of the north interior wall of the pronaos of the tomb of Petosiris, Tuna el-Gebel, Egypt, ca. 325–300 B.C.E. Public domain image from G. Lefebvre, *Le tombeau de Petosiris* (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1923–1924), pls. 7 and 8.



royal gifts, given by the Great King to important individuals as tokens of esteem.<sup>82</sup> An example of this is provided by Lysias (19.25). In this speech one Demus, son of Pyrilampes (and Plato's stepbrother), is said to have received a gold *phiale* from Artaxerxes II as a mark of royal favor.<sup>83</sup> Demus served as an ambassador from Athens to the Great King, and he likely received the *phiale* during one of his diplomatic missions. The speech goes on to say that the *phiale*'s possessor "on the strength of that token he would then obtain plenty of goods and also money all over the continent" (19.26 [Lamb, LCL; adapted]). The term translated here as "continent," ἡπειρος, often refers to Asia when unqualified, and the implication is that vessels such as Demus's signaled one's high status and royal connections in the empire. This practice of royal gifting was emulated at the regional level by

82. Gunter and Root, "Replicating," 23.

83. Michael Vickers, "Demus' Gold Phiale (Lysias 19.25)," *American Journal of Ancient History* 9 (1984 [1988]): 48–53.



satraps, with the result that these bowls became status symbols in various local contexts as well. This in turn stimulated the production of glass and ceramic versions of them in various parts of the empire.<sup>84</sup>

There is evidence for the introduction of *rhyta*, *phialai*, and Achaemenid bowls to Egypt during the Twenty-Seventh Dynasty. A faience *rhyton* found at Canopus on the Mediterranean coast, as well as three faience lion protomes in the Brooklyn Museum (all unfortunately with provenance), attest to the use of *rhyta* in Egypt.<sup>85</sup> Stylistic considerations, as well as the choice of material, suggest these *rhyta* were made in Egypt as local adaptations of Achaemenid metal vessels. They cannot be dated firmly, but the likelihood is that they were made during the fifth century B.C.E. A *rhyton* made in a local ceramic fabric was found in a tomb at Suwa (near Zagazig) in the Nile Delta. Originally it was dated to the Eighteenth Dynasty, but it was found with imported Athenian ceramics of fifth or early fourth century date.<sup>86</sup> The travertine *rhyton* found at Tell el-Hesi in Palestine is probably an Egyptian import.<sup>87</sup>

A few ceramic examples of the Achaemenid bowl have been found in Egypt as well, at Heliopolis, Tell Defenneh, Tell el-Herr, Ayn Manawir in the Kharga Oasis, and Ein Tirghi in the Dakhla Oasis.<sup>88</sup> Most of these can be dated with relative certainty to the fifth century B.C.E., on the basis of stratigraphy, epigraphic finds, or the presence of imported Greek pottery. Three silver Achaemenid bowls and two silver *phialai* were purportedly

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84. Margaret C. Miller, "Luxury Toreutic in the Western Satrapies: Court-Inspired Gift-Exchange Diffusion," in *Der Achämenidenhof/The Achaemenid Court: Akten des 2. internationalen Kolloquiums zum Thema "Vorderasien im Spannungsfeld klassischer und altorientalischer Überlieferungen," Landgut Castelen bei Basel, 23.–25. Mai 2007* (ed. B. Jacobs and R. Rollinger; CLeO 2; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010), 853–97; Dusinberre, "Satrapal Sardis."

85. Susanne Ebbinghaus, "Rhyta with Animal Foreparts in the Achaemenid Empire and Their Reception in the West" (D.Phil. diss., University of Oxford, 1998), 141–48.

86. Ebbinghaus, "Rhyta with Animal Foreparts," 146.

87. Ephraim Stern, "Achaemenid Clay Rhyta from Palestine," *IEJ* 32 (1982): 36–43 (40).

88. References in Catherine Defernez, "Les témoignages d'un continuité de la culture matérielle saïte à l'époque perse: L'apport de l'industrie céramique," in *La XXVIe dynastie, continuités et ruptures: promenade saïte avec Jean Yoyotte* (ed. D. Devauchelle; Paris: Cybèle, 2011), 109–26 (at 110).



found in Egypt in 1947 as part of the Tell el-Maskhuta hoard.<sup>89</sup> Four of the vessels in the hoard have Aramaic inscriptions recording their dedication to the North Arabian goddess Han-'Ilat. The paleography of the inscriptions dates to the late fifth century B.C.E., providing a *terminus ante quem* for the production of the vessels, since the inscriptions were likely added later. One of the *phialai* (fig. 5) very closely resembles the *phiale* shown being made on Petosiris's tomb. The inscription on this bowl reads "that which Qaynu, son of Gašmu, king of Qedar, brought in offering to Han-'Ilat" (Dumbrell).<sup>90</sup> The Qedarites have been identified as an Arab confederation based in the northwest of the Arabian peninsula. These are likely the same Arabs who, according to Herodotus (3.4–9), provided Cambyses's army with water during the initial invasion of Egypt, resulting in a treaty of friendship between the Great King and the king of the Arabs.<sup>91</sup> The *phiale* dedicated by Qaynu may well have been a token of this friendship, given by the Great King (or perhaps by the satrap of Egypt) to the king of Qedar sometime during the fifth century. It is often assumed that if the shrine of Han-'Ilat referenced in the aforementioned inscriptions was in fact located at Tell el-Maskhuta, the Arabs were there to guard the canal dug by Darius I that connected the Nile to the Red Sea. If so, this *phiale* and the other vessels in the Tell el-Maskhuta hoard provide a good example of the use of royal or satrapal gifting to further the empire's political goals in Egypt.

There is no direct evidence for the presence or use of *rhyta*, *phialai*, or Achaemenid bowls during the Second Persian Period, though any of the unprovenanced objects discussed above could just as well belong to this period as to the Twenty-Seventh Dynasty. It is also possible that during the Twenty-Eighth through Thirtieth Dynasties, the decades of native Egyptian rule leading up to the Second Persian Period, these vessel

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89. *Five Years of Collecting Egyptian Art 1951–1956* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Brooklyn Museum, 1956), nos. 50–1; William J. Dumbrell, "The Tell el-Maskhuta Bowls and the 'Kingdom' of Qedar in the Persian Period," *BASOR* 203 (1971): 33–44. There is also a bronze Achaemenid bowl in the Brooklyn Museum, said to be from Thebes; see John D. Cooney, "Persian Influence in Late Egyptian Art," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 4 (1965): 39–48 (40–42).

90. Dumbrell, "Tell el-Maskhuta Bowls," 36.

91. David F. Graf, "Arabia during Achaemenid Times," in *Centre and Periphery: Proceedings of the Groningen 1986 Achaemenid History Workshop* (ed. H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg and A. Kuhrt; Achaemenid History 4; Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1990), 131–48 (138–43); see also Anderson, "Persian Memories and the Programmatic Nature of Nabataean Funerary Architecture," this volume.

forms acquired new meaning in Egypt. But with the resumption of Achaemenid rule it is very likely that their association with the empire was effectively reasserted, and this was the context in which Petosiris would have encountered them. As high priest of Thoth at Hermopolis he was a person of considerable local importance, socially, religiously, and economically. Moreover, he was presumably subject to at least some degree of satrapal oversight. Such oversight is attested during the fifth century B.C.E., when the satrap and his immediate subordinates corresponded with the priests of Khnum in Elephantine in order to monitor appointments and temple finances.<sup>92</sup> Petosiris, then, would have had links to the satrap, the sort of links symbolized by Achaemenid *phialai* and bowls. This does not mean that he was ever given gifts by the satrap or the Great King (though of course he might have been), but it does mean he would have been well aware of the significance of these types of vessels.

Petosiris's decision to include images of *rhyta*, a *phiale* and an Achaemenid bowl in his tomb's decorations was a deliberate one, calculated to communicate his status and identity. That he chose to use objects associated with Achaemenid rule indicates that for him the empire was not simply a destructive and oppressive force, as the Greek historical tradition would have it. He was likely not alone in this view. First, Petosiris's conception of what images were appropriate to his status and identity was determined not only by his own preferences and worldview, but also by how he perceived those images would be understood by his audience. That he chose to include overt references to Achaemenid rule suggests he was not the only one in Hermopolis whose memory of the empire was not strictly negative.<sup>93</sup> Second, metal and ceramic versions of Achaemenid vessels, especially *phialai* and Achaemenid bowls, continued to be made in Egypt



Figure 5: Silver phiale, said to be from Tell el-Maskhuta, Egypt, ca. late fifth century B.C.E. New York, Brooklyn Museum 54.50.34. Reproduced courtesy of the Brooklyn Museum.

92. Lisbeth S. Fried, *The Priest and the Great King: Temple-Palace Relations in the Persian Empire* (Biblical and Judaic Studies from the University of California, San Diego 10; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 80–84.

93. Baines, "Self-Presentation," 47 argues that the tomb of Petosiris was not

during the early Ptolemaic period.<sup>94</sup> The implication is that these shapes continued to resonate with some Egyptians who, like Petosiris, found some part of Achaemenid rule worth remembering.

It is interesting that Petosiris elected to represent the production of these vessels, rather than scenes of them in use. This decision is in keeping with the other images of agricultural and craft production that appear in the tomb, and which have a long history in Egyptian funerary art. At the same time it cast Petosiris in a higher position than he had occupied in life, namely, that of a king or satrap. Although they were imitated widely, the production of these vessels was, at least nominally, a royal prerogative, and in representing their production on his tomb Petosiris put himself in the role of the king. Similarly, in his biographical inscription he claims to have actually founded a temple, another activity normally performed only by kings.<sup>95</sup> These royal pretensions presented Petosiris as a figure of stability, continuity and restoration during a time of rapid political change, a rhetorical strategy with precedents going back to the biographies of the First Intermediate Period.

The tomb of Petosiris thus preserves the memory of Achaemenid rule of Egypt during the Second Persian Period in two different ways. His biographical inscription makes reference to unrest and disorder during the tenure of a foreign ruler most likely to have been Artaxerxes III. This reference is expressed in stereotyped terms to be sure, but as Jan Assmann has noted, Egyptian biographies need some basis in reality in order to be effective.<sup>96</sup> In the idealized estate depicted on the walls of his tomb, however, he includes images of Achaemenid metalware, suggesting that his memory of the Persians was more complicated than his biography would indicate. These vessels were symbols of personal connections to the most important and powerful people in Egypt and in the empire, connections Petosiris may have himself had in his capacity as high priest of Thoth. Certainly he did not seem to have wanted to forget Achaemenid rule altogether.

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unique (as is often stated), but that comparable tombs survive only in very fragmentary condition.

94. Michael Pfrommer, *Studien zu alexandrinischer und grossgriechischer Toreutik frühhellenistischer Zeit* (Archäologische Forschungen 16; Berlin: Mann, 1987), 42–74.

95. Lichtheim, *Literature*, 49 n. 8.

96. Assmann, *Mind of Egypt*, 104–5.

## EXPERIENCING THE SECOND PERSIAN PERIOD

The complex memory of the Second Persian Period preserved in Petosiris's tomb provides an important antidote to the straightforward negative memory presented in Ptolemaic propaganda and preserved in Greek historical writing. As reconstructed from his tomb this memory includes both the disorder and trauma of the Persian invasion and his participation in and integration into the new regime of Achaemenid rule. These are not contradictory memories; rather, their complexity reflects the complex realities of life under foreign rule. Ptolemy, by contrast, never experienced Achaemenid rule firsthand, and his "memory" of the period is correspondingly simplistic. This memory was created as part of his effort to legitimize and consolidate his newfound political authority, through a combination of the panhellenic ideology utilized by Alexander and the rhetoric of restoration that was so powerful in Egyptian political and religious thought. The result was a memory that drew more on stereotyped Greek views of the Persians than on actual experience. Yet this memory has served and continues to serve as the basis for ancient and modern narratives of the Second Persian Period.

In writing about Roman imperialism David Mattingly has argued that "we need to break free from the tendency to see the colonial world as one of rulers and ruled...and explore the full spectrum of discrepancy between these binary oppositions."<sup>97</sup> Petosiris's memory of the Second Persian Period is a useful illustration of this concept. His experience was not strictly "good" or "bad," and it likely included both positive and negative aspects. For other Egyptians in different places and different stations in life it may have been more fully positive or negative, though on present evidence it is impossible to identify definite examples. What is clear, however, is that Achaemenid rule of Egypt was experienced differently by different people, and that modern historical narratives obscure that diversity.

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97. David J. Mattingly, *Imperialism, Power, and Identity: Experiencing the Roman Empire* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2011), 29.

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# POLITICAL MEMORY IN THE ACHAEMENID EMPIRE: THE INTEGRATION OF EGYPTIAN KINGSHIP INTO PERSIAN ROYAL DISPLAY

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This contribution will focus on two groups of artifacts illustrating how effectively Darius I integrated Egyptian royal concepts into Persian kingship: the calcite vessels showing the development of a quadrilingual “royal tag” (§2) and the *staters* depicting Artaxerxes III in Persian court dress and Egyptian double crown (§3). Considering the two source types within the context of royal monuments of Darius I in Egypt (§1.1) and the incorporation of Egyptian elements into the framework of (re)presenting rulership in Persia (§1.2), it is feasible to assume that the strategies of Egypto-Persian display of rulership during the so-called first and second Persian dominion over Egypt (Twenty-Seventh and Thirty-First Dynasties, and approximately 525–400 and 343–332 B.C.E.) were aimed at facilitating a lasting political memory of (Egypto-)Persian kingship.

In essence, I will demonstrate that the integration of Egyptian elements into Persian kingship and especially into the visual display of the ruler and his rulership was deliberately initiated by Darius I for personal

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\* I would like to thank Caroline Waerzeggers and Jason Silverman for the incentive to rethink some material from my Ph.D. thesis from the viewpoint of “political memory” and for including its conclusions into these conference proceedings. Section 1 summarizes the major results from the chapters on Egypto-Persian kingship display under Darius I (chs. 2.4, 3.1–3.4, 4.2, 5, and 11.2). Sections 2 and 3 present the argumentation of chapters 3.6 resp. 3.5 on the vessels with “royal tag” and the coins depicting Artaxerxes III with Egyptian double crown. The Ph.D. thesis is going to be published as Melanie Wasmuth, *Reflexion und kulturelle Interaktion: Ägypten und die Achämeniden* (Oriens et Occidens; Stuttgart: Steiner, forthcoming). References in the present paper refer to the chapters in the latter version.

reasons and for promoting the perdurability of (Achaemenid) Persian kingship. The effectiveness of this strategy is attested by the posthumous positive evaluation of Darius I as Persian Great King in his role as Egyptian pharaoh, conveyed, for example, by Diodorus.<sup>1</sup> Besides, the memory of the integral Egypto-Persian kingship and its iconography developed by him was activated under Artaxerxes III for advancing contemporary political purposes: to present the ruler as Great King and once again lord over the world including Egypt.

### 1. THE CREATION OF EGYPTO-PERSIAN ROYAL ICONOGRAPHY UNDER DARIUS I

The royal monuments combining Egyptian and Persian elements dating from the reign of Darius I show a marked difference between Persia and Egypt as a location for royal (re)presentation regarding the means of iconographical integration of these elements. Probably, this is primarily due to the regional specifics with respect to audience, visibility, and socio-cultural setting of the monuments. Yet, the strong distinction between the strategies of displaying the ruler in the Persian heartland and the provinces—or at least the province of Egypt—may be partially owed to the different spheres of context. The monuments in Persia all belong to the architectural and iconographical framework of the court, the palatial sphere, while the evidence from Egypt comes from Egyptian and Persian sacral and infrastructural contexts. The *canal monuments* including two Persian fire altars in the vicinity of the so-called *canal stelae* belong to the visible and to some extent accessible Persian sacral sphere in Egypt, the *canal stelae* themselves primarily to an infrastructural one. On the other hand, the monuments and small objects presenting Darius I as a living god and probably also his royal statue belong to the largely visible part of the Egyptian sacral sphere, e.g., on the outer faces of the temple of Hibis. As with most palatial contexts in Egypt, there is no known evidence for how satrapal or royal residences of the rulers of the Twenty-Seventh and

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1. Diod. 1.95.4–5: “(4.) Als sechster soll sich Dareios, der Vater des Xerxes mit den Gesetzen Ägyptens beschäftigt haben. [...] (5.) [...] Daher sei er von den Ägyptern so sehr verehrt worden, daß sie ihn als einzigen von allen Königen schon bei Lebzeiten zum Gotte machten und ihm nach seinem Tode die gleiche Verehrung erwiesen wie den gerechtesten ihrer Herrscher früherer Zeiten.” (Diodoros, *Weltgeschichte Buch I–X* (vol. 1; BibGrLit 34; Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1992), 129.

Thirty-First Dynasties looked. Therefore, a potentially revealing comparison of the palatial sphere in Egypt and Persia is not possible.

Though the cultural settings are different, all monuments in question are comparable regarding their subject: the representation of the ruler and his realm. In Persia, the emphasis is on the cultural diversity within the scope of the empire and therefore on the visual display of the ruler as Great King ruling the whole world. In Egypt, the focus is predominantly on the presentation of the ruler in his double role as Persian Great King and Egyptian pharaoh—two royal concepts that are mutually incompatible. Both are characterized by a claim of global dominance, in which the mutual other is one of the foes to be subjected, whose realm is to be conquered. The display of this double role reflects the interaction and deliberate integration of Egyptian and Persian royal concepts: They demonstrate a marked consideration for designing monuments which are directly or on a meta-level readable and consistently understandable within both, the Egyptian and the Persian (and the Mesopotamian) cultural traditions.

### 1.1. The Evidence in Egypt

From Egypt, apart from depictions as Egyptian pharaoh<sup>2</sup> and as Egyptian god, three monument complexes are known showing Egypto-Persian representations of rulership, all dating to the reign of Darius I: (1) along the canal joining the Red Sea and the Wadi Tumilat the *canal stelae* (see fig. 1), all of which were situated in an architectural context consisting of several less known and predominantly Persian monuments (*canal monuments*); (2) the statue of Darius I found at Susa, but in all likelihood originally displayed in Egypt (see fig. 2); (3) the representation of the slaying of the Apophis serpent on the contemporary front of the temple at Hibis (see fig. 3) in context of the display of Darius as Egyptian god: as Horus falcon at Hibis and on a private stela and as Nile god on bronze appliqués from the temple of Karnak.

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2. The monuments displaying the Achaemenid rulers as Egyptian pharaohs within the Egyptian cultural tradition do not enter into this argument. For compilations of these sources see Georges Posener, *La première domination perse en Égypte: Recueil d'inscriptions hiéroglyphiques* (BdE 11; Cairo: IFAO, 1936); Edda Bresciani, "La satrapia d'Egitto," *SCO* 7 [1958]: 132–88; Wasmuth, *Reflexion und kulturelle Interaktion*, ch. 4.



As already pointed out, all three complexes are characterized by adaptations which markedly make the representations readable and/or acceptable within the Egyptian as well as the Persian and often also within the Mesopotamian cultural tradition. This argues for an integration of both form and content into a joint Egypto-Persian royal concept for which three strategies for including Egyptian aspects into the official representation of the ruler and his rulership can be observed: addition, combination, and association.

Primarily by way of addition, the *canal stelae* combine Persian and Egyptian versions of their contents (fig. 1). These monumental stelae mark strategic points of the canal from between the northernmost golf coast of the Red Sea and the Wadi Tumilat, a navigable waterway between the Red Sea and the Nile and in consequence between the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean.<sup>3</sup> The Kubri (or Suez) stela was placed close to the golf coast; the Kabret (or Shallûfa) and the Serapeum (or Matroukah) stela(e) stood to the south and north of the Bitter Lakes; and the Maskhuta stela was erected at the first major town in the Wadi Tumilat.<sup>4</sup>

These stelae are characterized by the addition of an Egyptian and a Persian version onto the two faces of one stela or on two different stelae. The “Egyptian” version is inscribed in Egyptian, in monumental hieroglyphs, and follows Egyptian iconography, while the “Persian” version features a shorter version of the text inscribed in Old Persian, Elamite and Late Babylonian, in cuneiform script, and follows mainly Persian iconography.<sup>5</sup> This

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3. Wasmuth, *Reflexion und kulturelle Interaktion*, ch. 6.3.2. The Greek and Latin sources have been widely discussed, most extensively in Friedrich Oertel, “Das Problem des antiken Suezkanals,” in *Spiegel der Geschichte* (ed. K. Repgen and S. Skalweit; Münster: Aschendorff, 1964), 18–51, and Christopher Tuplin, “Darius’ Suez Canal and Persian Imperialism,” in *Asia Minor and Egypt: Old Cultures in a New Empire* (ed. H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg and A. Kuhrt; Achaemenid History 6; Leiden: NINO, 1991), 237–83. Posener also took the Egyptian literary sources into account (Georges Posener, “Le canal du Nil à la Mer Rouge avant les Ptolémées,” *ChrEg* 13 [1938]: 259–73). On the other hand, the primary sources from the Achaemenid period have only been partially collected and examined, before the author’s Ph.D. thesis; most comprehensively by Tuplin, “Darius’ Suez Canal” and Edda Bresciani, “L’Egitto achemenide: Dario I e il canale del mar Rosso,” in *Mélanges Jacques Briand* (ed. J. Elayi and J. Sapin; *Transeu* 14; Paris: Gabalda, 1998), 103–11.

4. For a detailed analysis and reconstruction of the canal stelae see Wasmuth, *Reflexion und kulturelle Interaktion*, ch. 3.3.

5. For an illustration of the Maskhuta stela see Wladimir Golénischeff, “Stèle de

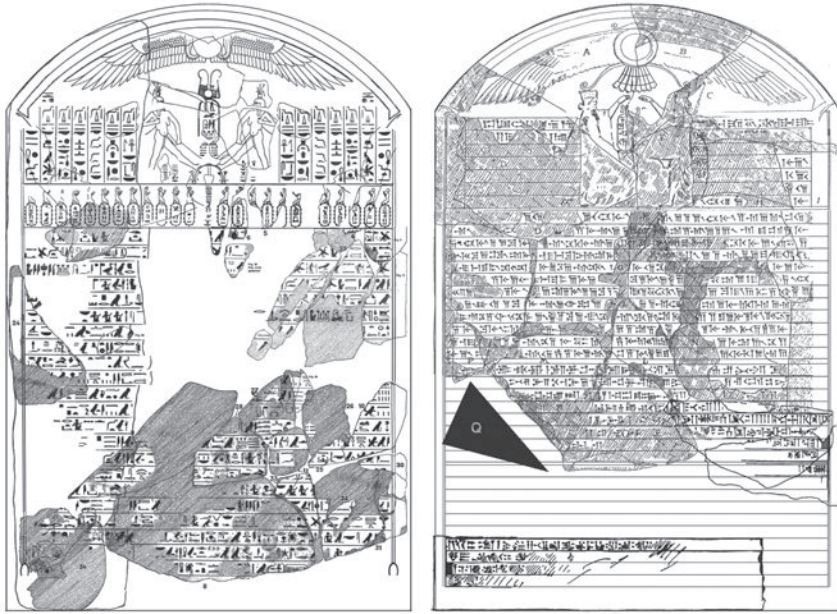


Figure 1. Reconstruction of the bifacial canal stelae. Kabret stela. Line drawing by Melanie Wasmuth [Ph.D. diss., Basel 2009, figs. 3.55, 3.57], based on Golénischeff, “Stèle de Darius,” pl. VIII; Posener, *Première domination*, pl. IV–XV; Ménant, “La stèle de Chalouf,” 142; Scheil, “Inscription de Darius à Suez,” 194, 196; Daressy, “Stèle de Chalouf,” 161–64; Clédat, “Notes sur l’Isthme de Suez,” 225.

separation in a Persian and an Egyptian version is broken up on the “Persian” face by the cartouche framing the cuneiform inscription of the royal

Darius aux environs de Tell el-Maskhoutah,” *RT* 13 (1890): pl. VIII and Posener, *Première domination*, pl. IV. For a reconstruction of the Egyptian and the Persian face of the Kabret stela, see fig. 1; the reconstruction of the Kubri stela is alike apart from the toponymic list which is mirrored. The Egyptian face is based on the Maskhuta stela and the illustrations of the Egyptian faces of the Kabret and Kubri stelae published by Posener, *Première domination*, pls. V–XV. The Persian face is based on Joachim Ménant, “La stèle de Chalouf,” *RT* 9 (1887): 142; Jean Vincent Scheil, “Documents et Arguments 10: Inscription de Darius à Suez (menues restitutions),” *RA* 27 (1930): 194, 196; as well as on the notes in Georges Daressy, “Révision des textes de la stèle de Chalouf,” *RT* 11 (1889): 161–64, and Jean Clédat, “Notes sur l’Isthme de Suez,” *BIFAO* 16 (1919): 225. For the Serapeum stela(e) see Achille Jaillon and Cyrille Lemasson, “Lettres de MM. Jaillon et Lemasson à M. Golénischeff au sujet des monuments perses de l’Isthme,” *RT* 13 (1890): 97, 99. See also above, note 5.

name Darius, on the “Egyptian” face by the list of un-Egyptian foreign geographic names as well as posture and dress of their representatives<sup>6</sup> and by the Persian royal titulary (see below §2.2), which is included in translation in the Egyptian text.

On the Kabret and Kubri stelae, the two versions are incised bifacially, probably showing alternating faces when travelling along the canal. At least, the “Egyptian” faces are to be reconstructed identically, but the order of the toponyms is laterally reversed.<sup>7</sup> The Maskhuta stela, on the other hand, features only an “Egyptian” face and is based on a different draft: the order of the columns in the lunette is partially reversed and the text below the register with the toponymic list combines a much briefer account of the construction work and a more detailed presentation of the king as supported by the gods.<sup>8</sup> Whether a separate stela with a “Persian” face complemented the monument, and whether there was one bi-facially inscribed Serapeum stela or two single-faced ones, cannot be ascertained any longer.<sup>9</sup>

The essential effect of this strategy of addition is its readability without further knowledge of the other cultural tradition: people travelling along the canal may either understand or at least recognize the “Egyptian” or the “Persian” version without necessarily contemplating the other side. This may be the first major attempt to integrate Egyptian kingship into Persian

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6. Contrary to Egyptian cultural tradition, the representatives of the toponyms are displayed unbound in the Egyptian gesture of adoration (see fig. 1). Similarly, the representatives on the statue base are unbound; they are displayed in a gesture connotating supporting, presenting, and receiving in Egyptian display (see fig. 2 and note 15).

7. In all places where the fragments allow double-checking, the difference between the inscriptions on the Kubri and the Kabret stelae is not more than one sign width (see fig. 1).

8. For a synoptic presentation of the construction text of the Kubri and Kabret stelae (DZeg6a) and separately for the Maskhuta stela (DZeg6b) see Wasmuth, *Reflexion und kulturelle Interaktion*, ch. 3.3.2.

9. As could be shown by Günter Schweiger, *Kritische Neuedition der achämenidischen Keilinschriften* (Taimering: Schweiger VWT, 1998), 605, 608, the cuneiform fragments from Tell el-Maskhuta are not part of the Maskhuta stela or a “Persian” version on a second stela, but attest a completely different composition, therefore belonging to the *canal monuments* (Maskhuta I according to Wasmuth, *Reflexion und kulturelle Interaktion*, ch. 3.5.1). Regarding the Serapeum stela(e), the only known sources are two brief notes in letters to Wladimir Golénischeff (Jaillon and Lemasson, “Lettres,” 97–99), which do not provide conclusive information (Wasmuth, *Reflexion und kulturelle Interaktion*, ch. 3.5.8).

display of rulership, or the strategy may be due to the monuments' place of erection: the canal stelae were visible for everyone on the canal.

A different strategy for integrating Egyptian and Persian elements into Egypto-Persian royal iconography is witnessed by the statue of Darius found at Susa, but designed for and most probably originally erected in an Egyptian context.<sup>10</sup> The first impression—at least nowadays in its headless state—is also one of addition: the base is predominantly Egyptian, while the figure of the king looks essentially Persian, though the type of statue is an Egyptian *Standschreitstatue*<sup>11</sup> with back pillar (see fig. 2).<sup>12</sup>

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10. For a presentation of the statue and its archaeological context, see Monique Kervran et al., “Une statue de Darius découverte à Suse,” *JA* 260 (1972): 235–66. The first petrographic analyses showed that the statue is not made of the same material as the surrounding structures at Susa; a potential origin from the area of Hamadan-Borujir in Iran was proposed (Jean Trichet and Pierre Poupet, “Etude pétrographique de la roche constituant la statue de Darius, découverte à Suse, en Décembre 1972,” *CDAFI* 4 [1974]: 57–59). A more recent comparison with samples from the Wadi Hammamat in Egypt demonstrates a nearly perfect match and thus a strong likelihood that the monolith for the statue of Darius was extracted there (Jean Trichet and François Vallat, “L'origine égyptienne de la statue de Darius,” in *Contribution à l'histoire de l'Iran: mélanges offerts à Jean Perrot* [ed. F. Vallat; Paris: Recherche sur les civilisations, 1990], 206–8). The lack of chisel marks even in unpolished areas shows that the statue was sculpted in the Egyptian tradition without use of hard-tipped metal tools (David Stornach, “Description and Comment,” in Kervran et al., “Une statue de Darius,” *JA* 260 [1972]: 244–5). In addition to this multi-faceted archaeological evidence for an Egyptian origin of the statue, the inscriptions argue for an original place of erection in Egypt: according to the inscription on the top of the statue base, the statue was to be placed as commemorative monument for the Ka of Darius beside the god Atum, indicating an Atum temple as original place of erection. Which Atum temple is open to speculation; for a potential identification of the Atum temple at *pr-Itm* in Wadi Tumilat see Bresciani, “Canale,” 103, 110. For a detailed discussion of the primary and secondary context of erection see also Wasmuth, *Reflexion und kulturelle Interaktion*, chs. 3.2.1, 3.2.5.

11. The Egyptianological *terminus technicus* denotes a type of statue, which depicts the owner neither in a really standing nor a walking posture, but something in between: the legs are in a striding position, but the center of gravity is on the rear leg (usually adjoining the back pillar of the statue), not between the legs. Though it would suffice for the Egyptian context to refer to this type of statue as a *standing statue*, the term is useful to express the significant difference in posture in comparison with e.g. the Mesopotamian royal statuary standing with their feet next to each other.

12. Further illustrations of the statue are included e.g. in John Curtis and Nigel Tallis, eds., *Forgotten Empire: The World of Ancient Persia* (London: British Museum Press, 2005), 99 no. 88; Amélie Kuhrt, *The Persian Empire: A Corpus of Sources from the Achaemenid Period* (London: Routledge, 2007), 480 fig. 11.2, 482 fig. 11.4.

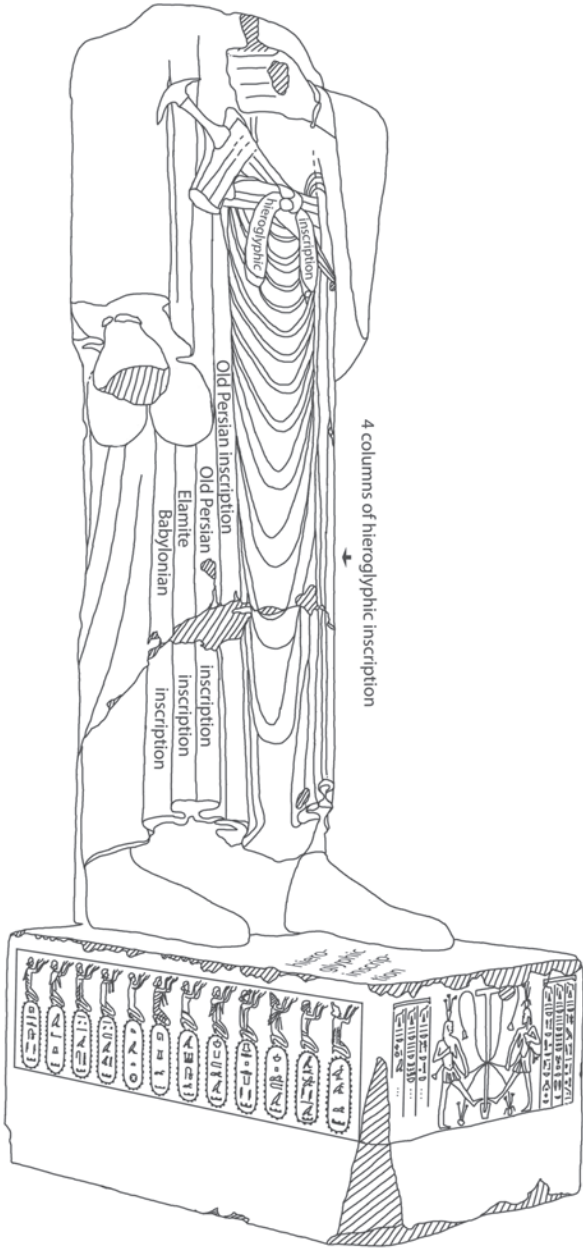


Figure 2. Statue of Darius I. From Susa. Teheran, National Museum, Inv. No. 4112. Line drawing by Melanie Wasmuth, based on Vittmann, *Ägypten und die Fremden*, 137 fig. 58.

If examined closely, it can be seen that the final design of the overall impression, but also of the details, is neither Egyptian, nor Persian, but a combination of both.<sup>13</sup> For example, the display of the toponyms on the sides of the base follows Egyptian conventions, but instead of bound captives raising out of the crenelated ovals encircling each geographic name, the representatives of these toponyms kneel on top of the wall cartouches and hold their hands upwards in a similar gesture as on the *gātū* bearer reliefs in Persepolis and Naqš-e Rostam.<sup>14</sup> This gesture with upturned open palms is in Egypt used for receiving, offering and supporting.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, for the king a gesture was chosen which was associated with highest status in a number of cultural traditions: the posture/gesture of standing in a striding position with one arm bent in front of the breast and the other hanging down ending in a closed fist is often used in Egypt for representing the ruler. But it is never the most commonly used, and in the first millennium B.C.E. it is more closely associated with royal women, especially the God's Wives of the Twenty-Fifth and Twenty-Sixth Dynasties. In all likelihood, the posture/gesture was chosen for its similarity to the Neo-Assyrian royal statues and the reliefs showing the enthroned Darius, for instance in the audience scenes at Persepolis.<sup>16</sup>

13. For a detailed examination, see Wasmuth, *Reflexion und kulturelle Interaktion*, chs. 3.2, 3.4.

14. For an analysis of the individual depictions of the subject peoples as displayed on the list of toponyms on the statue base, see Michael Roaf, "The Subject Peoples on the Base of the Statue of Darius," *CDAFI* 4 (1974): 73–160; for the *gātū* bearer reliefs at Naqsh-e Rostam and Persepolis, see e.g. Gerold Walser, *Die Völkerschaften auf den Reliefs von Persepolis* (Teheraner Forschungen 2; Berlin: Mann, 1966), plan (*Falttafel*) 2 and fig. 5.

15. See, e.g., the offering bearers in the Eighteenth Dynasty Theban private tombs, e.g., in the tomb of Sennefer (TT 96; Arne Eggebrecht, ed., *Sennefer: Die Grabkammer des Bürgermeisters von Theben* [Mainz: Zabern, 1993], 41 fig. 27), or for the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty the relief showing Nekho II (Psammetikh II) making an offer to Thot as baboon (Helmut Satzinger, *Das Kunsthistorische Museum in Wien: Die Ägyptisch-Orientalische Sammlung* [Zaberns Bildbände zur Archäologie 14; Mainz: Zabern, 1994], 47 fig. 30b); e.g., the scene of Khabekhnet and his wife receiving water from the tree goddess in his tomb in Deir el-Medineh (TT 2, Nineteenth Dynasty; Karol Michalowski, *Ägypten: Kunst und Kultur* [Ars Antiqua 2; Freiburg: Herder, 1973], 440 fig. 572) or the supporting of the sky (hieroglyph) in the temple of Sety I at Abydos (*in situ*; e.g. Madeleine Page-Gassner and André B. Wiese, *Ägypten: Augenblicke der Ewigkeit: Unbekannte Schätze aus Schweizer Privatbesitz* [Mainz: Zabern, 1997], 238).

16. For Mesopotamia, see e.g., the statue of Assurnasirpal II from the temple of



While the strategy of addition does not require an understanding of the Persian (or Elamite or Babylonian) as well as the Egyptian language and/or semiotic values of display, the strategy of combination works best when at least rudimentary knowledge of both cultural traditions is known. The third strategy of Egypto-Persian royal iconography can only be understood with intimate knowledge of Egyptian royal and religious concepts and their visual presentation. The reading of the illustrations of Darius I<sup>17</sup> as *living* Horus requires the association with elements from Egyptian royal titulary, iconography, and kingship concepts.

Probably the earliest and the most explicit illustrations are known from the central gateway into the temple of Hibis at Khargah oasis:<sup>18</sup> Darius, who is identified by an inscription and shown as falcon, receives life (*ꜥnh*) from Monthu and from Amun-Ra. Accordingly, he is the *living* Horus—a key aspect of Egyptian kingship translated into visual display. Similarly, Darius as Horus falcon is worshipped on the stela of Padiusirpare.<sup>19</sup> Pos-

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Ninurta at Nimrud (London, British Museum, BM 118871, e.g. Eva Strommenger and Max Hirmer, *Fünf Jahrtausende Mesopotamien: Die Kunst von den Anfängen um 5000 v. Chr. bis zu Alexander dem Großen* [Munich: Hirmer, 1962], fig. 196), for the Egyptian God's Wives before the Twenty-Seventh Dynasty, see e.g., the statue of Anchnesneferibre Heqat-nefru-Mut (Twenty-Sixth Dynasty) from the Cachette in Karnak (Cairo, Egyptian Museum, CG 42205, Georges Legrain, *Statues et Statuettes des Rois et des Particuliers* [CG 42001–42250; 3 vols. and index vol.; Cairo: IFAO, 1906–1925], pl. XII). For illustrations of the Achaemenid audience scenes, see, e.g., Kuhrt, *Empire*, 2:536 fig. 11.29, 2:537 fig. 11.30. For a detailed discussion of the posture of the statue of Darius and its potential derivations, see Wasmuth, *Reflexion und kulturelle Interaktion*, ch. 3.2.2.

17. As the inscriptions only give the name Darius, but no specific titles or affiliation, the ascription to Darius I is not absolutely certain. Yet, all other monuments displaying the double role are certainly produced in the name of Darius I and there is very little evidence from the reigns of Darius II and III in Egypt. Therefore, the ascription of these depictions to Darius I is highly likely in all cited cases.

18. Nowadays the gateway between the hypostyle hall N and chamber M. For a brief introduction to the temple of Hibis, see Joachim Willeitner, *Die ägyptischen Oasen: Städte, Tempel und Gräber in der Libyschen Wüste* (Zaberns Bildbände zur Archäologie; Mainz: Zabern, 2003). For drawings of the reliefs, see Norman de Garis Davies, *The Temple of Hibis in el Kharga Oasis III: The Decoration* (PMMA 17; New York: MMA, 1953), especially pls. 1, 39, 42. For a discussion of the dates of construction and decoration see Wasmuth, *Reflexion und kulturelle Interaktion*, 189–202, especially chs. 4.2.1, 4.2.2. The illustrations relevant for this article are uncontroversially dated to the Persian period.

19. Unknown provenance (Fayyum?); Berlin, Ägyptisches Museum, no. 7493; e.g.



sibly, the representation of the Great King as Horus falcon could be rather easily associated with Persian kingship via the display of the winged ring with anthropomorphic figure, which was closely connected with Persian kingship, if not its embodiment.<sup>20</sup>

From the front of the Hibis temple, a further—more monumental, yet more subtle—illustration of Darius as *living* Horus is known:<sup>21</sup> the final composition on the right hand side of the screen walls shows the king as Horus—anthropomorphic with falcon head, back, tail and wings (see fig. 3).<sup>22</sup> The display of the king—the *living* Horus—is stressed by the posture and the weapon (the *hḏ* mace), both evoking the emblematic scene of “slaying the foes,” the typical presentation of Egyptian kingship on the outer temple fronts.<sup>23</sup> Yet, the king slays Apophis, the divine serpent foe, not the traditional bundle of Libyan, Nubian and Asiatic foes: by transposing the royal emblematic scene onto a mythological level, the Persian Great King in his role as pharaoh is avoided to be displayed as slaying the Asiatics—his own people including himself.

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Günter Vittmann, *Ägypten und die Fremden* (Kulturgeschichte der Antiken Welt 97, Mainz: Zabern, 2003), 139, fig. 60. For a discussion of the date and sociocultural setting of the stela see Wasmuth, *Reflexion und kulturelle Interaktion*, ch. 5.1.

20. For a discussion of the symbolism of the winged symbol in Achaemenid Persia, see Parivash Jamzadeh, “The Winged Ring with Human Bust in Achaemenid Art as a Dynastic Symbol,” *IrAnt* 17 (1982): 91–99, especially 96.

21. For a detailed discussion of the scene and its implications for Egyptian royal display under Persian rule see Wasmuth, *Reflexion und kulturelle Interaktion*, chs. 4.2.3, 4.2.4, 5.1, 5.3, 6.3.1.

22. For the interpretation of the type of statue showing an anthropomorphic figure with falcon head and wings as royal statue, see Susanne Bickel, “Aspects et fonctions de la déification d’Amenhotep III,” *BIFAO* 102 (2002): 70; the best known statue, which was found in the temple of Khonsu at Karnak, shows Amenhotep III (Eighteenth Dynasty; Brussels, Koninklijke Musea voor Kunst en Geschiedenis—Musées Royaux d’Art et d’Histoire, E 5118; Bernard van Rinsveld, *Dieux et déesses de l’ancienne Égypte* [Guides du département égyptien 9; Brussels: Musées royaux d’art et d’histoire, 1994], 30, 32).

23. Similarly already Heike Sternberg el-Hotabi and Heribert Aigner, “Der Hibis-tempel in der Oase El-Chargeh: Architektur und Dekoration im Spannungsfeld ägyptischer und persischer Interessen,” in *Altertum und Mittelmeerraum: Die antike Welt diesseits und jenseits der Levante* (ed. R. Rollinger and B. Truschnegg; Oriens et Occidens 12; Stuttgart: Steiner, 2006), 543, yet with overall interpretation of the image as Horus/Seth and thereby kingship, not as depiction of the king himself.



Figure 3: Darius I as foreign living Horus. Temple of Hibis *in situ*. Line drawing by Melanie Wasmuth, based on Davies, *Hibis*, pl. 43.

As the inscription indicates, the king, who is illustrated as *living* Horus, is not to be identified as Horus, but as his divine opponent Seth, who—since the New Kingdom—is also “god of the foreigners” and is worshipped in the oases in anthropomorphic form with falcon head.<sup>24</sup> It seems likely that this identifying inscription is supposed to denote that Darius, the *living Horus*, that is, the Egyptian pharaoh, is actually a foreigner. As has been pointed out by Sternberg el-Hotabi and Aigner, the inclusion of a lion accompanying the falcon figure is very unusual for this scene though it is included in typically displayed emblematic scenes of *slaying the foes* in later Egyptian temple reliefs. It is therefore considered to be a Persian element.<sup>25</sup> Accordingly, the Persian royal animal species

24. For Seth as foreigner, see Sternberg el-Hotabi and Aigner, “Hibistempel,” 541–42. For a discussion of the falcon-headed Seth of the Oases, see Jürgen Osing, “Seth in Dachla und Charga,” *MDAIK* 41 (1985): 233.

25. Sternberg el-Hotabi and Aigner, “Hibistempel,” 543.

the foreign *living* Horus as Persian. This interpretation is supported by the later Egyptian tradition to name Seth with the epithet “the Mede (= the Persian).”<sup>26</sup>

Therefore, the depiction is to be read as: “Darius, the Persian, the foreign Horus who guarantees Maat by slaying his foes.” The specific translation of Egyptian kingship and the double role of the ruler as pharaoh and Great King into visual display is dependent on its regional setting in the western oases with its local variant of Seth with falcon head. As with the statue of Darius and especially its base, this display allows a number of interpretations—probably deliberately: apart from the reading as “*living* foreign Horus,” the scene can be understood on a solely divine level—as an icon for general Egyptian kingship by the slaying of Apophis by Horus/Seth or as an elaborate depiction of Seth of the Oases. Additionally, the merging of Horus and Seth into one may have evoked the integration of the roles as Egyptian pharaoh and his Asiatic royal foe into one ruler. On the other hand, an understanding of the denotation of the falcon figure as Seth as subtle protest of the priesthood of the Hibis temple against the ruler seems inappropriate given the traditional depictions of the ruler within the temple and the explicit illustrations of Darius as Horus falcon presented with life by Amun-Ra and Monthu and the deified display of Darius as (or closely associated with) Hapi, for example, on metal fittings from Karnak.<sup>27</sup>

## 1.2. The Evidence in Persia

Egyptian elements were not only used in Egypt in order to display Achaemenid kingship, but also in Persia.<sup>28</sup> A detailed analysis of the Egyptian

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26. Dimitri Meeks, “Dictionnaires et lexicographie de l'égyptien ancien: Méthodes et résultats,” *BiOr* 56 (1999): 581; Herman te Velde, *Seth, God of Confusion: A Study of his Role in Egyptian Mythology and Religion* (PDÄ 6; Leiden: Brill, 1977), 148–49; *Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen* (ed. Christian Leitz; 8 vols; Orientalia Lovaniensia analecta 110–116, 129; Leuven: Peters, 2002–2003), 3, 464.

27. From the Cachette at Karnak; Twenty-Seventh Dynasty (Darius I); Cairo, Egyptian Museum, JE 38050; Posener, *Première Domination*, 159, no. 114.

28. For a discussion of the Egyptian elements in Achaemenid Persia, see Was-muth, *Reflexion und kulturelle Interaktion*, ch. 2.4, which presents a reevaluation of the elements analyzed by Margaret Cool Root, *The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art: Essays on the Creation of an Iconography of Empire* (AcIr 19; Textes et Mémoires 9; Leiden: Brill, 1979).

elements integrated into the Persian representations of the ruler and his realm shows that in Persia itself the aspect “the ruler as Great King”—as king over the huge and culturally diverse realm of the Achaemenid empire—and not the “correct” readability of each foreign element—was predominant. While, in Egypt, form and contents of displaying Egypto-Persian kingship were adapted in a way markedly facilitating the reading and understanding of the monuments and their depictions within both the Egyptian and the Persian traditions (see §1.1 above), the Egyptian elements in Persia are integrated either in form or in content into the Persian repertoire: They either illustrate as *exotica*—without claim to accuracy in detail and without adoption of the context and subsequently the original meaning—the scope of the realm or they are taken over as concepts but adapted more or less completely to the Persian canon of display.

The first strategy may be illustrated by the two most prominent “Egyptian” elements—the *hmhm* crown<sup>29</sup> of the winged figure at gateway R in Pasargadae and the torus roll and cavetto cornice on the gateways and windows at Persepolis. Both were taken over either directly from Egypt or indirectly via the Levant.<sup>30</sup> Close parallels can be found in Levantine iconography: torus roll and cavetto cornice are part of the Levantine motive repertoire on stelae and *naiskoi* at least from the early first millennium B.C.E. onwards,<sup>31</sup> and *hmhm* and other elaborate Egyptian crowns were probably well known, for example, from Egyptianizing ivory objects as found in the Neo-Assyrian palace treasures at “Fort Shalmaneser” in Nimrud.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, most (non-Egyptian) observers probably associated

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29. Not the *3tf* crown as can be found in secondary literature: e.g. Root, *King and Kingship*, 300.

30. For illustrations of the *hmhm* crown of the “genius” at Pasargadae and the architectural element “torus roll and cavetto cornice” at Persepolis see e.g. Curtis and Tallis, *Forgotten Empire*, 31 no. 10, 35 no. 18; Kuhrt, *Empire*, 1:91 fig. 3.7, 2:504 fig. 11.16. For a detailed discussion of the origins of both elements, see Wasmuth, *Reflexion und kulturelle Interaktion*, chs. 2.4.1, 2.4.7.

31. For a compilation of the relevant sources see Peter Wagner, *Der ägyptische Einfluss auf die phönizische Architektur* (Habelts Dissertationsdrucke: Reihe Klassische Archäologie 12; Bonn: Rudolf Habelt, 1980); Maria Teresa Francisi, “Gli elementi architettonici delle stele puniche,” in *Atti del II congresso internazionale di studi fenici e punico* (Roma, 9–14 Novembre 1987) (Collezione di Studi Fenici 30; Rome: Consiglio nazionale delle ricerche, 1991), 863–74.

32. E.g. Georgina Herrmann, Helena Coffey, and Stuart Laidlaw, *The Published Ivories from Fort Shalmaneser, Nimrud: A Scanned Archive of Photographs* (London:

these elements with the Levant, rather than with Egypt. Additionally, the “Egyptian” element in both cases is taken out of context and used primarily as decorative element: the Egyptian sacral/religious context is lost, and in detail, the form does not follow the Egyptian “master copy.” This argues for a strategy that does not express specific foreign concepts. Rather, it illustrates the geographical, political, and cultural scope of Achaemenid rulership by displaying recognizable exotica without need for special attention to detail.

The second use of elements from the Egyptian cultural tradition can be witnessed with some certainty in the depiction of the architectural setting of the king, which was probably inspired by the display of the pharaoh: though the actual designs of the ruler, the throne, and the canopy, for example, in the “audience scenes” at the Apadana at Persepolis are highly un-Egyptian, the idea to display the king architecturally on a throne on top of a platform below a canopy may have been taken over from Egypt. If this is correct, we are dealing with an Egyptian form of expression filled with Persian content.<sup>33</sup> This interpretation is supported by the specific form of the winged symbol on the canopy, which looks predominantly Egyptian (apart from the depiction as a winged ring instead of the Egyptian winged disc), while most other winged symbols have closer parallels in the Mesopotamian cultural tradition.<sup>34</sup>

The idea of promoting an enduring kingship by means of adopting the long-lasting, and accordingly continuity-promoting, Egyptian representations of the ruler in an architectural frame possibly goes back to the actual time spent in Egypt by Darius and his followers during the Egyptian campaign.<sup>35</sup>

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Institute of Archaeology, University College London; British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 2004), 141 (S1933–34), 142 (S1936–37).

33. See already Root, *King and Kingship*, 237 for the proposed derivation from Egypt of “the mode of representing the royal figures within an architecturally defined space.”

34. For a discussion of the winged symbols used in context with Egyptian elements in Achaemenid art in Persia see Wasmuth, *Reflexion und kulturelle Interaktion*, ch. 2.4.7.

35. Though this was certainly omnipresent in the illustrations eternally preserving this display of kingship—e.g., on temple reliefs—the inspiration may just as easily originate in the actual presentations of the king assuming that the reliefs and paintings are representative of contemporary representational practice.

## 2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE “ROYAL TAG”

### 2.1. The Evidence

The “vessels with royal tags” are a group of closed containers from the Achaemenid period made probably in Egypt of calcite (“Egyptian alabaster”) or granite and inscribed with the royal name and abbreviated titles.<sup>36</sup> These vessels are of special importance to our present topic. On the one hand, they offer highly unusual evidence for the development of Achaemenid royal representation: if the state of the evidence is representative, they testify to the formation of a fundamentally new expression of kingship after the reign of Darius I. On the other hand, the circulation of the “royal tags” bears witness to the inclusion of Egyptian as a fourth official language and hence to the integration of Egyptian notions of kingship to the Persian ruler’s identity and role as Great King. Westenholz and Stolper distinguish several developmental stages of the royal inscription:<sup>37</sup> monolingual Egyptian tags, tags combining this monolingual Egyptian text with a Persian royal trilingue, and two versions of a quadrilingual tag with long or short versions of a Persian royal trilingue combined with an Egyptian “translation.”

Several vessels designate Darius I and Xerxes I (until year 5) solely as Egyptian pharaohs by inserting the Persian royal name into the traditional Egyptian titulary formula:<sup>38</sup>

*nsw-bjtj nb-t3wj* (RN) | *‘nh dt rnpt X*

King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Lord of the Two Lands, RN, may he live eternally, year X

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36. A comprehensive compilation of this group of artifacts is still missing and is also beyond the scope of this study. The largest collection is to be found in Posener, *Première domination*, 137–51. References to several additional vessels from known archaeological contexts are listed in Joan Goodnick Westenholz and Matthew W. Stolper, “A Stone Jar with Inscriptions of Darius I in Four Languages,” *ARTA* 2002.005 (2002): 6–7. A currently comprehensive collection of the vessels in the name of Artaxerxes III is provided by Rüdiger Schmitt, “Eine weitere Alabaster-Vase mit Artaxerxes-Inscription,” *AMI* 33 (2001): 191–201.

37. Westenholz and Stolper, “Stone Jar,” 8–9.

38. E.g. Posener, *Première domination*, 137–51: nos. 37–42 (Darius I), 44–47 (Xerxes I), possibly no. 77 (Xerxes I<sup>2</sup>), probably nos. 83–91 (the royal name is not or only partially preserved).

Similar inscriptions were carved into Egyptian cult utensils like *menats*<sup>39</sup> and *sistrum* handles in the reign of Darius I.<sup>40</sup> Therefore it may be assumed that the vessels with monolingual hieroglyphic inscriptions in the traditional Egyptian formula were primarily produced for the Egyptian inner sphere or for direct transfer of commodities between Egypt and the Persian court. This would explain the comparatively dense concentration of artifacts found at Susa.

Only a few known vessels combine this Egyptian titulary formula with a cuneiform trilingual inscription phrased in the Persian formula—one from the reign of Darius I and two from the reign of Xerxes I:<sup>41</sup>

Old Persian	RN xš v-z-r-k
Elamite	RN <sup>diš</sup> EŠŠANA ir-šá-ir-ra
Babylonian	RN LUGAL GAL-ú
Translation	RN, the Great King
Egyptian	nsw-bjtj nb-t3wj (RN)  ‘nh dt rnpt X

Translation	King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Lord of the Two Lands, RN, may he live eternally, year X
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As regards content, these inscriptions denote a transitional version of the royal tag transforming the Egyptian vessel into an Achaemenid one—in an object presenting the pharaoh in his role as Great King and explicating this double role in the textual display. Whether the tag resulted from actually adding the cuneiform trilingual inscription to an existing monolingually inscribed vessel cannot be ascertained.<sup>42</sup>

39. Colliers with keyhole-shaped counterweights used as rattles in the cult of Hathor; in Egyptological terminology, the term is mostly used just for the counterweight.

40. E.g. Posener, *Première domination*, 153–59 (nos. 101–13); see also Wasmuth, *Reflexion und kulturelle Interaktion*, ch. 4.3.2.

41. Jerusalem, Bible Lands Museum, BLMJ 1979, unknown provenance, Darius I (year 36), Westenholz and Stolper, “Stone Jar,” 1–5, figs. 1–10; Paris, Louvre: AS 561, from Susa, Xerxes I (year 2), Posener, *Première domination*, 141 (no. 43); Paris, Louvre, no. 10512, from Susa, Xerxes I (year not preserved), Posener, *Première domination*, 142 (no. 48).

42. Neither can this later addition—if that is indeed the case—be dated (Westenholz and Stolper, “Stone Jar,” 11 argue for a potential dating under Xerxes I). Though it is possible, that the trilingual inscription was incised into a vessel of Darius I during



The majority of vessels, known in the names of Xerxes and Artaxerxes, are inscribed with a quadrilingual royal tag, which combines a Persian royal trilingue with a formally identical Egyptian “translation.” In the name of Artaxerxes (I–III), abbreviated versions are known:<sup>43</sup>

Old Persian:	RN xš <i>v-z-r-k</i>	>	RN xš
Elamite:	RN <sup>diš</sup> EŠŠANA <i>ir-šá-ir-ra</i>	>	RN <sup>diš</sup> EŠŠANA
Babylonian:	RN LUGAL GAL-ú	>	RN LUGAL
Egyptian:	RN <i>pr-‘3 p3-‘3</i>	>	RN <i>pr-‘3 (p3-‘3)</i>
Translation:	RN, Great King [Eg., pharaoh and Great King] <sup>44</sup>	>	RN, king [Eg., pharaoh (and Great King)]

## 2.2. The Titles *p3-‘3*, *pr-‘3*, and *pr-‘3 p3-‘3*

A translation and integration of the Persian royal titulary into Egyptian royal presentation is already known from Darius I, though not from vessels with royal tag. Based on the inscriptions on the dress folds of the statue of Darius (DSeg2) and the canal stelae (DZeg6), the following titles correspond to each other:<sup>45</sup>

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the reign of Xerxes I, there is no positive evidence for this. As most formations of Achaemenid expressions of royal display including the development of quadrilingual inscriptions (a trilingual cuneiform plus a hieroglyphic Egyptian inscription; see fig. 2) date from the reign of Darius I, such a post-dating does not seem necessary. For the argumentation of this contribution, it is of only minor importance when this transitional royal tag was developed—(late) in the reign of Darius I or very early in the reign of Xerxes I.

43. For a compilation of the evidence in the name of Artaxerxes see Schmitt, “Alabaster-Vase,” 198.

44. Not “the great pharaoh/king” as e.g. in Schmitt, “Alabaster-Vase,” 193, 195–97; see below §2.2.

45. The sigla for the Egyptian hieroglyphic inscriptions on the statue of Darius (DSeg1–5) and the canal stelae (DZeg1–6) were given by the author in her Ph.D. dissertation (see Wasmuth, *Reflexion und kulturelle Interaktion*, ch. 3.1), in analogy to the established sigla for the cuneiform inscriptions. The Old Persian text is cited from the re-edition of the inscription DSab on the statue of Darius by Schweiger, *Kritische Neuedition der achämenidischen Keilinschriften*, 2:461, 1:128–29.

<i>p3-ʿ3</i>	<i>p3 wr n n3 wrw</i>	<i>p3 ḥrj n p3 t3 [...]</i>	<i>[s3 n] ʿjt-ntr<sup>1</sup> w-š-t-s-p</i>	<i>j3ḥmjnš</i>
<i>xa-ša-a- ya- θa-i- ya : va- za- ra-ka</i>	<i>xa-ša-a- ya-θa-i- ya : xa- ša-a-ya- θa-i-ya- a-na-a- ma</i>	<i>xa-ša-a-ya-θa-i-ya : da-ha-ya-u-na-a-ma : xa-ša-a-ya-θa-i-ya : a-ha-ya-a-ya-a : ba-u- ma-i-ya-a : va-za-ra- ka-a-ya-a</i>	<i>vi-i-ša-ta-a-sa- pa-ha-ya-a : pu-u-ça</i>	<i>ha-xa- a-ma- na-i-ša- i-ya</i>
Great King	king of kings	king of countries, king on this great earth (Eg., master of the earth [in its entirety]*)	son of (Eg.: the god's father) Vištaspā	an Achaemenian

\* Reconstruction by Jean Yoyotte, "Les inscriptions hiéroglyphiques: Darius et l'Égypte," *JA* 260 (1972): 182.

*p3-ʿ3 p3 wr n n3 wrw p3 ḥrj n p3 t3 [... s3 n] jt-ntr w-š-t-s-p j3ḥmjnš* is the transposition of the demotic translation of the Achaemenid titulary into hieroglyphs.<sup>46</sup> Interestingly, the title "king of kings" is translated as *p3 wr n n3 wrw*. This is not only an indicator for the translation and transposition of the Persian titulary to hieroglyphic Egyptian via demotic, it also implies that Darius was not accorded the title *wr wrw* ("greatest of the great"), but that he was *wr* ("the foreign king/ruler"<sup>47</sup>) *n n3 wrw* ("of the foreign kings/rulers"). The next two titles are not well enough preserved to judge how Egyptian standard phraseology is adapted. Yet, it is once again striking that the title "king of countries" is not expressed by the royal title *nb t3w* (*nbw* [*tp t3 r-dr.f*]), but by the phrase *ḥrj n ...*, which was not part of the specifically royal formula. On the other hand, Darius's father is accorded an Egyptian title without counterpart in the cuneiform trilingual inscription: *jt-ntr w-š-t-s-p* ("god's father").<sup>48</sup> The effort seems

46. Yoyotte, "Inscriptions hiéroglyphiques," 181–82.

47. *Wb* I 329.15–16

48. The titulary element *jt-ntr* PN ("god's father PN") is not preserved on any of the canal stelae and only partially so on the statue of Darius, providing no evidence for examining the relevance of this difference between the Egyptian and the Persian title. It may have been inserted to express that Vištaspā/Hystaspes was not king, though father of one; for this use of the title see Labib Habachi, "Gottesvater," *LÄ* 2:825–26.

to have been to produce a generic Egyptian version of the Achaemenid titulary, not so much a one-to-one translation of the cuneiform text, and certainly not to match existing royal titles from both cultural traditions as closely as possible.

For the context of the royal tags, the different wording of the translations of  $X\check{S}$  (“king”) is of special interest: on the monuments erected in Egypt, which iconographically and textually present Darius I in his double role as Egyptian pharaoh and Persian Great King, the title  $X\check{S}$   $v\text{-}z\text{-}r\text{-}k$  (“Great King”) is translated as  $p3\text{-}'3$  (“the great”),<sup>49</sup> while  $X\check{S}$  (“king”) is circumscribed e.g. as  $p3$   $wr$  (“the (foreign) king”) or as  $p3$   $h\check{r}j$  (“the master”). On two fragments from the canal stelae, which cannot be exactly positioned anymore and for which the context is therefore missing, the king is denoted as  $^{\text{r}}RN$  ( $^{\text{r}}nh$   $\underline{dt}$ )  $pr\text{-}'3$   $^{\text{r}}nh$   $\underline{wd}3$   $snb^1$  (“RN (may he live eternally), the pharaoh, life! health! prosperity!”).<sup>50</sup> The integration into the Egyptian titulary formula suggests that  $pr\text{-}'3$  implies the specific role as pharaoh,  $p3\text{-}'3$  his role as Great King.

Following the evidence on the monuments presenting Darius as Egypto-Persian ruler, it is likely that also on the vessels with “royal tag”  $p3\text{-}'3$  refers to the Great King, while  $pr\text{-}'3$  (“Great House = king”<sup>51</sup>) denotes his role as Egyptian pharaoh.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, I propose to read the structurally analogous Egyptian “translation” of the cuneiform trilingual inscription on the vessels in the names of Xerxes I and Artaxerxes I ( $RN$ ) |  $pr\text{-}'3$   $p3\text{-}'3$  as “RN, pharaoh and Great King.” The short version of Artaxerxes (I–III) probably combines this specification of the Egyptian long version as “(Persian) king and (Egyptian) pharaoh” ( $X\check{S}$  /  $pr\text{-}'3$ ).<sup>53</sup>

49. Not only within the full titulary sequence: see, e.g.,  $p3\text{-}'3$   $s3.s$   $pw$  (“The Great King is her [= Neith’s] son”) on the Maskhuta stela, line 5; Posener, *Première Domination*, 55, 59, pl. IV; Wasmuth, *Reflexion und kulturelle Interaktion*, chs. 3.2.5, 3.6.2.

50. Posener, *Première Domination*, 79, fragments 35 and 36.

51. *Wb* I 516.

52. With regard to the linguistic evidence from Egypt, it is unlikely that the titulary  $pr\text{-}'3$   $p3\text{-}'3$  on the vessels from the reigns of Xerxes I and Artaxerxes I is a direct translation of the Persian text (“king + great” ||  $X\check{S}$  +  $v\text{-}z\text{-}r\text{-}k$  ||  $pr\text{-}'3$   $p3\text{-}'3$ ): though  $pr\text{-}'3$  was occasionally used as part of the royal titulary from the Third Intermediate Period onwards, it replaces  $nsw\text{-}b\check{t}j$  or  $nsw$  as general reference for the Egyptian king only during the Ptolemaic Period, and only in Coptic is IIPPO (<  $pr\text{-}'3$ ) used for Egyptian as well as foreign kings (Blöbaum, *Herrscherlegitimation*, 33; Beckerath, *Königsnamen*, 31).

53. The interpretation of the short version of the “royal tag” in the name of Artax-

### 2.3. The Sociopolitical Context

The multilingual royal tags define the vessels as commodities circulated via official, royal distribution. The high find concentration in Susa indicates a primary designation of supplying the royal court with luxury items. In this context, the continued use of vessels with monolingual Egyptian inscriptions is immediately understandable in the context of direct contact between the province (Egypt) and the court.

Apart from Susa, vessels with “royal tags” are known from archaeological contexts in Persepolis (Persia), Uruk (Babylonia), Sepphoris (Galilee), Halikarnassos (Caria), around Orsk (land of the Saka; at the influx of the Or into the Ural River), and supposedly from Babylon, Syria, Bactria and Egypt.<sup>54</sup> Three scenarios affecting this widespread distribution of the “vessels with royal tags” seem probable:<sup>55</sup>

- (1) The distribution may be due to a primarily one-directional transfer from the king to honored subjects who were awarded these precious royal stone vessels (and their contents); such a scenario

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erxes is more open to interpretation due to its scarce and problematic evidence (see Schmitt, “Alabaster-Vase,” 195–99): Most of the vessels cannot be securely ascribed to a specific Artaxerxes and six of the eleven vessels in the name of Artaxerxes are not well enough preserved to show which text combination was inscribed. The other five show three times “king / pharaoh” ( $X\dot{S} / pr\text{-}ʿ3$ ), once “king and pharaoh+Great King” ( $X\dot{S} / pr\text{-}ʿ3 p3\text{-}ʿ3$ ) and once “Great King and pharaoh” ( $X\dot{S} v\text{-}z\text{-}r\text{-}k / pr\text{-}ʿ3$ ). Two motivations behind the short formally identical versions seem likely: 1)  $X\dot{S} / pr\text{-}ʿ3$  (“king and pharaoh”) was the short version to express “(Persian) king and (Egyptian) pharaoh” or 2) against the current state of research and known evidence  $pr\text{-}ʿ3$  was already used in the Achaemenid Period to denote Egyptian and foreign kings—or at least accepted foreign rulers over Egypt. The deviations in form of the Persian and Egyptian texts may be due to a transitional state in the development.

54. Schmitt, “Alabaster-Vase,” 191; Westenholz and Stolper, “Stone Jar,” 6–7.

55. In the context of the sociocultural setting of the vessels, the observation is of interest that not only the Egyptian measure of capacity *hin* was used (and sometimes inscribed) for them (Posener, *Première domination*, 147, 151; Robert K. Ritner, “The Earliest Attestation of the *kpd*-Measure,” in *Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson* 2 [ed. P. Der Manuelian; Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1996], 687), but that there is also evidence for the use of the Persian measure of capacity *kapica* = demotic *kpd* (Ritner, “Measure,” 685–88). This is an additional indication for the change of purpose from being originally Egyptian vessels in service of the Persian Empire to becoming (Egypto-)Persian commodities.

would easily explain the decision to add a trilingual inscription in the official languages.

- (2) Equally likely and closely related to the aforementioned scenario is the distribution to members of the elite in the provinces, not as a personal honor, but in their role as royal officials—to be used in their “private” life or as part of their official (e.g. representational) duties.
- (3) A different scenario explains the wide distribution of the vessels by the members of the elite across the empire—to provision themselves with precious/costly salves or liquids. In this context the “royal tag” could be explained by a royal monopoly on the specific contents or their (routes of) transportation.

Though the way of circulation cannot be ascertained, the distribution of these vessels with royal tag, combining a cuneiform trilingual with an Egyptian royal inscription, sent a clear message: deliberately or incidentally, the vessels demonstrated a special status, both for Egypt as provider of such precious commodities and for the Egyptian language, advertised as additional official language.

### 3. ARTAXERXES III AS LORD OVER THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN REGION

An important complex of artifacts testifying to the visual display of Egypto-Persian relations are the coins depicting Artaxerxes III (359–338 B.C.E., king over Egypt since 343 B.C.E.) in Persian court dress and Egyptian double crown. The most significant object in this corpus is the *stater* found at Susa in the palace of Darius together with a Phoenician *octodrachma* during the archaeological excavations in 1927–1928. Allotte de la Fuÿe presented the object in 1928 and contextualized it within a corpus of three nearly identical coins already published in 1910 by Babelon,<sup>56</sup> but it did not enter further scientific discussion on the Achaemenid Empire. In 1993, three of these coins—nowadays in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France—were included in the *Sylloge nummorum graecorum: Paris–Cilicie* within a bigger corpus showing the enthroned ruler in Persian court

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56. François Maurice Allotte de la Fuÿe, “Monnaies recueillies à Suse en 1927–1928,” *MDP* 20 (1928): 65–74; Ernest Babelon, *Traité des monnaies grecques et romaines* II.2 (Paris: Leroux, 1910), no 734 (2 coins) and no 735.

dress.<sup>57</sup> Yet, the remarks of Allotte de la Fuÿe, who identified the headgear as the Egyptian double crown, have been ignored and the crown is described as a Persian tiara without further comment. The groundbreaking essay by Newell identifying Myriandros as a mint, on the other hand, has been considered and confirmed.<sup>58</sup>

The group of *staters* compiled by Allotte de la Fuÿe demonstrates that the integration of the two incompatible roles of Great King and pharaoh—both claim absolute rulership—into a single display of Egypto-Persian kingship, developed under Darius I for an Egyptian context (see §2 above), took on a life of its own in the later Achaemenid Empire and outside the original core area. The visual strategy of representing the double role—or even multiple roles—of the ruler by combining elements of the respective cultural traditions into the display was remembered and transformed to match the contemporary political situation: the re-conquest of Egypt under Artaxerxes III.

### 3.1. The Evidence

The key piece of evidence is the silver *stater* of Artaxerxes III found at Susa (see fig. 4).<sup>59</sup> The obverse depicts the enthroned ruler looking to the right within a circle, which circumscribes about 5/6 of the coin. Behind the throne, following the circle and to be read from top to bottom, B'LTRZ (Ba'al-Tarsos—"Lord of Tarsos") is written in Aramaic. As Allotte de la Fuÿe convincingly argued, this is an epithet of the Persian Great King evoking divine kingship by associating him with the city god of Tarsos.<sup>60</sup> As in the Achaemenid audience scenes, the ruler sits on an elaborate throne and holds a lotus flower in his right hand. But unlike the straight-backed thrones of the Persepolis reliefs, the *stater* shows a throne with curled back, often seen on objects from the Levant.<sup>61</sup> The ruler himself wears a Persian

57. Eduardo Levante, *Cabinet des Médailles: Cilicie* (SNG: France 2; Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale; Zurich: Numismatica Ars Classica, 1993), SNG 422–429, especially SNG 422–424.

58. Edward T. Newell, "Myriandros—Alexandria kat'Isson," *AJN* 53 (1919): 1–42, pls. I–II.

59. It measures 23mm in diameter and weighs 10.35g according to Allotte de la Fuÿe, "Monnaies," 71–72; 10.40g according to Levante, *Cilicie*, pl. 16 SNG 422.

60. Allotte de la Fuÿe, "Monnaies," 66, especially note 1.

61. Cf. the Phoenician stamp seals of the sixth–fourth century B.C.E. (Astrid Nunn, *Der figürliche Motivschatz Phöniziens, Syriens und Transjordaniens vom 6. bis*



Figure 4: *Stater* of Artaxerxes III from Susa. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, SNG Cilicie 422. Line drawing by Melanie Wasmuth, based on Levante, *Cilicie*, pl. 16 SNG 422.

court dress, the hair bound back into a bun, a beard and a headdress, which cannot be identified with any of the Achaemenid headdresses. As Allotte de la Fuÿe demonstrated in 1928, the headdress is an Egyptian double crown. Much closer parallels than the Ptolemaic depictions mentioned by him can be found in the Phoenician cultural tradition, especially on scaraboids and the figurative ivories from the Levant as found, for instance, in Nimrud. They provide exceptionally good parallels for the flat, angular form of the Red Crown.<sup>62</sup> Due to the size of the *stater*—the crown is not even 3mm high—one cannot discern whether the crown lacks a frontal spiral or whether it is rudimentarily depicted.<sup>63</sup> In addition to the form of the crown, the vertical posture of the staff may be due to Levantine influence: in the

zum 4. Jahrhundert v. Chr. [OBO SA 18; Fribourg: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000], pl. 44; at least fig. 22 is from known archaeological context in Byblos). Similar thrones are depicted on the coinage from Samaria (e.g. Hoard of Nablus IGCH 1504; London, British Museum, Department of Coins and Medals, CGR82907 & CGR82910; <http://www.museum-achemenet.college-de-france.fr/>).

62. E.g., Herrmann et al., *Published Ivories*, 18 (S0154), 24 (S0231), 76 (S0953-56), 80 (S1018), 81 (S1032, S1034-35), 82 (S1040-50), 83 (S1052-55), *passim*.

63. For Phoenician ivories showing double crowns without spiral see Herrmann et al., *Published Ivories*, 24 (S0231), 80 (S1018), 81 (S1032, S1034-35), 82 (S1040-50), *passim*; for depictions of the for Egypt canonical spiral *ibid.*, 18 (S0154), 25 (S0247-48), 76 (S0953-56), *passim*.



Persian reliefs (e.g. the audience scenes) the staff is slanted. The design of the staff on the *stater* may point to Cilicia in view of the close parallels with the coins of the satraps Mazaios and Balakros depicting B'LTRZ with a similar staff crowned with a lotus flower—possibly deriving from the local dynastic insignia.<sup>64</sup> Further indications of Cilician elements on the *stater* from Susa are the epithet B'LTRZ (Ba'al-Tarsos—"Lord of Tarsos") and the Aramaic *mim* pointing to Myriandros at the Gulf of Issos as place of the actual mint.<sup>65</sup>

The backside of the *stater* depicts a crouched lion looking to the left beneath a bow with a hardly visible bowstring. Whether the posture of the lion is influenced by Egyptian art<sup>66</sup> is difficult to decide, but cannot be ruled out in view of the depiction of the double crown on the obverse. In combination with the bow—the Persian royal weapon *par excellence*—the lion symbolizes the king himself.<sup>67</sup>

As pointed out by Allotte de la Fuÿe, several close parallels to the *stater* of Artaxerxes III from Susa are known, all of unknown provenance; as they came into circulation prior to the Susa coin, it is unlikely they are fakes. The nearly identical *stater* in the Collection Jameson<sup>68</sup> probably derives from the same embossing die. The same holds true for the second pair of *staters*, which differ from the Susa one by presenting the inscription laterally reversed.<sup>69</sup> Close parallels to the obverse are known from several

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64. Cf. Levante, *Cilicie*, SNG 312–371.

65. Allotte de la Fuÿe, "Monnaies," 73, following Newell, "Myriandros," 16, 21–29; see also below §3.2 and especially note 71.

66. Allotte de la Fuÿe, "Monnaies," 69.

67. See already Allotte de la Fuÿe, "Monnaies," 71, who brings up and rejects an interpretation of the seated figure as depicting the satrap in charge of the mint.

68. Babelon, *Traité*, 735, pl. 114 fig. 6; Newell, "Myriandros," 16; not included in Levante, *Cilicie*. The silver *stater* weighs 10.30g.

69. *Stater* in the Collection Waddington: Babelon, *Traité*, 734, pl. 114 fig. 5; Newell, "Myriandros," 16; Levante, *Cilicie*, SNG 423; 10.62g. *Stater* in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France: Babelon, *Traité*, 734, without illustration; Newell, "Myriandros," 16; Levante 1993: SNG 424; 10.30g. Allotte de la Fuÿe also includes a hemi-obolos into the corpus of depictions with Egyptian double crown, dating to about 325 B.C.E. (Babelon, *Traité*, 764, 483, pl. 115 fig. 8; Allotte de la Fuÿe, "Monnaies," 66). On the basis of the state of preservation and publication, I can neither verify nor negate this identification. Therefore, I exclude it from my further analysis, though it would be an attractive piece of evidence for the depiction of the Egyptian double crown on a different type of coin and combined with a different depiction (a prowling lion under a bundle of thunderbolts) on the back-face.

types of coins showing the ruler with Persian tiara, but featuring different back-faces.<sup>70</sup>

The specific back-face with bow and crouching lion is only attested in combination with the enthroned ruler with double crown on the obverse and vice versa, and only on one specific type of coin—silver *staters* weighing approx. 10.50g. The special embossing shows on the obverse the ruler in Persian court dress, sitting on a Phoenician throne with curled back-rest holding a Cilician dynastic staff and a lotus flower (an element of Persian royal display) and wearing an Egyptian double crown—in short, the Persian Great King displayed as ruler of the whole Eastern Mediterranean coastal region. On the back-face, the ruler is embodied by symbols: the bow and the crouching lion, which deliberately or incidentally can be associated with Egyptian kingship via the display of pharaoh as crouching sphinx.

### 3.2. The Sociopolitical Context

The mint of these *staters* showing Artaxerxes III in Persian court dress and Egyptian double crown enthroned on a Levantine throne and holding a Cilician staff probably dates to the time right after the reconquest of Egypt in 343 B.C.E. Though the primary sources do not allow one to decide whether the eastern gulf of Issos was part of the Cilician or Transeuphratian sphere of influence and administration, the coins minted under Mazaïos in Myriandros can be dated to his period of office as satrap of Cilicia and Transeuphratia.<sup>71</sup> There is also no direct positive evidence for

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70. E.g. Levante, *Cilicie*, pl. 16: SNG 425 (striding lion) or SNG 426 and probably SNG 427 (lion kills a bull), SNG 429/428 (head; commentary 428 belongs to illustration 429).

71. See e.g. Fritz Moritz Heichelheim, "Geschichte Syriens und Palaestinas von der Eroberung durch Kyros II. bis zur Besitznahme durch den Islam (539 v. Chr.–641/2 n. Chr.)," in *Orientalische Geschichte von Kyros bis Mohammed*. (ed. A. Dietrich, G. Widengren, and F. M. Heichelheim; HdO 1.2; Leiden: Brill, 1966), 106. For a detailed discussion see Newell, "Myriandros," 16, 21–29. His core arguments are as follows: the coins were not minted in Tarsos, the satrapal seat of Mazaïos, for iconographical and stylistic reasons (21–22). No other Cilician mint is likely: there is no evidence for satrapal minting in western Cilicia, the mints of Mallos and Issos in eastern Cilicia were not in use any more, and the mint of Soloi was autonomous and therefore not likely to mint satrapal coinage for Mazaïos of Tarsos (22). Several coins from Tarsos testify that Mazaïos was satrap of Cilicia and Transeuphratia by ca. 350 B.C.E. (23).

fixing the exact date of the promotion of Mazaïos from satrap of Cilicia to satrap of the joint area.<sup>72</sup> Yet sociopolitically, Arrian's ascription of this advancement as reward for Mazaïos's merits in the campaign leading to the reconquest of Egypt in 343 B.C.E. makes eminent sense.<sup>73</sup>

The reconquest of Egypt is also the period in history when such an iconographical display of the ruler would have had the highest possible impact—especially considering the fact that, apart from the vessels with “royal tag” and the *staters* of Artaxerxes III, overt presentations of Egyptian aspects of Persian kingship are limited to the reign of Darius I. It is to be assumed that the special embossing under Artaxerxes III (as had been the case under Darius I) was not primarily designed as currency, but for its political message: to circulate the royal image and its associations.<sup>74</sup>

Accordingly, the *staters* depicting Artaxerxes III in Persian court dress and Egyptian double crown enthroned on a Levantine throne and holding a Cilician staff were probably minted in order to circulate the important message of the reconquest of Egypt in the rebellious areas having supported the former Egyptian king Nectanebos II. The break of Levantine opposition was finalized by the inclusion of Trans-Euphrates into the domain of

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The embossing of a Transeuphratian coinage of Mazaïos seems likely (23–24). For historical and/or iconographical reasons, the mints of Bambyke and Aleppo are out of the question (24). The strategically most important town in fourth century northern Syria, both for military and trade purposes, was Myriandros (25–26). Several coins of the same mint depict waves or mountains which indicates a location between the mountains and the sea, like Myriandros (26). Furthermore, evidence of Cilician and Cypriote influence points to Myriandros (27). Additionally, the corpus of coins often shows an Aramaic *mim* under or next to the throne; this cannot designate Mazaïos who is explicitly mentioned on some of these coins. It probably indicates Myriandros as place of minting similarly to the Greek initials for the mints of Issos, Mallos and Soloi (Allotte de la Fuÿe, “Monnaies,” 73). The actual location of ancient Myriandros is still unknown (Mustafa H. Sayar and Karlheinz Kessler, “Myriandros,” *Der Neue Pauly* 8:595), though it was situated in the area of modern-day Iskenderun at the Gulf of Issos—the crossing point of the travel routes from the Gulf of Issos via the Amanian Gate to the Euphrates and from Syria via the Cilician Gates to Cilicia (Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire* [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2002], 383).

72. Newell, “Myriandros,” 23.

73. See e.g. Weiskopf, “Cilicia.” Allotte de la Fuÿe, “Monnaies,” 69 already proposed that it was this event which occasioned the design of the *stater* found in Susa.

74. Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 409.

Mazaïos's satrapy and by the enduring documentation of the reinclusion of Egypt into the Persian Empire on the commemorative coins.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

To sum up, what can be observed for Darius I is a deliberate integration of Egyptian elements into Achaemenid royal representation in order to promote the perdurability of Persian kingship, thereby instigating a political memory of kingship display. Due to the specific objectives and audiences, the strategies used for royal visual presentation were different for Persia and Egypt. In Egypt, the monumental artifacts displaying Darius I and his rule depict his *a priori* incompatible double role as Egyptian pharaoh and Persian Great King. Depending on the degree of visibility and expected multi-faceted knowledge of the reader/observer, Persian and Egyptian iconographic and textual symbolism was interconnected in different ways:

- in addition to each other (as can be witnessed on the Egyptian versus Persian faces of the canal stelae)
- in combination, thereby adapting the elements to be similarly readable within both, the Egyptian and the Persian, and often also the Mesopotamian cultural traditions (most prominently in the statue of Darius)
- and by evoking associations of royal or divine concepts of rulership (e.g. Darius as falcon on the facade and main gateway of the contemporary temple of Hibis, on the stela of Padiusirpare, and as Nile god on bronze fittings from Karnak).

In Persia, Egyptian elements were integrated in two different spheres with complementary messages:

- The strategies of incorporating Egyptian elements into the architectural and representational setting of the court argue for a display of the Great King as ruler over the entire world including Egypt. As for the most prominent Egyptianizing element, the use of torus roll and cavetto cornice for gates and windows in several buildings at Persepolis, the form was taken over more or less true in detail, but not the content. This indicates that in Persian court display, the aim was to show cultural diversity and thereby the

scope of the realm. The different elements seem to be chosen to promote loyalty by stressing the power and legitimacy of the Great King and his empire on an emotional rather than a rational level. They evoke pride as well as humility; pride in the choice of having elements of one's own cultural tradition included into the representational framework of the Great King in his heartland and core of empire; humbleness due to the display of overwhelming power expressed by the diversity of the represented cultural traditions.<sup>75</sup>

- In addition to the use of Egyptian(izing) elements within the palace architecture, Egyptian concepts of royal display can be witnessed in the actual presentation of the ruler: though the form is Persian, the content—the eternal display of the ruler in an architecturally framed and elevated position—is probably taken from Egypt. Regarding Darius's life and his ambition that the Persian kingship should endure forever, Egyptian elements held probably two major attractions: the personal reminder that Darius owed his rulership to the campaign which successfully integrated Egypt into the Achaemenid Empire and bereft the empire of its former king. Next to this personal element, the perdurability of the Egyptian kingdom, which is reflected in the Egyptian kingship conceptions as well as the iconography, were probably highly attractive.

While the Egypto-Persian iconography of Darius I thus demonstrates the instigation of a political memory of kingship display, the vessels with “royal tags,” and especially the development of a quadrilingual tag in the name of Artaxerxes (I–III), allow a glimpse into the procedure of promoting such a political memory: the incorporation of Egyptian kingship concepts into an integral Egypto-Persian kingship under Darius I is taken up and developed within the contemporary socio-political setting. Though the means for their distribution are open to discussion, the circulation of the vessels enhanced by quadrilingual royal tags proclaim a special status for Egypt because of her precious commodities: the containers and their contents. In addition, by being included into the tag that circulated with the vessels, the Egyptian language could be perceived, or was even pro-

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75. The discussion on the “correct” identification of the derivation of the elements is irrelevant in this context. The system would work alike, if, e.g., the crown of the “genius” at Pasargadae or the cavetto cornices were associated primarily with the Levant or with Egypt.

moted, as an official language equal to those traditionally combined in the cuneiform trilingual inscription.

Under Artaxerxes III, the deliberate activation of the political memory of an Egypto-Persian kingship display for contemporary political purposes can be witnessed: a special embossing that depicts Artaxerxes III sitting on a Phoenician/Levantine throne, holding a Cilician dynastic staff and the Persian lotus flower, wearing the Persian court dress and an Egyptian double crown is created in order to circulate the message of the re-incorporation of Egypt into the realm, thereby proclaiming Artaxerxes III lord over the entire East Mediterranean region. The combination of the different strategies and motivations for displaying the ruler and his realm developed under Darius I for Egypt and for Persia—the presentation of the double role as Persian Great King and Egyptian pharaoh and of the cultural diversity of the realm—argues for a deliberate activation of this political memory of visual kingship display for contemporary political needs and aims in the mid-fourth century B.C.E. This drawing on both strategies was probably facilitated by the visibility of the royal statue of Darius I, which was originally produced for an Egyptian location, in the palatial context of Susa.

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## CONFLICTING LOYALTIES: KING AND CONTEXT IN THE ARAMAIC BOOK OF AHIQAR

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### INTRODUCTION

The Aramaic *Book of Ahiqar* (= TAD C1.1)<sup>1</sup> represents an intriguing piece of literary evidence from the Achaemenid period. The papyri which contain the text were recovered from excavations at Elephantine, a long-inhabited island in southern Egypt located across from Syene (modern day Aswan).<sup>2</sup> *Ahiqar* was found among a number of other Aramaic texts, most of which belonged to a community of self-identified Judeans,<sup>3</sup> who were

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1. References to *Ahiqar* and other Aramaic texts from Elephantine are from the four-volume edition by Bezalel Porten and Ada Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt* (= TAD A–D).

2. The texts discovered there—mostly from German and French excavations at the beginning of the twentieth century—span a long period of time and a variety of languages, from Hieratic texts as far back as 2000 B.C.E. to Arabic ones from the early seventh century C.E. For a collection of translations of various texts from Elephantine in Hieratic, Demotic, Aramaic, Greek, Coptic, and Latin, see Bezalel Porten, *The Elephantine Papyri in English: Three Millennia of Cross-Cultural Continuity and Change* (2nd ed.; DMOA 22; Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011).

3. The community is often referred to in scholarship as a “Jewish” community. The Aramaic term is יהודאי (A). There is some debate on whether “Jew(ish)” is the appropriate translation, since the term seems to be properly geographic, i.e., they identify themselves as people who originated from Yehud/Judah—indeed, some of the papyri attest to a continued relationship with people from their homeland (e.g. TAD A4.8). For this reason I prefer to use the term “Judean” though many scholars have opted for “Jewish.” On this issue and the religious and social characteristics of the community at Elephantine, see Bezalel Porten, *Archives from Elephantine: The Life of an Ancient Jewish Military Colony* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1968), whose work is still the starting point for investigation into the life of this community; and for

operating as mercenaries for the Persian Empire. The Aramaic texts date from the very late sixth century B.C.E. until the beginning of the fourth century B.C.E. Moreover, the *Ahiqar* papyrus itself—while disjointed, fragmentary, and incomplete—is a palimpsest, and the dates found on the erased customs account underneath *Ahiqar* allow for an approximate date to the latter part of the fifth century B.C.E.<sup>4</sup>

Yet despite the near exactness with which we can both date and locate the Aramaic *Ahiqar* text, as well as having a general understanding of its presumed reading audience, there have been almost no studies of how the text may have functioned in its Elephantine setting. Indeed, hardly any scholar has attempted to read the social and ethical aspects of the text in light of the Achaemenid-controlled Egyptian context.<sup>5</sup>

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more recent studies, Karel van der Toorn, “Anat-Yahu, Some Other Deities, and the Jews of Elephantine” *Numen* 39 (1992): 80–101, and Bob Becking, “Yehudite Identity in Elephantine,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context*. (ed. O. Lipschits et al.; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 403–19.

4. See Ada Yardeni, “Maritime Trade and Royal Accountancy in an Erased Customs Account from 475 B.C.E. on the *Ahiqar* Scroll from Elephantine,” *BASOR* 293 (1994): 67–78.

5. Instead, the focus here has largely been on the textual and/or philological issues, such as dialect, in order to determine the presumed “original” dating and provenance of *Ahiqar*. These issues will be addressed in brief below. Aside from the *Ahiqar*-centered scholarship, there are numerous studies of wisdom literature from the ancient Near East, particularly the Hebrew Bible, which give attention to *Ahiqar*. Much of *Ahiqar* scholarship that appears in biblical studies is comprised of these identifications of parallels in form and content to biblical and Jewish wisdom literature, especially Proverbs, though often without much further consideration. Hence, the frequent, though generally brief, appearance of summaries and/or excerpts of *Ahiqar* can be found in introductory books on Old Testament wisdom literature (e.g. James L. Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction* [3rd edition; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010], 267–69; Roland E. Murphy, *The Tree of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature* [New York: Doubleday, 1990], 158–59; Max Küchler, *Frühjüdische Weisheitstraditionen: Zum Fortgang weisheitlichen Denkens im Bereich des frühjüdischen Jahweglaubens* [Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1979], 319–411), and in introductions to commentaries on Proverbs (e.g., William McKane, *Proverbs: A New Approach* [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970], 156–82; Michael Fox, *Proverbs 10–31* [AB 18b; New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009], 767–69). The narrative portion of *Ahiqar* has also frequently come up in conversations about Jewish court tales genre, and thus is often cited in studies of similar stories of Joseph, Daniel, Esther, et al; see, e.g., Lawrence M. Wills, *The Jew in the Court of the Foreign King*:



The present study seeks to correct this imbalance and offer a reading of the *Book of Ahiqar* in light of its Elephantine setting. In doing so, I will focus on one aspect that has significance both in the text itself and for the theme of this volume: the image of the king.

I argue that, on the one hand, the narrative and sayings in *Ahiqar* demonstrate an ethic of obedience, even admiration, toward the king. Weighed against the political backdrop of Achaemenid-controlled Egypt in the fifth century B.C.E., this presentation of the king suggests a state-sanctioned document, or at least one strongly influenced by a propagandistic imperial agenda. In the Elephantine setting, this view has some support given that an Aramaic copy of the Bisitun inscription (TAD C2.1) was also found among the documents there. On the other hand, a closer analysis of the narrative and sayings makes evident another, more despondent, layer of the text, one that conveys a pronounced anxiety about life around the king, and thus offers some counterbalance to the otherwise positive estimation of the royal institution.

Before turning to the *Ahiqar* text directly, it is prudent to evaluate the appropriate literary and historical contexts of the Elephantine *Ahiqar*, which, in turn, should inform our reading of the text. The first two sections, therefore, will address a couple of issues: first, to consider similar texts both generically and chronologically in effort to reconcile the Assyrian setting of the narrative with a Persian-period reception; and secondly, to paint a basic picture of the significant political issues during the fifth century B.C.E. to which *Ahiqar*'s Elephantine audience would have been attuned.

#### READING PAST INTO THE PRESENT:

#### NARRATIVE, MEMORY, AND THE LITERARY CONTEXT OF AHIQAR

The narrative of *Ahiqar* is set during the reign of two kings, Sennacherib and his son Esarhaddon, who are both characters in the story. Both are prominent kings of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, which dominated Mesopotamia and Syro-Palestine during the eighth and seventh centuries

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*Ancient Jewish Court Legends* (Harvard Dissertations in Religion 26; Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 1990), and Susan Niditch and Robert Doran, "The Success Story of the Wise Courtier: A Formal Approach," *JBL* 96 (1977): 179–93. Because the Aramaic portion of the narrative is incomplete, many of the studies mentioned above rely heavily on the later versions, especially the Syriac, rather than the Aramaic.

B.C.E., even stretching their power to Egypt (however briefly). For much of *Ahiqar* scholarship, questions of historical context or historical relevance have focused on this Neo-Assyrian setting.<sup>6</sup> The issue is generally approached by asking how accurately or inaccurately the details reflect such a setting. Indeed, there are a number of elements that have been identified as suggesting an “authentic” Neo-Assyrian composition.<sup>7</sup> Yet,

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6. The narrative and sayings of *Ahiqar* have almost always been treated separately, so when it comes to the text’s view on kingship the narrative portions are disjointed from the sayings and never the twain have met. With the narrative, as I indicate here, most begin with a Neo-Assyrian setting. As for the sayings, however, it must be noted that wisdom instructions in general are notoriously difficult to locate in a particular context, and scholars are thus hesitant to make any direct claims. Nevertheless, Ingo Kottsieper, a prominent *Ahiqar* scholar, has argued that many of the sayings reflect what he has found to be a much older dialect of Aramaic dating back to the seventh or even eighth centuries B.C.E. The sayings dealing with the king, therefore, must refer to a time when local Syrian kings had power; see, for example, Kottsieper, “Die Geschichte und die Sprüche des weisen Ahiqar,” in *Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments* (ed. O. Kaiser; vol. 3.2; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1991), 320–47, and “The Aramaic Tradition: Ahikar,” in *Scribes, Sages, and Seers: the Sage in the Eastern Mediterranean World* (ed. L. Purdue; Göttingen: Hubert, 2008), 109–24. Such a view can hardly be proven and leaves us with a very vague understanding of the historical context in which to interpret the text, especially when compared with the specific setting at Elephantine. More importantly, it offers nothing by way of how the text might have functioned at Elephantine or at any time later; to say, as he does, that they were simply maintained as remnants of an old tradition is an insufficient explanation, for it would then have no meaning whatsoever to the reading audience.

7. Some of the major points, for example, are: the correct spelling of the names of the kings and Nabusumiskun; the narrative and the sayings both consider the king as “merciful,” which was a familiar epithet of that king according to some Akkadian sources; and finally by reference to the Warka (Uruk) king list which, though dating to the Seleucid area, includes a certain Aba-Enlil-dari who was also called “Ahuqar” as the *ummānu* to Esarhaddon. None of these are convincing, in my mind, for establishing a Neo-Assyrian date. The less well-known name Nabusumiskun (unlike famous king names) is attested among the papyri at Elephantine as a resident there. Esarhaddon’s fame, as we will see, continued well past the Neo-Assyrian period. The Warka list only testifies that a tradition about Ahiqar was known to a much later (specifically, Seleucid in the early second century B.C.E.) Mesopotamian community. On these factors as indicators of historical setting see, for example, James Lindenberger, “Ahiqar,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (ed. J. Charlesworth; 2 vols.; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1985), 2:479–507, esp. 480–83; for a well-argued counterview see Michael Chyutin, *Tendentious Hagiographies: Jewish Propagandist Fiction BCE* (LSTS; London: T&T Clark, 2011), 26–34. For a study that takes the Uruk tablet as fact, see: Stepha-

even if these studies are correct in locating the “original” composition to a Neo-Assyrian context, this does little to explain how the text might have functioned for the community at Elephantine. We are still left with the question of what significance these kings might have had on the reading audience at Elephantine.

A better approach comes by being attentive to memory studies, especially in comparison with texts similar to *Ahiqar* in both Judean and Egyptian literary traditions. In an introductory essay to a volume focused on social memory as it applies to biblical studies, Diana Edelman makes the following statement:

The point of applying memory studies to reading the texts of the Hebrew Bible is not to discern how accurately or inaccurately events have been portrayed, interpreted, or remembered. Rather, it is to explore how the books contributed to the shaping of social memory of those of Judean descent or affiliation who self-identified as members of the religious community of Israel.<sup>8</sup>

The issue, then, is one of cultural memory, not historical fact. Edelman goes on to argue that:

[Cultural memory] involves shared templates and “mind maps” by which group members recall people and events of the past that have been valued by and infused with symbolic meaning by a particular group, providing a sense of common identity ... put simply, social memory “identifies a group, giving it a sense of its past and defining its aspirations for the future,” usually by giving voice to collective experience.<sup>9</sup>

To give a more concrete example—and one that is particularly appropriate for *Ahiqar*—we might consider the contribution in the same volume

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nie Dalley, “Assyrian Court Narratives in Aramaic and Egyptian: Historical Fiction,” in *Historiography in the Cuneiform World: Proceedings of the XLVe Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* (ed. T. Abusch et al.; vol. 1; Bethesda, Md.: CDL Press, 2001), 149–61; for a more balanced approach, see John Strugnell, “Problems in the Development of the *Ahiqar* Tale,” in *Frank More Cross Volume* (ed. B. Levine et al; *Eretz-Israel* 26; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1999), 204–11.

8. Diana V. Edelman, “Introduction,” in *Remembering Biblical Figures in the Late Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods: Social Memory and Imagination* (ed. D. V. Edelman and E. Ben Zvi; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), xi–xxiv (xix).

9. *Ibid.*, xi.

by Russell Hobson which explores the various texts describing Sennacherib's invasion (2 Kgs 18–19; Isa 36–37; 2 Chr 32) using a methodology informed by cultural memory.<sup>10</sup> Hobson argues that Sennacherib occupies a multivalent role in the cultural memory of the Jews during the late sixth century B.C.E. of both instrument of Yahweh and symbol of oppressive foreign power. Memories of Sennacherib contained in these passages recalled the Exodus event, an especially prevalent element in their memory at that time, with the result that “the figure of Sennacherib brought into focus the struggle for identity that engaged the Yehud group.”<sup>11</sup>

These studies demonstrate that recourse to past figures is not necessarily about the figures themselves but how they function in (i.e., are remembered by) a community. Significant persons, peoples, or events from an audience's past carry a specific set of symbolic values for the receiving audience. Judith is a good example of this. The text begins by identifying Nebuchadnezzar as the king of the Assyrians who reigned in Nineveh. Despite the gross inaccuracy—to the point that some have suggested it was intentional—for the Seleucid-era audience of Judith, mention of the “Assyrians” still had an operative value as a symbol of an ancient oppressive power that invaded Judah.<sup>12</sup> The same, of course, can be said for the figure of Nebuchadnezzar, and thus their connection makes sense on a certain level.

A similar approach can be applied to *Ahiqar*. As Stephanie West reminds us, “to the Jews at Elephantine, the Assyrian empire was part of their history, part of their cultural memory, and thus the story's setting meaningful.”<sup>13</sup> Yet, we ought not to see the references to Sennacherib and Esarhaddon as “historical” in the sense that the text is trying to convey

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10. Russell Hobson, “The Memory of Sennacherib in Late Persian Yehud,” in *Remembering Biblical Figures in the Late Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods: Social Memory and Imagination* (ed. D. V. Edelman and E. Ben Zvi; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 199–220.

11. *Ibid.*, 220.

12. There is still some debate about the date of the book of Judith, but most assume a Seleucid or, more specifically, a Hasmonean one, though some still suggest Persian. For a brief overview and bibliography on Judith, including issues of dating and symbolic values for the characters within, see Denise Dombkowski Hopkins, “Judith,” in *Women's Bible Commentary: Twentieth Anniversary Edition* (ed. C. Newsom et al.; 3rd ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012), 383–90.

13. Stephanie West, “Croesus' Second Reprieve and Other Tales of the Persian Court,” *CQ* 53 (2003): 416–37 (427).

what happened (even if it actually did), but rather it is in the text's use of these figures, who represent external threats to the audience (who, we presume, identify themselves with the protagonist Ahiqar). This is not to say, of course, that the Assyrian kings did not occupy a particular "site in the memory" of the Judeans. Indeed, it is this memory of the Assyrians and the threat they posed which looms over the entirety of the narrative, even if the historical events themselves (i.e., the destruction and occupation of Israel and Judah, the deportation of many Israelites, etc.) are not directly addressed in the narrative.

A closer look at a couple examples of literature from both Judean and Egyptian traditions is helpful at this point. Indeed, there is strong evidence in comparable literary materials—especially in the genre often labeled "Jew in the court of a foreign king"—to find an author drawing on a past historical figure with a pronounced significance for a later Jewish community. The book of Daniel is a suitable example, not only because its individual court tales (especially chs. 1–6) share many formal and thematic similarities with *Ahiqar*, but like *Ahiqar* Daniel's reading audience is separated from the historical setting of the narrative itself. In the case of Daniel, the tales are mostly set in the Neo-Babylonian court, while the composition itself is generally dated to the middle of the second century B.C.E., a period of Seleucid oppression. The figure of Nebuchadnezzar, who is prominent in Daniel, carries a symbolic value that is then used to comment on the present Seleucid power during the time of Daniel's composition. The Babylonian king(s) function as a cipher for the Seleucid imperial hegemony, but only inasmuch as Nebuchadnezzar has a specific value for the receiving audience. In the case of comparing the Babylonian king with the present Seleucid one, Antiochus IV, there is a meaningful interplay that draws on circumstances from both past and present—not the least of which is the destruction and desecration of the Temple in Jerusalem. So, even though the second century author of Daniel no doubt inherited and assembled a cycle of stories about Daniel in the Babylonian court that circulated in earlier periods (perhaps even as far back as the Babylonian, though most likely the Persian), the time of the text's reception (ca. 167 B.C.E.) is as much an important context (if not a more important one) in which to interpret the text.<sup>14</sup>

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14. Much more can be said about the interplay between the figures Nebuchadnezzar and Antiochus in the book of Daniel, and the literature on this topic as well as its Seleucid dating and interpretation in general is voluminous. I will not recite it here;

Because *Ahiqar* was found in Egypt and, I argue, should be interpreted in such a context, it is also useful to look briefly at an Egyptian example that is both contemporaneous with *Ahiqar* and shares a number of topical connections. The memory of the Assyrian occupation of Egypt in the seventh century B.C.E. continued long after the fall of Nineveh in 612 B.C.E. and, as the existence of a long stretch of materials testifies, the period of Assyrian control had a lasting resonance among native Egyptian populations. A number of texts from Egypt throughout the Persian and Greco-Roman periods featured the Neo-Assyrian monarchs, and the time of Assyrian occupation was a popular setting for a number of these texts.<sup>15</sup>

One such example from the very same time period as *Ahiqar* is the so-called Sheikh Faḍl inscription.<sup>16</sup> This fragmentary tomb inscription, or really painting in red ink, dates from the early to mid-fifth century B.C.E. and is written in Aramaic.<sup>17</sup> Although the text is not in native Egyptian,

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although, I will point to one recent study that looks at how Daniel is commenting on Seleucid kingship (= Antiochus IV) by recourse to an ancient king (Nebuchadnezzar II), who holds a special place in the cultural memory of the Jewish audience; see Amanda M. Davis Bledsoe, "Attitudes toward Seleucid Imperial Hegemony in the Book of Daniel," in *Reactions to Empire: Sacred Texts in their Socio-Political Contexts* (ed. J. Dunne and D. Batovici; WUNT 2/372; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 23–40.

15. In roughly chronological order of the dates of the manuscripts themselves (not the presumed "original" composition), the texts are: the Sheikh Faḍl inscription (Aramaic; fifth century B.C.E.); *The Tale of Assurbanipal and Šamaš-šumu-ukin* (Papyrus Amherst 63; Aramaic but Demotic script; fourth century B.C.E.); the Inaros Cycle of Stories (also known as the Petubastis cycle; Demotic; first century C.E.). On the Assyrian occupation of Egypt, especially as it is remembered in later texts from Egypt (Demotic, Aramaic, and to some extent Greek) see Kim Ryholt, "The Assyrian Invasion of Egypt in Egyptian Literary Tradition: A Survey of the Narrative Source Material," in *Assyria and Beyond: Studies Presented to Mogens Trolle Larson* (ed. Jan Gerrit Dercksen; PIHANS 100; Leiden: NINO, 2004), 483–510; Tawny L. Holm, "Memories of Sennacherib in Aramaic Tradition," in *Sennacherib at the Gates of Jerusalem: Story, History and Historiography* (ed. I. Kalimi and S. Richardson; CHANE 71; Leiden: Brill, 2014), 295–323; and Dalley, "Assyrian Court Narratives," *passim*.

16. The most up-to-date and exhaustive analysis of this text with translation is by Tawny L. Holm, "The Sheikh Faḍl Inscription in its Literary and Historical Context," *Aramaic Studies* 5 (2007): 193–224. The Aramaic text, including a reproduction and translation, can be found in TAD D 23.1, 286–298.

17. The dating is based on paleography and is generally located to the first or second quarter of the fifth century; cf. Holm, "Sheikh Faḍl," 201; TAD D, 287. Dalley, "Assyrian Court Narratives," 154, incorrectly assumes a seventh century date and that the tomb belonged to a non-native Egyptian, specifically one who "served as a very

Tawny Holm (following André Lemaire) argues that, “the narrative looks fully Egyptian in scope, and seems to focus on the petty kings and heroes of the early Saite period of the early seventh century and may well be a fictionalization of historical events.”<sup>18</sup> The inscription contains a number of texts but in one panel we find a narrative that mentions the Assyrian king Esarhaddon (אס[ר]חדן) alongside of the last Cushite pharaoh Taharqa (תהרקא) as well as Necho I (נכוא/נכו), founder of the Saite dynasty, whose reign partly coincided with Taharqa’s. The text also mentions a certain Yinḥaru (ינחרו), whom Holm (as well as Lemaire and Ryholt, among others) considers to be the hero, Inaros of Athribis, “who was an Egyptian rebel against the Assyrians in the seventh century B.C.E. ... [and] is best known from the most extensive story cycle in Egyptian literature, found in several published and unpublished Demotic manuscripts dating to the late Ptolemaic and Roman periods.”<sup>19</sup> Kim Ryholt has pointed out that both the Sheikh Faḍl inscription and these much later Demotic texts (which date to the Roman period, though admittedly their date of composition could be much earlier) mention the exact same set of kings interacting: Esarhaddon, Necho, and Taharqa.<sup>20</sup>

Important for our discussion is not that these very kings did, in fact, interact, but that stories about them were told much later—in the case of Sheikh Faḍl around two hundred years—than the events themselves. The question then, like with *Ahiqar* and Daniel, is how these stories functioned in their later contexts. In the case of the Sheikh Faḍl inscription, Tawny Holm has argued it may be no coincidence that a story about Inaros of Athribis would have been recorded during the fifth century B.C.E. when one considers the intriguing circumstances in Egypt during this period. In particular, she draws attention to another Inaros, an Inaros of Libyan decent, who, according to Greek sources, led a nearly successful revolt

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high-ranking officer under Assurbanipal and perhaps, also Esarhaddon.” She is led to this conclusion chiefly by seeing it as a personal autobiography of the tomb’s occupant rather than a work of historical fiction as understood by Holm, Porten, and Lemaire (cf. Holm, “Sheikh Faḍl,” 200–204).

18. Holm, “Sheikh Faḍl,” 193–94; cf. André Lemaire, “Les inscriptions araméennes de Cheikh-Fadl (Égypte),” in *Studia Aramaica: New Sources and New Approaches, Papers Delivered at the London Conference of The Institute of Jewish Studies University College London, 26th–28th June 1991* (ed. M. J. Geller et al.; JSSSup 4; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 77–132.

19. Holm, “Sheikh Faḍl,” 202.

20. Ryholt, “Assyrian Invasion of Egypt,” 496–97.



against the Persian king Artaxerxes in the 460s and 450s B.C.E. with the help of an Athenian contingent.<sup>21</sup> Holm continues: “If the scribes produced this story about the old Inaros of the seventh century at the same time as they were fighting alongside the Persians against the new, Libyan Inaros of the fifth century, one must ponder why.”<sup>22</sup> The fragmentary nature of the text leaves precise interpretation “frustratingly enigmatic”<sup>23</sup>; it remains unclear whether the story is pro- or anti-Persian. Nevertheless, its topic and close chronological proximity make it an important conversation partner for the Elephantine *Ahiqar*.

Returning to *Ahiqar*, the Assyrian context surely had some meaning for the Judeans at Elephantine as it did for Egyptians of the same time period and Jews of Palestine from a later era. But this section has also demonstrated that the importance of the Assyrian past should not preclude an interpretation of the text from the perspective of the later reading audience. Thus, the political memory in Persian-period Egypt for both Egyptian and Judean audiences can be characterized in a similar fashion, especially in their recourse to the “distant” past of Assyrian occupation as a lens through which to interpret the present circumstances they encountered under control of Achaemenid authorities. The conditions of rule and other aspects may have had a pronounced resonance with a part of the cultural memory of various populations as expressed in their literature from this time—specifically in the rhetorically charged reactions to foreign invaders and occupiers. This is evident in both native Egyptian and Judean literary traditions of the Persian and Greco-Roman periods. During these periods we have evidence of stories being told and transmitted wherein the heroes are figures from the past who were operating at a time under foreign control. In many cases, like *Ahiqar*, the foreign power was a Neo-Assyrian king. Memory studies inform us that it is not so much important whether or not these stories reflect historical fact (or how closely), but rather in their ability to teach us about how a particular community from a later time *remembered* these stories and, moreover, used them for various ideological purposes. In so doing, a connection is created between the past and the present, between the ancient enemy/occupier and the current one, and between the achievements of

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21. For further mention of this fifth-century revolt, see the discussion in section 2 below.

22. Holm, “Sheikh Faḍl,” 223.

23. *Ibid.*, 224.

the ancient hero and the hopes and/or expectations of the present community. Because such a connection was likely made, this can reasonably explain not only why a text like *Ahiqar* was transmitted to a Judean colony in southern Egypt (as well as into the native Egyptian tradition as evidenced by the later Demotic translations), but it can also aid in our understanding of how a text set in the Assyrian court was received by a community living under Persian rule. Given our reasonable understanding of the political and social climate of Egypt, in general, and Elephantine, in particular, during the fifth century, we can therefore read *Ahiqar in situ*, that is, in the very context from which the papyri themselves come. It is to this political context that I now turn.

#### HISTORICAL/POLITICAL CLIMATE FOR ELEPHANTINE AUDIENCE OF *AHIQAR*

On the one hand, I would argue that any mention of kings or kingship in a text from the latter half of the fifth century *must* have been read through the lens of the Persian imperial system. This, as we have demonstrated above, should not discount the fact that the Assyrian kings in *Ahiqar* would have had a certain cultural value to Judeans (and Egyptians) of this period. Still, there is the problem of how exactly the ancient kings were connected to the present context. In this section, therefore, our focus turns toward the historical context of the Elephantine audience, namely the political climate of Persian-controlled Egypt in the fifth century B.C.E.

Because there is nothing in the *Ahiqar* papyri themselves that points to a Persian context other than the condition of their discovery, we must be cautious in our approach, and, as Stephanie West states, “we can only speculate about the circumstances in which *Ahiqar*’s frame-story was transferred from the Assyrian to the Persian court.”<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, Margaret Cool Root reminds us that there is much historically to justify a comparison between the Persian kings and their Neo-Assyrian forebears, for, in terms of iconography, specialized language, pageantry, and the like “Achaemenid ideologies and practices of kingship clearly drew consciously as well as by assimilation upon earlier models.”<sup>25</sup>

24. West, “Croesus’ Second Reprieve,” 427.

25. Margaret Cool Root, “Defining the Divine in Achaemenid Persian Kingship: The View from Bisitun,” in *Every Inch a King: Comparative Studies on Kings and King-*

As noted above, Tawny Holm has suggested that because the narrative portion of the Aramaic Sheikh Faḍl inscription, though highly fragmentary, concerns itself with rebellion led by a certain Inaros against a foreign occupying power (the Assyrians), it would, therefore, have had a strong resonance with the native Egyptian population in the fifth century B.C.E., who were under occupation from the foreign Achaemenid Empire. In this section, I argue that the same can be said of the Elephantine audience in their reactions to *Ahiqar*. Just as much as the comparative literary materials add nuance to our understanding of *Ahiqar*, so too does a critical appreciation of the historical context in which the text was being read. In this case, we are dealing with Egypt in the late fifth century B.C.E. The issues raised in the text itself should be assessed in light of significant historical aspects during this time. In this case, reflections on the king can be easily related to the community's understanding of the political climate and, in the context of an instructional text, the ideal way in which they should operate under these circumstances. The primary issues related to the king in *Ahiqar*, as I will demonstrate below, are loyalty and obedience and their concomitant opposites disloyalty (= treason) and disobedience (= rebellion).

That the audience at Elephantine was familiar with rebellion is all but certain. The Egyptians constantly rebelled against the Persians throughout their occupation in the sixth and fifth centuries.<sup>26</sup> For example, the Inaros rebellion, mentioned earlier, seems to have had some impact on Elephantine even if Inaros's reach did not extend that far south.<sup>27</sup> Later, at the end

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*ship in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds* (ed. L. Mitchell and C. Melville; Rulers and Elites 2; Leiden: Brill, 2013), 23–65.

26. The dates and specific details of these revolts are mostly still debated, but the following is a quick list of the revolts: 522 B.C.E. at Cambyses' death, Egypt was later retaken at least by 519 B.C.E. by Darius; 486 B.C.E. at Darius' death when Xerxes was taking the throne; 460s/450s B.C.E. revolt by Inaros against Artaxerxes; 450 B.C.E. (or possibly earlier) revolt of Amyrtaeus of Sais; 404–398 B.C.E. revolt of Amyrtaeus (nephew of Amyrtaeus of Sais) against Darius II. For a brief overview of these revolts see Dan'el Kahn, "Inaros' Rebellion Against Artaxerxes I and the Athenian Disaster in Egypt," *CQ* 58 (2008): 424–40.

27. There is some debate as to how far south the sway of Inaros's revolt reached; on this see Kahn, "Inaros' Rebellion," *passim*, who lays out the two arguments and then sides with the view that the rebellion did reach all the way south to Elephantine. Kahn argues that sources other than Greek ones (Diodorus Siculus, Thucydides, and Ctesias) should be consulted and cites as evidence the Wadi Hammamat graffito from

of the fifth century, a certain Amyrtaeus successfully revolted against the Egyptians in 404 B.C.E. Documents from Elephantine, however, continued to be signed and dated according to the Persian king Artaxerxes, demonstrating that at least in the far south until 401 B.C.E., Persian authority continued to be recognized. When set against the backdrop of the goings-on at Elephantine specifically, namely the destruction and rebuilding of the Temple of Yahu, it makes sense that the Judeans remained loyal to the Persians, who, in turn, granted favors to ensure that loyalty—in this case, allowing the rebuilding of the Temple to Yahu after its destruction by native Egyptians. About this, Bezalel Porten writes: “It is likely that Artaxerxes decided in favor of the Jews to assure their loyalty in the face of the rebellion of the rest of Egypt ... and [likewise] the garrison there maintained its loyalty to the Persians at least down through the beginning of 401.”<sup>28</sup>

Aside from the revolts, from Elephantine itself we have an Aramaic copy of the famous Bisitun inscription.<sup>29</sup> As the text itself states, copies of

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460 B.C.E. and adds that the ‘Ayin Manawir ostrakon (generally cited as evidence that Inaros was not viewed favorably in the south) is misinterpreted and should not be read as “chief of rebels” but rather as “chief of Bakalu tribe.” Thus, as Holm, “Sheikh Faḍl,” 224 agrees, this ostrakon is evidence that “the Inaros revolt had reached all the way south to the Khārga oasis in Upper Egypt, and had even gained some legitimacy there.” Dan’el Kahn, “Inaros’ Rebellion,” 430–33 points out that the actual papyrus sheets themselves upon which Ahiqar is found may also have direct relevance to the issue of Persian control of Upper Egypt during Inaros’s revolt in the mid-450s B.C.E. Ahiqar is a palimpsest, and the erased text (deciphered by Ada Yardeni) is a customs account dated to the eleventh year of the Persian king. Although the name is missing, Yardeni, “Maritime Trade and Royal Accountancy,” 67–70 concludes that it must be either Xerxes (and thus year 475 B.C.E.) or Artaxerxes I (and thus 454 B.C.E.). If the latter identification is the correct one, then the Persians would seem to still have had control of Upper Egypt in 454, contra the scholarly assumption that this was a time when Inaros (from 460 to 454) had removed Persian control over Egypt and locked up the Persian officials in Memphis.

28. Porten, *Archives from Elephantine*, 295.

29. The Aramaic copy of Bisitun largely follows the Old Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian versions, with one notable exception being the presence of an extra paragraph that was identified by Nicholas Sims-Williams as a translation of the final paragraph of Darius I’s tomb inscription (DNb, lines 50–60); for transcription, translation, and critical apparatus see Sims-Williams, “The Final Paragraph of the Tomb-Inscription of Darius I (DNb, 50–60): The Old Persian Text in the Light of an Aramaic Version,” *BSOAS* 44 (1981): 1–7. Interestingly, the content of this passage has some formal similarities with the wisdom of Ahiqar in that the paragraph comprises advice for proper

it were to be distributed throughout the empire and thus the Aramaic Bisitun may have functioned at Elephantine as a reaffirmation of the loyalty of Aramaic Judeans to the Persian Empire. At the very least, its presence suggests that loyalty to the throne among the Aramaic speaking population at Elephantine was a concern for the Persian monarchy.

For the Persians, the loyalty of their subjects, especially their military troops who were the key to holding Egypt, was paramount. In the same manner, for the Judean population at Elephantine, rebellion was “on their minds,” even if it was not they themselves who were rebelling. It comes as no surprise, then, to find texts like Bisitun, in its Aramaic form, at Elephantine. The political situation of fifth century Egypt is one of rebellion and royal power, as shown by the harsh suppression of many of the revolts.<sup>30</sup> This is the context in which we ought to interpret the royal ideology in *Ahiqar*.

#### A CONFLICTING MESSAGE: THE KING IN THE ARAMAIC BOOK OF AHIQAR

In this final section, I will examine the presentation of the king in the narrative and sayings of *Ahiqar* in light of the surveys above that dealt with comparable literary materials and historical contexts. At first glance, one finds in *Ahiqar* a strong emphasis on loyalty to the monarch. This lesson would have a meaningful resonance for the Judeans at Elephantine, where, as we have shown, loyalty was a very important issue for Achaemenid rulers, particularly among the non-indigenous military populations who represented Persian power at a time when the local Egyptian population was inclined to revolt. Because loyalty and obedience to the king are emphasized, one could suggest that *Ahiqar*, along with Bisitun, was distributed in order to ensure loyalty among the various subservient populations of the empire. Or, if not commissioned directly by Persian authorities (i.e., by a scribe being paid by the Persians), then *Ahiqar* is at

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conduct—in the Aramaic the addressee is seemingly Darius’s successor, whereas in DNB it is the impersonal “subject” taken to indicate “Darius’s people in general”; Sims-Williams, “The Final Paragraph,” 2. A more recent transcription and translation of the Aramaic Bisitun inscription, including this excerpt, can be found in TAD C.

30. According to Herodotus 7.7, for example, Xerxes “reduced the country to a condition of worse servitude than it had ever been in the previous reign” (cited in Kahn, “Inaros’ Rebellion,” 424, who refers also to the Satrap Stele).

least a by-product of the Persian propaganda machine, hence its opinions on the king are heavily influenced by the political climate.

Such is the view of the very few studies that have attempted to read *Ahiqar* in its Elephantine context. At a recent conference, Reinhard Kratz read a paper which linked *Ahiqar*'s view of the king with the Aramaic Bisitun text and identified them both as evidence of the Persian propaganda machine at work among the Jews at Elephantine.<sup>31</sup> Bob Becking likewise connects *Ahiqar* with Bisitun, stating that both were "in use for scribal education. In reading and writing this text, the intelligentsia from Elephantine of the various ethnic and/or religious groups were trained in the Persian imperial ideology."<sup>32</sup>

The designation of *Ahiqar* as state-sanctioned or merely propaganda-influenced literature, however, follows a methodology which only pays attention to the praise of the king, as if it were by a loyal subject confident in the royal prerogative. Such a reading ignores the fact that the text carries two very different intrinsic meanings, one uplifting but another, more pervasive one that is utterly disheartening. In the following analysis, I will bring to light these two layers.

Although fragmentary, the issue at hand in the narrative seems to be that of loyalty, particularly to one's father (or perhaps teacher or master). The plot is enacted when Nadan decides to betray his uncle and adoptive father, *Ahiqar*. Interestingly, Nadan's disloyal behavior comes in the form of an accusation of disloyalty to the king.<sup>33</sup> In contrast to Nadan's

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31. Reinhard Kratz, "Achiqar and Bisitun: Literature of the Judaeans at Elephantine?" (paper presented at the International Meeting of the SBL, St. Andrews Scotland, 8 July 2013).

32. Bob Becking, "Yehudite Identity in Elephantine," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context* (ed. O. Lipschits et al.; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 403–19 (414).

33. Unfortunately, the passage where Nadan actually accuses *Ahiqar* is not extant or severely damaged; see end of column 2. In the later versions, there is an elaborate scheme where Nadan sets up *Ahiqar* by having him lead an army, unknowingly, against the king; there is not enough room in the papyri for such a scenario and thus it appears that Nadan simply slandered his uncle. When Esarhaddon commands Nabusumiskun to kill *Ahiqar*, however, he asks the rhetorical question: "Why should [*Ahiqar*] damage the land against us?" (l. 36). The verb used here means "to damage" (Aram. חבל; here in the Pael/D-stem also meaning "to harm" or "to destroy"), and to my knowledge it does not have a specialized use for "treason" or "disloyalty," but it is used in reference to the destruction or downfall of a kingdom/king in Ezra (4:22) and Daniel (2:44, 4:23,

treachery, we find in the character Nabusumiskun a loyal friend, who returned to Ahiqar the very same kindness which the latter had shown him at an earlier time. This plot development, as Kratz has pointed out, stands as the “pre-cursor of the golden rule expressed in narrative form.”<sup>34</sup> Ironically, Ahiqar, in helping Nabusumiskun, had actually been unfaithful to the king in that he disobeyed his direct command; however, in a paradoxical twist, Ahiqar characterizes this disobedience as being beneficial to the state/king, hence he states: “moreover Sennacherib the King loved me abundantly because I let you live and did not kill you” (line 51).<sup>35</sup> In sum, at least one moral of the Ahiqar narrative is that displaying loyalty to king, or to one’s superiors/parents and friends is wise and will be rewarded.

While the narrative itself promotes a certain ethic, namely loyal behavior, its presentation of the king, as I will show in this section, is somewhat complicated. The authority of the king is never challenged, though the capriciousness of his decrees may be questioned.<sup>36</sup> Ahiqar bows down and prostrates himself before the monarch—thus demonstrating his complete submission to the ruler as if he were divine.<sup>37</sup> The kings Esarhaddon and Sennacherib were occasionally “incensed” (חמר) at their subjects, but

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6:27, 7:14). One might also note Daniel’s plea of innocence before King Darius (6:23), where he says: “before you, O king, I have done no wrong (חַבֵּלָה).” A very interesting parallel with the Sheikh Faḍl inscription is also worth mentioning. In this text, the rebellion of Inaros against Esarhaddon (who controls Egypt) is described using the exact same term: one of the Egyptian pharaohs speaking to Inaros says: “let him not damage Egypt” (Aram. (אֵל [י] חַבֵּל מִצְרַיִם); see Holm, “Sheikh Faḍl,” 199. The connection between what Ahiqar was accused of doing against the king/land and what Nadan *actually* did against Ahiqar is further intensified by the repetition of the verb חַבֵּל in the words that Nabusumiskun speaks to Ahiqar concerning Nadan: “He [Nadan] *damaged* you” (line 44).

34. Kratz, “Achiqar and Bisitun” (2013). This notion is expressed quite directly by Ahiqar himself, who tells Nabusumiskun: “Just as I did for you, so then do for me” (line 33).

35. All translations are based on the edition by Porten/Yardeni in TAD III, though some are slightly amended based on my own readings.

36. That both Ahiqar and Nabusumiskun *know better* than the king himself with regard to executing his subjects suggests this. I will expand on this point below.

37. The issue of the king and the divine will be addressed shortly. I would note here that there are no gods mentioned in the extant narrative portions of *Ahiqar*. Although this passage (line 13) and the epithet in line 53 could be understood as subtle references to the king’s connection to the gods.



they could also show them “love” (51 and 65). Esarhaddon was also “well-known” to be “merciful” (מֶרְחֻמִּין; line 53).<sup>38</sup> These words, notably, come from the lips of Ahiqar *after* he has been falsely accused and sentenced to death by the king. The impression then, as Stephanie West notes, is “that Ahiqar’s loyalty is unimpaired by his undeserved suffering.”<sup>39</sup> Yet, ironically, despite his “unimpaired loyalty to the king,” Ahiqar openly admits to having disobeyed a direct order of the king when he helped Nabu escape punishment. In the same way, Nabusumiskun’s disobedience to the king actually *becomes* an act of loyalty because by the end of the story (at least in the later versions) Ahiqar arises as the loyal defender of Assyrian might against the Egyptians.

Moreover, the king himself is characterized by a noticeable fickleness, much like the characterization of kings in the biblical narratives of Esther or Daniel, where the monarchs are quickly and easily persuaded by their advisers into handing out severe punishments.<sup>40</sup> Esarhaddon acts the part of the gullible foreign king, for he, seemingly without hesitation, accepts Nadan’s accusations and orders the renowned adviser “upon whose advice Sennacherib (his father) and all Assyria (depended)” to be executed. In the same breath, these stories emphasize the finality and unquestionable nature of the king’s decree, while also depicting the king issuing such decrees in a capricious almost whimsical manner. Both Ahiqar and Nabusumiskun are explicitly stated to be innocent of the crimes of which they were accused. Already in the story of Ahiqar then, we may be able to detect a hint of dissatisfaction, or at the very least, disillusionment with the office of the king in terms of upholding justice.<sup>41</sup>

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38. The term “merciful” may, in fact, be an epithet of the king, rather than simply an adjective. Note that the term has been used as an epithet of the god ‘El; see James Lindenberger, “The Gods of Ahiqar” *Ugarit-Forschungen* 14 (1982): 105–17 (110–11 n. 31). Thus, the term here could indirectly be relating the king to the deity. This connection is intensified when one considers the saying in Ahiqar line 91 where the king is directly likened to “the Merciful” (the epithet there stands in parallel to the god El). See discussion below.

39. West, “Croesus’ Second Reprieve,” 426.

40. That the foreign king is oft portrayed as easily pliable through persuasion from those courtiers surrounding him is a well-recognized topos in numerous court tales such as Esther and Daniel; see, for example, Shemaryahu Talmon, “Wisdom in the Book of Esther” *VT* 13 (1963): 419–55, at 439–40, and Stephanie West, “Croesus’ Second Reprieve,” 422–23.

41. In addition to the general critique about a king who does not uphold jus-

When we look at the sayings of *Ahiqar*, we find an even more nuanced picture of kingship and what a “wise” response to this outlook entails. I turn now to column 6 of *Ahiqar* where nearly all of the sayings related to the king are clustered together. The translation of the column is as follows:<sup>42</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Moreover, to the gods it/she is precious [...] to/for [...] the kingdom/kingship in the skies [or: by the heavens/Shamayn] it is established, for the Lord of the Holy Ones exalted (it).

<sup>80</sup> My son, do not curse the day until you have seen the ni[ght].

<sup>81</sup> Al[so], keep in mind that in every place are their e[yes] and their ears are near your mouth. Guard yourself! Do not let it be th[eir] prey!

<sup>82</sup> More than everything that is guarded, guard your mouth! And concerning that which you’ve h[ear]d, make your heart heavy; for a bird is a word, and the one who releases it is a man of no heart.

<sup>83</sup> [...] the secrets of your mouth. Afterward, take out your words in its (proper) time, for mightier is ambush of mouth than ambush of battle.

<sup>84</sup> Do not cover the word of a king; let it be a healing for your heart. Soft is the speech of a king, (yet) it is sharper and mightier than a double-edged blade.

<sup>85</sup> Look before you is something difficult, against the face of a king do not stand, his rage is quicker than lightning. You, guard yourself! <sup>86</sup> Do not let him show it (= rage) on account of your talking lest you die early in your days.

<sup>87</sup> [Obey] the word of a king, if it is commanded to you, it is a burning fire. Hurry, do it! Do not cause it to burn against you, and consume your hands.

<sup>88</sup> Moreover, let the word of the king be done with delight of the heart. \* How can wood contest with fire, flesh with a knife, or a man with a king?

<sup>89a</sup> I have tasted bitter herbs and their taste is strong, but nothing is more bitter than poverty

<sup>89b</sup> Soft is the tongue of a king <sup>90a</sup> but it will break the ribs of the sea serpent, like death which is unseen.

<sup>90</sup> In an abundance of sons let not your heart rejoice and in their fewness do not mourn.

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tice, which could be applied to many empires, the specific critique of a king who issues decrees without “hearing both sides,” as appears to be the case with *Ahiqar* and his accuser *Nadan*, may recall the Testament of *Darius* (a section of which is found attached to the Aramaic *Bisitun* text at Elephantine, see n. 29 above), wherein the king states in instructional form to his successor that he always listened to both sides before making judgment. I thank Christine Mitchell for pointing this text out to me.

42. Based on translation in TAD C 1.1 with slight emendations.

<sup>91</sup> A king is like the Merciful, indeed his voice is lofty, who is there who can stand before him except the one with whom El is?

<sup>92</sup> Beautiful is the king to see like Shamash, and precious is his glory to those who walk the earth quietly.

As is evident, the sayings related to the king are not spread out across the various columns. Instead, they are concentrated in a single place, the effect of which creates a tightly knit passage that has a marked unity, both structurally and in terms of content.<sup>43</sup> A brief exegesis of this passage is prudent.

On the one hand, we notice a great deal of overlap in the king's depiction with the one found in the narrative. The king's command is never to be questioned (84).<sup>44</sup> His wrath is swift (85) and deadly (86). Just as Sennacherib/Esarhaddon showed love to their servants, the instructions teach that the king's words can be kind and gentle (84b, 89b). Also, one should not stand in the face of the king (line 85), implying that one should, like Ahiqar, prostrate oneself (cf. line 14).<sup>45</sup> The various attributes of the king mentioned in lines 84 through 88—his word, anger, face (= rage), and tongue—all revolve around the central issue of obedience to the monarch and the power of the royal word or decree. The force of these admonitions pivots on how destructive and dangerous it can be to challenge or take lightly the king's authority. It is important to note that they not only emphasize obedience to the king's command, but these lines also reflect upon the monarch's inherent *power*, as well as that power's *inscrutability*.

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43. This may, of course, be an accident of recovery, i.e., more king sayings simply were not preserved. In fact, line 133 mentions the "throne," implying that a ruler is meant, although it could just as easily be taken metaphorically for anyone who abuses authority. Nevertheless, the clustering of king sayings in column 4 is obvious and seemingly intentional. For such a rhetorically-oriented analysis of the sayings collection, I refer to Michael Weigl's recent study, "Compositional Strategies in the Aramaic Sayings of Ahiqar: Columns 6–8," in *The World of the Aramaeans: Studies in Language and Literature in Honour of Paul-Eugène Dion* (ed. P. M. Michèle Daviau et al.; 3 vols. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001), 3:22–82, where he focuses on compositional features in *Ahiqar* and argues—incidentally, on the basis of this same column—that the compiler or author of *Ahiqar* operated with some intent in arranging his proverbs.

44. Numbers in parentheses here and throughout this section refer to line numbers in the TAD edition found in the translated passage above.

45. The phrase "stand in the face of the king" is probably to be interpreted metaphorically; hence, do not disagree or be haughty before the king. But it certainly is connected to the actual behavior as exemplified by Ahiqar in the narrative.

A royal decree can be beneficial and uplifting, but like lightning and death itself, his rage can strike quickly and without warning.

Finally, in lines 91 and 92 there is a noticeable change in the tone and language. Demonstrating an arguably hymnic quality, these sayings directly relate the king to the divine. His mercy is compared to El, and so also his authority (“voice”) is said to be unassailable because of El’s support (91). Similarly, the king has an elevated stature that is likened to the solar deity (92). These lines show clearly that the concern is no longer simply prudent behavior around a king; rather, we have an acclamation of the institution of kingship itself. The effect of this lofty praise is such that one comes away with a very high regard of the royal office.

Besides being fragmentary, the uppermost line of column 6 is most likely the second half of a two-line unit, whose subject matter was presumably mentioned in the first line of the previous (now missing) column. Because the preceding lines are not extant we can only look to the subsequent lines in the column for any context clues about its subject. The line comprises a description of *something* that is precious to the gods, is set in the heavens (or perhaps established by Shamayn—a possible divine epithet), and has been set up by one Baal Qaddašin/Qadšan (“Lord of the holy ones/holiness”), which could be an alternative form for the more familiar divine epithet Baal Šamayn.<sup>46</sup> Notably, we also find the word מלכותא (“the kingdom”) or perhaps simply “the kingship.” With this term we are invited to consider the possibility of some connection to the rest of the column where מלכה (“the king”) is prominent. Indeed, when we compare the terminology and syntax of line 79 we can find a number of parallels with lines 91 and 92. Most notable is the adjective “precious” (יקיר) which appears in both 79 and 92, attached in the former case to “kingdom” (or perhaps “kingship”) and in the latter saying to the king himself: thus, the two sets of lines could be functioning as an *inclusio* to the entire section.<sup>47</sup>

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46. See Lindenberger, “The Gods of Ahiqar,” 105–17; alternatively, the term could be remnant of Assyrian epithet where Sun-God is called Bel-Igigi “lord of the holy ones”; see Edward Lipiński, *The Aramaeans: Their Ancient History, Culture, Religion* (OLA 100; Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 625.

47. The correspondence between lines 79 and 92 is so great that one may reasonably assume the existence of another line at the end of the previous (now missing) column that formed a couplet with line 79 and would have had comparable language and forms to that of line 91—i.e., it probably included hymnic language about the king along with some reference to the divine. Unfortunately, however probable this conjecture may be, the extent to which Ahiqar drew on a hymn about kingship/the

With a quick scan, one notices that the reflection on the king and his authority is interrupted by a few unrelated sayings (80–83, 89a, 90). Yet, a closer analysis reveals that these seemingly disparate sayings have been neatly woven into the larger framework of loyalty and obedience to the king, and may even implicitly evoke the imperial context. For example, lines 80–83 are concerned with correct speech, with terms like “word” and “mouth” being prominent. The transition to sayings about the king in line 84, then, comes quite naturally given its focus on the king’s word and speech. The sense of line 81, of course, is about speaking a careless word that can be overheard and later used against you. But the specific mention of their “eyes” and their “ears” may be an allusion to Persian system of spies mentioned in Xenophon and Herodotus.<sup>48</sup> Thus, while the king himself is not directly mentioned in this saying, the exact *Sitz im Leben* may in fact relate to the issue of loyalty. As a result, the saying could be taken as a warning against speaking a treasonous or slanderous word about the king and/or empire.

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king is tenuous. Kottsieper, “The Aramaic Tradition: Ahikar,” 114 and Weigl, “Compositional Strategies,” 24–26 have even detected a chiasmic structure that hinges upon the repeated term in 79 and 92 and is reinforced by other noticeably paired sayings in the column (e.g., 84b and 89b; 90b and 80; and, probably, 85 and 87). So, based on the language of the first line and the evidence of an overall structure in the column, we may tentatively suggest that the subject of line 79 is related to the king, probably being some attribute of his that, like below, is comparable to a quality of the divine. This conclusion undergirds the analysis here which treats the entire column as a well-organized thought-unit, which, incidentally, may be compared to the “chapters” we see in similar collections like the *Instruction of Ptahhotep*. On a side note, this line (79) was previously believed to be the second half of a hymn to wisdom, having been attached to the end of another column that ends with a description of wisdom; however, since the edition by Porten/Yardeni, the two columns are no longer joined, thus once again we are left without the subject. See Seth Bledsoe, “Can Ahikar Tell us Anything about Personified Wisdom?” *JBL* 132 (2013): 119–37.

48. For brief discussion and ancient references to the “Eyes and Ears of the King”—especially in the Greek sources, Xenophon and Herodotus—see, e.g., Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 343–44, and Josef Wiesehofer, “The Achaemenid Empire,” in *The Dynamics of Ancient Empires: State Power from Assyria to Byzantium* (ed. I. Morris and W. Scheidel; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 66–98, esp. 86 and 91. C. L. Seow, *Ecclesiastes* (AB 18; New York: Doubleday, 1997), 341 also points to another Elephantine document (TAD A 4.5.9) which suggests knowledge of this post at Elephantine in listing, among other officials, the “listeners who are appointed in the provinces.”

Similarly, line 82 likens a reckless word to the releasing of a bird, which cannot easily (or, perhaps, never) be captured again. This metaphor brings to mind the very close parallel found in Qohelet: “Do not curse the king, even in your thoughts, or curse the rich, even in your bedroom; for a bird of the air may carry your voice, or some winged creature tell the matter” (10:20 NRSV). The biblical author put this imaginative exhortation for discretion in speech into a royal context, specifically as a warning against disparaging authority figures. Again, though *Ahiqar* does not connect the bird-is-a-word image to the king explicitly, its immediate context suggests that here we may have another caution against treasonous or disloyal speech.<sup>49</sup>

Lines 89a and 90 can certainly stand on their own. Together they represent what are most likely the two most important concerns for the average person: one’s social/financial standing and one’s progeny. Yet, their presence in the midst of sayings about loyalty to the throne can leave a dramatic impression, the rhetorical effect of which implies that disobedience (or dishonesty) to the king will result in poverty—a proverbially dire situation to find oneself in. Likewise, the threat is not only material, but familial. Perhaps these two sayings do not have anything to do with the king directly, but in light of their context the purpose of their placement among the king sayings may be to convey exactly what is at stake (wealth and family) if one disregards the advice about obedience to the king.

To sum up, a casual reading of the narrative and sayings of *Ahiqar* seems to convey fairly straightforward advice about obedience and loyalty to the monarch, whose authority and power have divine support. Thus, one of the keys to an expedient life, according to *Ahiqar*, is prompt and unwavering deference to the king’s command. Thus, the arguments by Kratz and Becking, that the exhortation for loyalty to the monarch and the divine exaltation of his personage could be evidence of an infusion or appropriation of the Persian propaganda campaign, hold some weight. However, upon closer examination, there is much that speaks against reading this text as a proponent of unflinching loyalty.

For one, the narrative attests that even the wisest sage, who ranks among the highest officials, can be destroyed on a whim. Granted, *Ahiqar* is saved from that fate, but the possibility of the situation is never questioned. In fact, the king-sayings make it very clear that death can come

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49. Seow, *Ecclesiastes*, 340–41, also connects this verse to the Persian spy system.

quickly and unexpectedly (cf. 85–86). Secondly, the juxtaposition of the exalted, divine monarch with the very pessimistic sayings in lines 80, 89a, and 90 should not be overlooked. How much does the praise for the king's glory stand out, when it is intertwined with the bitterness of poverty or the loss of children? Line 80 is particularly dismal in its "it could always get worse" attitude.

In the same way, the repeated attention to the futility of resisting the king in lines 84–88 (especially 88) should not be underappreciated. The implication is that the audience might wish to "contest with" the king. The negative tone of these sayings speaks against the sincerity of the royal ideology expressed in the surrounding lines, much like the disobedience of Ahiqar and Nabusumiskun indirectly undermines the apparent loyalty to the king's authority in the narrative. The ethic conveyed by the king sayings in the middle of the column is one of fear, born out of a need for self-preservation. The poetic portions at the top and bottom of the column seem to function as the positive trappings of an otherwise biting assessment of the realities under foreign rule where one's life, wealth, and family is subject to the swift and inscrutable rage of the monarch

Examples from other columns of the sayings reinforce the pessimistic outlook of futility with respect to the king. For sake of space, I will only mention one. The fable in lines 168b–171a is a good example. Most of the other fables in *Ahiqar*, like this one, draw on the natural world to comment on some aspect of human life and generally relate to theological anthropology, that is how the author understands humanity in relation to society and the divine. The fables begin with a predator, in this case a bear, who engages in a conversation with an animal of prey, here a group of lambs. The beginning of the dialogue between the bear and the lambs is missing, but the lambs clearly respond to the bear by saying, "carry off whichever one of us that you want," suggesting both that the bear will be successful in his endeavor to eat a lamb and, moreover, that there is nothing that the lambs could do to stop the bear in the first place. Fortunately, the interpretive comment attached to the end of the fable is mostly intact, allowing further clarification of the message. It states: "For it is not in the hands of humans to pick up their feet and to put them down apart from the gods ... [...] // for it is not in your hands to pick up your foot to put it down." The message, therefore, seems to be one of futility and fate. When a bear comes across a flock of lambs, the lambs have no choice in the matter and are incapable of doing anything to escape the power of the bear. Instead, they are left with only one response, that is, "take whatever you want because



we cannot stop you anyway.” The author put a theological layer onto the moral of the fable: just as lambs are helpless to resist a bear, so also are human desires or purposes worthless if the gods decide otherwise. This perspective resonates strongly with the impression of the royal power in the king sayings of column 6. The bear could even be a metaphor for the king (and thus the lambs would equate to the audience, i.e., the Jews at Elephantine). It is not unlikely given the connection the text makes earlier between the will of the gods and the will of the king and that similar literature like Daniel often use predatory animals as symbols for kings.

Read in the context of Elephantine, then, the *Book of Ahiqar* would have a certain resonance among the Jewish community whose existence and prosperity was wholly dependent on the beneficence of the monarch. The drama surrounding the destruction of the temple is a particularly useful case study. The Persian authority is understood to be absolute and thus recourse must be made there for recompense and retaliation against the Egyptian priests. Power, then, resides ultimately with the Persian king. Appeals to authority, however, should not be taken as evidence of their outright support of the imperial hegemony, but simply as recognition of its power in the current socio-political circumstances.

Indeed, when it comes to literature from the perspective of the occupied and insecure, one need not choose between the two extremes of loyalty or subversion/resistance. Based on my analysis, it seems that with respect to the king, *Ahiqar* promotes loyalty, but the text only seems to foster such obedience out of a concern for self-preservation. The possible exceptions are the hymnic sayings which surround the exhortations to obedience. There, the king is likened to deities. The question then is do these hymnic sayings invite the audience to praise the king or do they simply acknowledge the monarch's authority (i.e., by equating it with that of the gods)? Assessing tone in an ancient text is very difficult and any conclusion is at best tenuous without clear evidence. Regardless, the uplifting lines about the beauty and beneficence of the monarch are contrasted starkly by the pitiful expressions of helplessness and despair. In the same way the absolute power of the king in the sayings is certainly acknowledged, but it is done so in terms of the threat and dangers it poses. Thus, at least in column 6, one is hard-pressed to come away with an unadulterated feeling of encouragement about the person of the king.

We are left, instead, with a conflicting view expressed poignantly and pointedly in the saying found in lines 89b–90a which demonstrates the dynamic power of the king, one that is gentle while, at the same time,

having a power and viciousness of mythic proportions. A similar contrast is evident in the extant portions of the narrative. Ahiqar owes his prominent position to the king and is granted permission to have a family member become his successor. Yet, at a whim the second most powerful person in the Persian Empire can be sentenced to death by the command of the king, seemingly without any opportunity to protest.

This kind of reading, one that especially pays attention to the tone, creates a much more sobering understanding of kingship than one would expect in a wisdom collection of an indigenous population or even a state-sanctioned piece of literature. Instead, the conflicting view of kingship—wherein the monarch's word is divine-like in its power, having no way of keeping it in check thus resulting in a situation of constant fear of retribution—fits nicely into the situation faced by the Judean community at Elephantine. On the one hand, loyalty to the monarch cannot be questioned openly, after all the residents at Elephantine have seen the Persians time and time again put down the Egyptian rebellions. Yet, the text also attests to the need to express the frustrations and fears of a society under the hegemony of a strong foreign power.

### CONCLUSION

The universal appeal of instructional sayings and, to some extent, narratives about the past, allow them to have significance in a limitless number of social settings and cultures. It is no surprise that stories and instructions are recycled time and again, with various communities making use of the traditions embedded therein. With the Aramaic version we are fortunate to have a piece of literature *in situ*, from which we can reasonably surmise who was reading it as well as when and where within relatively concrete political circumstances. By offering a reading of Aramaic *Book of Ahiqar* in its Achaemenid Elephantine setting—both in terms of comparable literary materials and political circumstances—we find that the details of the text relate quite strongly to the historical context, especially in terms of its perspective on the king.

This paper has shown that when speaking about the Assyrian kings, there is clear literary support to understand *Ahiqar* as evoking a shared cultural memory of ancient figures that are imbedded with particular political and ethical values against which the audience is to interpret the present socio-political situation in fifth century Persian-controlled Egypt. The fictionalized and historical setting of *Ahiqar* is also important, because

it provides a literary “safe space” in which to offer critique of the current situation. A narrative set in the distant past allows at least some opportunity for honest reflection on the current political situation.

Granted, the views about kingship represented in *Ahiqar* could apply to a number of historical contexts in the ancient Near East, including the Neo-Assyrian or even native Syrian ones, as others have suggested. The goal of this paper, however, is to show that there is strong historical and literary evidence for reading *Ahiqar* in the Persian Period—an enterprise that has hardly been undertaken despite the methodological and contextual justification (as I have shown) for doing so.<sup>50</sup> Read in its Elephantine setting, it is difficult to overlook the strong resonances between the details of *Ahiqar* and the political climate during the fifth century B.C.E. This may explain why such a text was copied and/or read at Elephantine. The message of *Ahiqar* is certainly one of loyalty to the monarch. Whether or not this is directly the result of Persian propaganda (as has been hinted at Kratz and Becking) is difficult to say, but it does make sense for the worldview of the Judean community in light of the fact that they apparently remained loyal to the Persian rule during the frequent revolts by the native Egyptians, including the final successful one by Amyrtaeus.

In assessing the worldview of *Ahiqar* in terms of its view of kingship, we can argue, on the one hand, that the message of *Ahiqar*’s narrative and the king-sayings in column 6 encourage loyalty, honesty, and obedience to the monarch. This outlook would have had a significant impact on the Judean audience at Elephantine and accords well with the Persian Imperial ideology as evidenced by closely related literature, especially the Aramaic copy of the Bisitun Inscription which was also found at Elephantine. On the other hand, I have also suggested that we can detect a disguised *dissatisfaction* with the political system wherein the king is supposed to be the source of justice within which the text operates. At the very least, the text calls attention to the problematic aspects of life under foreign rule.

Together, the narrative and sayings of *Ahiqar* present a complicated, indeed, conflicting view of kingship. The king has absolute power of mythic

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50. I am not arguing that *Ahiqar* can *only* be interpreted against its Achaemenid background. Indeed, the clearly broad and lasting transmission of *Ahiqar* demonstrates that the story and wisdom of *Ahiqar* appealed to a wide variety of audiences, each of which, no doubt, received the text in their own unique way. As indicated above, a driving force in this study is to work against the assumption that there is a single “correct” (= original) context in which to interpret a piece of literature.

proportions and is apparently divinely ordained. Yet, the text also makes some effort to demonstrate that while this foreign king can function as a source of justice, he can also be a bitter and harsh source of oppression and destruction. *Ahiqar's* royal ideology is one that both accepts the political reality of Persian authority, while at the same time questions the merits of this system by giving voice to the relatively dismal realities experienced by the individual under a foreign imperial hegemony. The audience is one that sympathizes with a socially-vulnerable identity and one that lives in a diverse and unstable context where access to power is limited and justice is wholly dependent upon the seemingly unpredictable beneficence of one's own oppressors. A poignant summation of this outlook can be found in the remarks by Egyptologist Richard Parkinson about another instructional text from Egypt: "What we have here is not a simple matter of state propaganda or individual dissent, but an interplay between the ideal of ideology and the untoward of actuality, between ideal life and the vagaries of individual experience."<sup>51</sup>

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# ACHAEMENID RELIGIOUS POLICY AFTER THE SELEUCID DECLINE: CASE STUDIES IN POLITICAL MEMORY AND NEAR EASTERN DYNASTIC REPRESENTATION

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## INTRODUCTION

In an article published in 2007, Amélie Kuhrt has discussed “The Problem of Achaemenid Religious Policy.”<sup>1</sup> Taking the works of Old Testament scholars and their use of the Persian sources as her starting point, she demonstrates that many generalizing conclusions drawn from specific texts and local cases cannot be upheld when the sources are studied critically and put into context. From the Cyrus cylinder or the papyri of Elephantine, one cannot reconstruct a coherent religious policy that determined the Persian attitude towards Israel (and supposedly proves the authenticity of the Ezra-Nehemiah tradition). Kuhrt further argues that the very notion of an “Achaemenid religious policy” is anachronistic, based on concepts developed in European societies, in the wake of the Enlightenment and the challenges it posed for the relationship between religion and state. The very question that has occupied theologians and historians of the ancient Near East alike presupposes that there must have been more than just a case-by-case regulation of conflicts, but the sources cannot easily support such an assumption.

Still, the treatment of religious issues by Achaemenid rulers was of interest to current and former subjects already in antiquity. They produced and preserved documents that we now sometimes treat as evidence for

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1. Amélie Kuhrt, “The Problem of Achaemenid ‘Religious Policy,’” in *Die Welt der Götterbilder* (ed. B. Groneberg and W. Spickermann; BZAW 376; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 117–42.

“religious policy.” The Ezra-Nehemiah tradition may be one particularly well-known example, but there are others. The Gadatas letter from Magnesia and the Droaphernes letter from Sardis come to mind—in both cases, letters to or from an Achaemenid official regulating local religious affairs were inscribed on stone much later, in the late Hellenistic or early Roman era. This can only have been due to the interest of local religious functionaries, and has of course raised questions of authenticity that continue to be debated.<sup>2</sup> Achaemenid religious policy may not have existed as a coherent ideological strategy, but it certainly existed in various, conflicting reconstructions on a local level. It was invented again and again, as a form of political memory.

It is this phenomenon that I want to address in this paper. I will discuss some examples of how reconstructed (or simply constructed) Achaemenid attitudes towards religion could be used as an “invented tradition” that facilitated the erection of new states, or “imagined communities.”<sup>3</sup> My focus is not on the time immediately following the end of Achaemenid rule, but on a later period, when memories of the Achaemenid Empire had already faded, and rather free reconstructions could be offered. The obvious moment to look for is the decline of Seleucid rule. I am not just interested in Persian elements—religious or other—in Near Eastern dynastic representation of kingship; I am more specifically interested in the *claim* that certain religious elements were Persian, that the political decision to favor a symbol, a ritual or a temple could have a legitimizing effect because it could just as well have been made by an Achaemenid king. I am thus looking for historical postulates of an Achaemenid religious policy, used to bolster the authority of post-Achaemenid, and more specifically post-Seleucid, royal dynasties.

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2. The Persian origin of both documents has been questioned, e.g., by Pierre Briant, “Droaphernès et la statue de Sardis,” in *Studies of Persian History: Essays in Memory of David M. Lewis* (ed. M. Brosius and A. Kuhrt; Achaemenid History 11; Leiden: NINO, 1998), 205–26; “Histoire et archéologie d’un texte: La lettre de Darius à Gadatas entre Perses, Grecs et Romains,” in *Licia e Lidia prima dell’ellenizzazione* (ed. M. Giorgieri et al.; Rome: Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, 2003), 107–44. For a defense of the authenticity of the Gadatas letter, cf. Christopher Tuplin, “The Gadatas Letter,” in *Greek History and Epigraphy: Essays in Honour of P. J. Rhodes* (ed. L. Mitchell and L. Rubinstein; Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales, 2009), 155–84.

3. The term of course derives from Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (rev. ed.; London: Verso, 1991).

## WAS THERE A SELEUCID RELIGIOUS POLICY?

The term “post-Seleucid” requires justification, at least if it is supposed to be useful in more than just a chronological sense. I will argue that certain dynasties of the ancient Near East consciously evoked Achaemenid religious policies that they had themselves invented, thereby constructing their own legitimacy after they had established themselves in the wake of Seleucid decline. This presupposes that the Seleucids were not themselves identified with the Achaemenid past. But it has often been noted that Seleucid kings took over the roles that were expected from them by the local population, including religious functions where this was necessary. The best example is the Borsippa cylinder (268 B.C.E.). It shows Antiochus I as temple-builder and worshipper of Nabu, in the tradition of pre-Achaemenid traditions of royal ideology that remained virtually unchanged in Babylonia.<sup>4</sup> Other evidence concerns the (irregular) participation in the Babylonian new-year’s festival, and connections established by the Babylonian élite between local sanctuaries and Seleucid kings.<sup>5</sup> There was nothing specifically Achaemenid about this, although Achaemenid kings used the same strategies in Egypt.<sup>6</sup> It was a natural way to gain favor with conservative local authorities, and one that is hardly attested outside Babylonia.

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4. Cf. Susan Sherwin-White and Amélie Kuhrt, “Aspects of Seleucid Royal Ideology: The Cylinder of Antiochus I from Borsippa,” *JHS* 111 (1991): 71–86, who use the text as an argument for continuity; and from a different perspective Rolf Strootman, “Babylonian, Macedonian, King of the World: The Antiochos Cylinder from Borsippa and Seleukid Imperial Integration,” in *Shifting Social Imaginaries in the Hellenistic Period: Narrations, Practices, and Images* (ed. E. Stavrianopoulou; Mnemosyne Supplements 363; Leiden: Brill, 2013), 67–97, who stresses the Seleucid characteristics. Strootman even argues that “Seleukid propaganda erased the Achaemenids from Babylonian history” due to the decidedly archaic tone (73).

5. Cf. the discussion by Tom Boiy and Peter Franz Mittag, “Die lokalen Eliten in Babylonien,” in *Lokale Eliten und hellenistische Könige: Zwischen Kooperation und Konfrontation* (ed. B. Dreyer and P. F. Mittag; Oikumene 8; Berlin: Verlag Antike, 2011), 105–31 (110–14, 118).

6. The comparison is often made, e.g., by Laurianne Sève-Martinez, “Quoi de neuf sur le royaume séleucide?” in *L’Orient méditerranéen de la mort d’Alexandre aux campagnes de Pompée: Cités et royaumes à l’époque hellénistique* (ed. F. Prost; Pallas 62; Rennes: Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 2003), 221–42 (239–40).

On the whole, the Seleucids do not seem to have had any special interest in Achaemenid heritage, and the same is true for Achaemenid religious traditions.<sup>7</sup> Even in Babylonia, where Seleucid kings fulfilled traditional cultic roles at least on certain occasions, they were identified with Alexander and the Macedonian tradition rather than with Cyrus or Darius. True, foreign enemies could at times posit a continuity between Achaemenid and Seleucid rule that also involved attitudes towards religion—as when a priestly decree from Canopus in Egypt credits Ptolemy III with having brought back from the Seleucid empire, in the third Syrian war, “the sacred statues that had been taken out of the country by the Persians.”<sup>8</sup> But such statements were based on political ideologies with no apparent relation to what the Seleucids themselves saw as the defining elements of their rule.

Another preliminary question that has to be briefly addressed is whether or not there was a definable Seleucid religious policy. Basic principles are set out clearly in the much-discussed new inscription from Maresha that records the appointment of Olympiodorus as (probably) high-priest of the satrapy Coele-Syria and Phoenicia in 178 B.C.E.<sup>9</sup> The opening lines of the letter sent by Seleucus IV to Heliodorus contain one of the longest ideological statements that can be found in Seleucid royal inscriptions,<sup>10</sup> and it clearly has to do with attitudes towards religion:

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7. Cf. Christopher Tuplin, “The Seleucids and Their Achaemenid Predecessors: A Persian Inheritance?” in *Ancient Greece and Ancient Iran: Cross-Cultural Encounters* (ed. S. M. Darbandi and A. Zournatzi; Athens: National Hellenic Research Foundation, 2008), 109–36.

8. OGIS 56, l. 9 (238 B.C.E.); translation by Michel Austin, *The Hellenistic World from Alexander to the Roman Conquest: A Selection of Ancient Sources in Translation* (2nd ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), no. 271. Cf. the account in OGIS 54 (Austin 268), l. 7. On the Seleucids as heirs of Egyptian enmity towards the Persians, see Susan Sherwin-White and Amélie Kuhrt, *From Samarkhand to Sardis: A New Approach to the Seleucid Empire* (Hellenistic Culture and Society 13; Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1993), 39.

9. SEG 57.1838; cf. Hannah M. Cotton and Michael Wörle, “Seleukos IV to Heliodoros: A New Dossier of Royal Correspondence from Israel,” *ZPE* 159 (2007): 191–205; Dov Gera, “Olympiodoros, Heliodoros and the Temples of Koilē Syria and Phoinikē,” *ZPE* 169 (2009): 125–55.

10. Cf. Walter Ameling, “Seleukidische Religionspolitik in Koile-Syrien und Phönizien nach der neuen Inschrift von Maresha,” in *Die Septuaginta—Entstehung, Sprache, Geschichte* (ed. S. Kreuzer, M. Meiser, and M. Sigismund; WUNT 286; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 337–59 (344): “es handelt sich ... um eine der längsten allgemeinen Äußerungen eines Seleukiden zu den Zielen seiner Herrschaft.”

Taking the utmost consideration for the safety of our subjects, and thinking it to be of the greatest good for the affairs in our realm when those living in our kingdom manage their lives without fear, and at the same time realising that nothing can enjoy its fitting prosperity without the good will of the gods, from the outset we have made it our concern to ensure that the sanctuaries founded in the other satrapies receive the traditional honours with the care befitting them. (Il. 14–22, trans. Cotton/Wörrle)

This is very explicit: everything should stay as it is—including, of course, the revenues that are to be exacted by Seleucid officials such as Olympiodorus. As the inscription refers to the “traditional honours” received by the gods, it could be taken as yet another piece of evidence for the Seleucid policy of “religious toleration” that has often been described.<sup>11</sup> But respect for local cults and reluctance to change anything hardly deserves to be called religious policy; such a strategy could also be described as a severe lack of interest. More interesting are recent attempts to show not only Seleucid respect for local cults, but “an active utilization of these cults in order to legitimate Seleucid rule.”<sup>12</sup> This would amount to the

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11. E.g. by Stefan Beyerle, “‘If You Preserve Carefully Faith...’—Hellenistic Attitudes towards Religion in Pre-Maccabean Times,” *ZAW* 118 (2006): 250–63 (esp. 258–62). His main piece of evidence is flawed: The quotation stems from a heavily reconstructed letter of (supposedly) Antiochus III to Amyzon (203 B.C.E.), where according to a now obsolete restoration by Wilhelm the inhabitants are asked to preserve “faith” (πίστις) in both the gods and the king; cf. the different restoration by C. Bradford Welles, *Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Period: A Study in Greek Epigraphy* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1934), 165 no. 38 (piety, εὐσέβεια, to the gods and loyalty, πίστις, to the king); and the much more conservative one by John Ma, Peter S. Derow and Andrew A. Meadows, “RC 38 (Amyzon) Reconsidered,” *ZPE* 109 (1995): 71–80 (loyalty to the kings, cf. p. 72: “There is nothing in the document which imposes a reference to the gods”). Even if the (completely restored) reference to gods were to be accepted (and Beyerle gives no reason to do so), it would not mean what Beyerle assumes, namely that the king asks the Amyzonians to keep up a *specific* form of worship in honor of *specific* gods, thus actively encouraging religious particularism for the common good. A more balanced treatment is provided by Maurice Sartre, “Religion und Herrschaft: Das Seleukidenreich,” *Saeculum* 57 (2006): 163–90 (165 against the concept of “religious policy”).

12. Kyle Erickson, “Apollo-Nabû: The Babylonian Policy of Antiochus I,” in *Seleucid Dissolution: The Sinking of the Anchor* (ed. K. Erickson and G. Ramsey; Philippika 50; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011), 51–65 (62 for the quotation); Strootman, “Babylonian, Macedonian, King of the World,” 73–78.

manipulation of local traditions according to Seleucid interests—a plausible perspective, but one that is difficult to prove, as pre-Hellenistic information about these traditions is often missing. In any case, “Seleucid religious policy” would still result in very different local manifestations phrased in indigenous terminology.

Two exceptions come to mind. Antiochus IV introduced the cults of Zeus Olympius and Dionysus in Jerusalem, but that was an irregular punitive measure in an unstable political situation. That the cult of Zeus Olympius seems to have been introduced in other “Greek” communities of the region is not necessarily evidence of further royal intervention, although it does indicate that “Greek” communities knew how to appease their rulers.<sup>13</sup> The dynastic ruler cult as planned and organized by Antiochus III comes closer to a consciously designed “religious policy.”<sup>14</sup> But this does not distinguish the Seleucids in any meaningful sense from the Ptolemies or the Attalids, and in any case the dynastic cult does not seem to have been something that the kings could not do without. Where it was incompatible with local religious expectations, it was probably not introduced.<sup>15</sup> On the whole, no “Seleucid religious policy” is apparent from the sources. This presumably left some empty space for the “Achaemenid revivals” that I am now going to present.

#### THE FRATARAKĀ OF PERSIS

I start with a difficult case. The coinage of the Fratarakā from Persis has received considerable attention in recent years. It is certainly an example of the creation of political memory after the Persian empire that assigns an important place to Achaemenid royal religion; whether or not it is also an example of a “reconstructed” Achaemenid religious policy is less secure.

The Fratarakā did not pose as Achaemenid kings, but they did employ several Achaemenid symbols for their own legitimation (the “satrapal

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13. For an interesting albeit speculative argument partly based on later civic coinage, cf. Achim Lichtenberger, “Artemis and Zeus Olympios in Roman Gerasa and Seleucid Religious Policy,” in *The Variety of Local Religious Life in the Near East in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods* (ed. T. Kaizer; RGRW 164; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 133–53. On Jerusalem, see below.

14. Cf. Peter van Nuffelen, “Le culte royal de l’empire des Séleucides: Une réinterprétation,” *Historia* 52 (2004): 278–301; Sartre, “Religion und Herrschaft,” 177–88.

15. Cf. Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, *From Samarkhand to Sardis*, 202–10.

tiara,” the royal archer, the winged figure that probably represents the royal glory).<sup>16</sup> The title is normally explained—by comparison with earlier evidence from Achaemenid Egypt—as deriving from the designation for a subordinate governor within a satrapy.<sup>17</sup> The reading of the legends is in many cases uncertain, but two of the earliest rulers, Ardaxšir I and Baydād, refer to themselves as *פרתרכא זי אלהיא*, “*frataraka* of the gods,” and *בר פרס*, “son of Persia.”<sup>18</sup> The gods in question may likely be those of the Persian pantheon, but the legend is concerned rather with the Persian origin of the rulers themselves. More interesting is the religious iconography that can often be found on the reverse. The coins of the early Fratarakā show the ruler in adoration before a building, with a standard to the right, and certain decorative elements on the roof that have been interpreted as fire-altars or parapets.<sup>19</sup> Later coins show what may be regarded as a reduction of the earlier type. The ruler has moved to the right and is now standing directly before what is normally called a fire-altar. If the suggestion that we should imagine this altar already inside the building depicted on the earlier coins were correct, the difference would not be of a categorical nature.<sup>20</sup> But the focus has clearly shifted towards the role of the ruler as a performer of ritual. Parthian influence on this later Fratarakā-coinage has often been stressed.<sup>21</sup>

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16. Cf. Josef Wiesehöfer, *Die ‘dunklen Jahrhunderte’ der Persis: Untersuchungen zu Geschichte und Kultur von Färs in frühhellenistischer Zeit (330–140 v. Chr.)* (Zetemata 90; Munich: Beck, 1994), 110–11; 135–36; Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis, “The Frataraka Coins of Persis: Bridging the Gap between Achaemenid and Sasanian Persia,” in *The World of Achaemenid Persia. History, Art and Society in Iran and the Ancient Near East* (ed. J. Curtis and S. Simpson; New York: Tauris, 2010), 379–94 (380; 389–90).

17. Cf. Wiesehöfer, *Die ‘dunklen Jahrhunderte’ der Persis*, 107–8.

18. The best images are available in Dietrich O. A. Klose and Wilhelm Müseler, *Statthalter, Rebellen, Könige: Die Münzen aus Persepolis von Alexander dem Großen zu den Sasaniden* (München: Staatliche Münzsammlung, 2008). On the legends and their interpretation, see *ibid.*, 18–19, 25.

19. For a summary of earlier views, see Daniel T. Potts, “Foundation Houses, Fire Altars and the Frataraka: Interpreting the Iconography of Some Post-Achaemenid Persian Coins,” *Iranica Antiqua* 42 (2007): 271–300.

20. This is the view of Ernie Haerinck and Bruno Overlaet, “Altar Shrines and Fire Altars? Architectural Representations on Frataraka Coinage,” *Iranica Antiqua* 43 (2008): 207–33 (217).

21. E.g. by Wiesehöfer, *Die ‘dunklen Jahrhunderte’ der Persis*, 113; Curtis, “Frataraka Coins,” 391.



The building on the earlier coins has been argued to represent the Zendan-i Sulaiman at Pasargadae, the Ka'ba-i Zardošt at Naqš-i Rostam, or a similar building that has not been preserved.<sup>22</sup> There is no agreement among scholars about the function of such buildings (fire-altar, fire-repository, etc.). It is an attractive suggestion that the Fratarakā-rulers themselves no longer knew what these buildings' original function had been, and used them as a symbol that referred to the glorious Achaemenid past.<sup>23</sup> This would be a good example of a (re)constructed Persian attitude toward religion, but the argument must remain speculative. The later type has a clearer focus on ritual. The proportions have changed: The ruler and the altar are of roughly equal size, as in the Achaemenid royal tomb reliefs of Naqš-i-Rostam, or on an Achaemenid seal dated between the sixth and the fourth century B.C.E.<sup>24</sup>

The significance of the typological development depends to some degree on the dating. Josef Wiesehöfer, followed by a number of scholars, has argued that the Fratarakā-coinage did not start before the early second century B.C.E.<sup>25</sup> The Fratarakā, in this view, were originally appointed by

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22. Cf. the overview by Potts, "Foundation Houses."

23. Potts, "Foundation Houses," 296–97; accepted by Klose and Müsseler, *Statthalter, Rebellen, Könige*, 21. Contrast Krzysztof Jakubiak, "Persis Coins Propaganda and Ideology in the Early Parthian Period," in *Aux pays d'Allat: Mélanges offerts à Michał Gawlikowski* (ed. P. Bieliński and F. M. Stępniewski; Warsaw: Instytut Archeologii Uniwersytet Warszawski, 2005), 99–112, who argues that "neither of the two [Zendan-i Sulaiman and Ka'ba-i Zardošt] was ever used as a temple, thus excluding any possibility of their appearing on coins as a propaganda symbol of an old Achaemenid tradition" (101); both parts of this statement are in fact doubtful. In a similar manner, his view that Persian elements on coins "were obviously not used by accident or without an understanding of their meaning" (104) is debatable.

24. Cf. the images in Klose and Müsseler, *Statthalter, Satrapen, Rebellen*, 22–23, who, however, compare the Achaemenid examples only to the first series of Baydād, not to the later, reduced type.

25. Wiesehöfer, *Dunklen Jahrhunderte der Persis*, 101–36; restated in his "Frataraka Rule in Early Seleucid Persis: A New Appraisal," in *Creating a Hellenistic World* (ed. A. Erskine and L. Llewellyn-Jones; Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales, 2011), 107–21 (110–16). Cf. Haerinck and Overlaet, "Altar Shrines and Fire Altars?" 208–9; Tuplin, "Seleucids and their Achaemenid Predecessors," 114; M. Rahim Shayegan, *Arsacids and Sasanians: Political Ideology in Post-Hellenistic and Late Antique Persia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 168–78; Sonja Plischke, *Die Seleukiden und Iran: Die seleukidische Herrschaftspolitik in den östlichen Satrapien* (CLeO 9; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2014), 310–12.

Antiochus III as the representatives of Seleucid power in Persis, but in the course of the second century established an independent kingdom before they became vassal kings of the Parthians. Oliver Hoover and others have more recently revived an older theory that argued for a start in the early third century B.C.E., not least because some coins (all of which carry the title *frataraka*) are overstrikes based on coins of Seleucus I and Antiochus I.<sup>26</sup> The Fratarakā-dynasts would then have had a short independent rule from the end of the Achaemenid empire until the Seleucids established control over Persis under Antiochus I; the later coins, with their Parthian influence and without the title *frataraka*, would have been produced considerably later, not before the 140s B.C.E. Recently, a third theory has been added that accepts the early beginning of Fratarakā-coinage, but denies any break in the third century as well as any secession of Persis from the Seleucid empire; in this view, the Fratarakā were not a post-Seleucid dynasty, but client rulers who remained loyal to the Seleucid kings until the bitter end (i.e., the Parthian conquest).<sup>27</sup>

The small number of coins and the ambiguous literary evidence for Seleucid control of Persis in the third century do not permit a definite solution. But the argument from overstruck coins is a strong one that renders the “low chronology” implausible.<sup>28</sup> The Fratarakā may still be regarded as a post-Seleucid dynasty. The lack of any reference to Seleucid authority (e.g., the anchor) is striking. The Fratarakā clearly derived their legitimacy from Achaemenid royal tradition, and took care to emphasize

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26. Oliver D. Hoover, “Overstruck Seleucid Coins,” in *Seleucid Coins: A Comprehensive Catalogue. Part II: Seleucus IV through Antiochus XIII, Vol. 2* (ed. A. Houghton, C. Lorber and O. Hoover; New York: American Numismatic Society, 2008), 209–30 (213–15); Klose and Müseler, *Statthalter, Rebellen, Könige*, 10–11; 15–21; Curtis, “Frataraka Coins,” 385–89.

27. David Engels, “A New Frataraka Chronology,” *Latomus* 72 (2013): 28–80.

28. I concur with Engels, “New Frataraka Chronology,” 46: “The ‘low chronology’ seems to ignore some important numismatic aspects.” Plischke, *Seleukiden und Iran*, 298–312 gives an overview over recent debates and concludes (310–12) that Wiesehöfer’s theory is the only one worth considering. She justly points to the literary evidence for Seleucid satraps in Persis, Susiana and Media under Antiochus III, but none of this precludes the possibility that there were (possibly semi-independent) Fratarakā in the early third century B.C.E.; in addition, Plischke does not make a suggestion about how to explain the observation that has revived the early dating, namely, that Fratarakā-coins are struck only over coins of Seleucus I and Antiochus I, not over those of later Seleucids.

the religious dimension of royal representation. The image of a concrete ritual performance by the king himself before the fire-altar belongs to the second and first centuries B.C.E. according to both chronological models. It has been argued with some speculation that the reason for this choice was that the Fratarakā had taken over religious functions from a formerly powerful priesthood.<sup>29</sup> But it could also be an attempt to counter Parthian propaganda, by referring to the religious competences and obligations of Achaemenid kings in a more obvious manner. The Arsacid dynasty did rely on Achaemenid traditions, but Parthian kings referred much less to the religious aspect of royal ideology on their coinage, and were generally more willing to incorporate well-known Hellenistic (and modified Seleucid) symbols.<sup>30</sup> Perhaps a stronger link to what was known (or guessed from observations made in Naqš-e Rostam) about Achaemenid religion in Fars seemed advantageous to the Fratarakā of the late second and first centuries B.C.E., be they vassal kings or autonomous rulers.

#### ANTIOCHUS I OF COMMAGENE

My second example is much better documented: the dynastic representation of Antiochus I of Commagene. Antiochus as an Orontid claimed ancestry from both Alexander the Great and Darius I.<sup>31</sup> When establishing what can only be described as a strictly organized, meticulously planned official religion that connected the ancestor and ruler cults to the worship of a syncretistic pantheon, he tried to capitalize on both traditions.<sup>32</sup>

29. Haerincx and Overlaet, "Altar Shrines and Fire Altars?" 218.

30. E.g. the deity sitting on the *omphalos*; cf. Linda-Marie Günther, "Seleukidische Vorbilder der parthischen Münzikonographie," in *The Parthian Empire and its Religions: Studies in the Dynamics of Religious Diversity* (ed. P. Wick and M. Zehnder; Pietas 5; Gutenberg: Computus, 2012), 53–66.

31. On the earlier history of the Orontid dynasty, see Margherita Facella, *La dinastia degli Orontidi nella Commagene ellenistico-romana* (Studi Ellenistici 17; Pisa: Giardini, 2006), 95–198. Orontes was a satrap of Armenia in the Persian empire and may have been related to the Achaemenid house via marriage alliances; the Alexander-connection draws upon the marriage alliance concluded by Mithridates I with Antiochus VIII by marrying the latter's daughter Laodice, mother of Antiochus I of Commagene; according to some legends, the Seleucids were heirs of Alexander.

32. On the cult, see Jörg Wagner, "Dynastie und Herrscherkult in Kommagene: Forschungsgeschichte und neuere Funde," *MDAI (I)* 33 (1983): 177–224; Facella, *Dinastia degli Orontidi*, 250–94; Peter Franz Mittag, "Zur Entwicklung des

Most interesting for us are the parallel inscriptions set up on the Eastern and Western terraces of the *hierotherasion* on Nemrud Dagħ.<sup>33</sup> Antiochus regularly calls on “all the traditional gods from Persia, Macedonia, and native Commagene,” and even gives a reason why the statues set up in the *hierotherasia* look like they do:

The images of their shape, produced with manifold techniques, as the old tradition of Persians and Greeks—the most fortunate root of my family—transmits, (these images) I have adorned with sacrifices and festivals, as is the old convention, and a common custom among men. And my just providence has additionally invented further honors that were obviously appropriate.<sup>34</sup>

Two sources for the cult are mentioned: on the one hand, the *παλαιὸς λόγος* of Persians and Greeks, on the other, the *δικαία φροντίς* of the king himself, who frankly states that some of the honors for the gods were “additionally invented” (*προσεξεῦρε*) by himself. It does not need much speculation to postulate that the additional inventions had the more important role in this process. Antiochus suggests as much when he states that he himself “instituted the order (of the festival) and the whole liturgy in a manner worthy of my fortune and of the illustriousness of the gods.”<sup>35</sup> It is also noteworthy that in an earlier phase of the cult’s development attested at Sofraz Köy, Iranian elements are absent. The cult of Antiochus seems to have originated as a Hellenistic, perhaps even Seleucid ruler cult; only later in his life did he decide to add “Persian” traditions to the Greek ones.<sup>36</sup>

Some elements of this blending of traditions are rather unsurprising, such as the parallel established between Ahura Mazda and Zeus. The role of Mithras in this context deserves more attention. He is obviously one of the “ancestral Persian gods,” identified here with Apollo, Helios and Hermes

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‘Herrscher-’ und ‘Dynastiekultes’ in Kommagene,” in *Studien zum vorhellenistischen und hellenistischen Herrscherkult* (ed. L.-M. Günther and S. Plische; Oikumene 9; Berlin: Verlag Antike, 2011), 141–60.

33. Greek text according to Helmut Waldmann, *Die kommagenischen Kultreformen unter König Mithradates I: Kallinikos und seinem Sohne Antiochos I* (EPRO 34; Leiden: Brill, 1973), 62–71.

34. Nomos Inscription (N; cf. IGLSyr I 1) 27–36.

35. N 73–75.

36. For the development, see Wagner, “Dynastie und Herrscherkult,” 192–94; Facella, *Dinastia degli Orontidi*, 280–81.

on the Greek side. It has long been recognized that this cult of Mithras cannot be identified with the Roman mysteries of Mithras (although the latter may have some diffuse roots in Commagene).<sup>37</sup> But does this mean that Mithras has his natural roots in Achaemenid royal theology?<sup>38</sup> It is true that Artaxerxes II and III do at times add Mithra and Anāhitā to standard formulae,<sup>39</sup> but on the whole, the prominence of Mithras in the Commagenian royal cult cannot easily be derived from Achaemenid royal ideology. We should see it as an invention based either on Classical Greek perceptions of Achaemenid rule or on Armenian traditions that we do not know at all. There is also no evidence for the syncretism being a traditional one. Herzfeld has adduced the five altars with Greek inscriptions found in the area of the so-called Fratarakā-Tempel of Persepolis, possibly from the late fourth century B.C.E.; they are dedicated to Zeus Megistos, Athena Basileia, Apollo, Artemis and Helios, but his suggestion that these gods were already at that time—and in this region—identified as Ahura Mazda, Anāhitā and Mithra is mere speculation.<sup>40</sup>

Antiochus himself admits that what he is presenting in the *hierotheresia* is to a significant degree an invented religion. Both the “traditional” and the newly invented rituals are based on his personal expertise that cannot be challenged on the grounds of historical arguments. This is directly stressed in another passage concerning the priestly garments: At the birthday ceremonies, the priest “shall wear the dress of Persian garment that both my graciousness and the traditional law of our family have invested

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37. That the Roman cult of Mithras has its roots in the Commagenian royal family has been tentatively speculated by Roger Beck, “The Mysteries of Mithras: A New Account of Their Genesis,” *JRS* 88 (1998): 115–28.

38. Thus Reinhold Merkelbach, *Mithras: Ein persisch-römischer Mysterienkult* (2nd ed.; Weinheim: Beltz Athenäum, 1994), 23–37; 59–61; Helmut Waldmann, *Der kommagenische Mazdaismus* (Istanbuler Mitteilungen Beihefte 37; Tübingen: Wasmuth, 1991), 35–36.

39. Cf. Kuhrt, “Problem of Achaemenid ‘Religious Policy,’” 123–24.

40. Ernst Herzfeld, *Archaeological History of Iran* (London: British Academy, 1935), 44–47; the most recent edition is the one by Georges Rougemont, *Inscriptions grecques d’Iran et d’Asie centrale* (Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum 2.1; London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 2012), 125–29 no. 59–63. Herzfeld’s theory has been adapted, e.g., by Pierfrancesco Callieri, *L’Archéologie du Fârs à l’époque hellénistique* (Paris: de Boccard, 2007), 56–69; Wiesehöfer, “Frataraka Rule in Early Seleucid Persis,” 109; cf. also Engels, “New Frataraka Chronology,” 32–33. For justified skepticism, cf. Rougemont’s commentary.

him with.”<sup>41</sup> Neither the royal *charis* nor the supposed *patrios nomos* tied to the royal family were sources that could have been critically evaluated by the inhabitants of Commagene. The Persian character of the garments is a mere postulate, designed to show that the king, who insists on having personally provided the garments, has access to Persian religious traditions that are not known to others.<sup>42</sup>

One important precondition for this argument was that in all likelihood, no Commagenian had ever seen a Persian priest before. The religious traditions supposedly known to Antiochus because of his Achaemenid heritage were alien to the region. Commagenian religion was dominated by Hittite and North Syrian traditions; there is no evidence for Iranian influence, apart from the kings and the local élite connected to the royal house.<sup>43</sup> Antiochus was in fact free to construct a “traditional” religious policy, one that matched his desire to connect himself to the great traditions of the Achaemenid Empire, but also to emphasize that an even more glorious age was yet to come.

The strategy was unsuccessful. In the words of Versluys, the tradition constructed by Antiochus “was apparently not considered (typically) Commagenean by the inhabitants of Commagene.”<sup>44</sup> The very conditions that seemed to facilitate Antiochus’s claims can in fact be seen as the main reason why his syncretistic, Achaemenid-Macedonian program failed: one would not expect people to climb up a mountain 2,000 meters high, to honor gods they did not know, with rituals that the king himself admitted to have “additionally invented.” But this is another story. In this context, it is important to note that Antiochus did not simply try to transplant

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41. N 135–137.

42. Mittag, “Zur Entwicklung des ‘Herrscher-’ und ‘Dynastiekultes’ in Kommagene,” 154–55 notes that the rituals to be carried out do not significantly differ from those of other Hellenistic ruler cults.

43. Michael Blömer, “Religious Life of Commagene in the Late Hellenistic and Early Roman Period,” in *The Letter of Mara bar Sarapion in Context* (ed. A. Merz and T. Tieleman; CHANE 58; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 95–128. Contrast Mittag, “Zur Entwicklung des ‘Herrscher-’ und ‘Dynastiekultes’ in Kommagene,” 158–60, who argues that Antiochus presented a Hellenized version of Persian religion to an audience that remained attached to Iranian traditions.

44. Miguel John Versluys, “Cultural Responses from Kingdom to Province: The Romanisation of Commagene, Local Identities and the Mara bar Sarapion Letter,” in *The Letter of Mara bar Sarapion in Context* (ed. A. Merz and T. Tieleman; CHANE 58; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 43–66 (64).

a Persian religious tradition into an environment where it did not belong, and that he did not just try to blend Persian and Macedonian traditions into a new kind of religious syncretism. He rather claimed—and I take it to be no more than a claim—to have access to authentic Achaemenid tradition that allowed him to behave in religious matters like an Achaemenid king would have done. We are dealing with a reconstructed, or “invented” Achaemenid religious policy for the purpose of legitimizing a post-Seleucid dynasty.

### THE MITHRIDATIDS OF PONTUS

For my third example, we have to move some decades back in time, and some 500 kilometers to the Northwest. The Mithridatid dynasty of Pontus actively advertised its Achaemenid origins, at least in the time of Mithridates VI Eupator.<sup>45</sup> According to a reconstruction that has found broad acceptance in recent scholarship, this may not be totally off the mark: it is possible that Mithridates’s ancestors had once been the satraps of Mysia, appointed by Darius, and that they belonged to one of the seven noble families of Persia (which could easily be integrated into an “Achaemenid” genealogy).<sup>46</sup> In the early Hellenistic period, they would have lost their position, but somehow established themselves in Paphlagonia. According to Stephen Mitchell, the Mithridatids acted henceforth as the “strongly iranising counterpart” to the Attalid dynasty, whose history went the other way (from Paphlagonia to Mysia and to straightforward Hellenization).<sup>47</sup>

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45. On the politics of genealogy, cf. Peter Panitschek, “Zu den genealogischen Konstruktionen der Dynastien von Pontos und Kappadokien,” *Rivista Storica dell'Antichità* 17–18 (1987–88): 73–95 (but cf. the following note for a more recent view on the actual origins of the dynasty).

46. Albert B. Bosworth and Patrick V. Wheatley, “The Origins of the Pontic House,” *JHS* 118 (1998): 155–64.

47. Stephen Mitchell, “In Search of the Pontic Community in Antiquity,” in *Representations of Empire: Rome and the Mediterranean World* (ed. A. K. Bowman et al.; PBA 114; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 35–64 (54); cf. Mitchell, “Anatolia between East and West: The Parallel Lives of the Attalid and Mithridatid Kingdoms in the Hellenistic Age,” *Anadolu Araştırmaları* 17 (2004): 131–39. Cf. for a more balanced view on the Mithridatids Brian C. McGing, “Iranian Kings in Greek Dress? Cultural Identity in the Mithradatid Kingdom of Pontus,” in *Space, Place and Identity in Northern Anatolia* (ed. T. Bekker-Nielsen; Geographica Historica 29; Stuttgart: Steiner, 2014), 13–37.



Apart from genealogy, the main examples adduced by Mitchell for the “iranizing” tendency of the Mithridatids have to do with religion. “The Mithridatids patronised the great iranising sanctuaries ... and did much to promote them”<sup>48</sup>; in addition, Mithridates VI “used symbols of Persian religion and Persian monarchy” on his coins.<sup>49</sup> But to start with the second quotation, Pontic coinage is a good example for the problems involved here. Apart from the iconography that is by all means Greek, only a few aspects can be cited as relevant. The “Pontic emblem,” a star and a crescent combined, appears on coins from Mithridates III onwards. It has been argued that it refers to the Anatolian cult of Men.<sup>50</sup> Achaemenid references have also been suggested, namely a syncretism of Men (the moon) and Ahura Mazda (the star), or a broader relationship to Achaemenid astral theology.<sup>51</sup> The latter view may be accepted with caution, but the combination of symbols has no exact Achaemenid parallel,<sup>52</sup> and the Men-connection seems rather likely—especially given the fact that the dynastic god of the Mithridatids seems to have been Men Pharnakou, to whom they swore their oaths at Ameria.<sup>53</sup> That god, apparently an invention of Pharnakes I, has been argued to be Iranian in character, but without good reason.<sup>54</sup> What remains is the importance of Perseus on coins especially of Mithridates VI. Perseus could of course be seen as the ancestor of the Persians,<sup>55</sup> but this would only bolster the claim of Achaemenid descent in a Greek context, without a notion of “Persian religion.”

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48. Mitchell, “In Search of the Pontic Community,” 57.

49. Mitchell, “Anatolia between East and West,” 139.

50. Lâtife Summerer, “Das pontische Wappen: Zur Astralsymbolik auf den pontischen Münzen,” *Chiron* 25 (1995): 305–14.

51. Cf. the positions discussed by Christoph Michels, *Kulturtransfer und monarchischer ‘Philhellenismus’: Bithynien, Pontos und Kappadokien in hellenistischer Zeit* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2009), 186–90.

52. The symbols themselves are of course not innovative; stars and crescents appear, e.g., on Neo-Assyrian and Achaemenid seals. The closest analogies to the Pontic emblem, however, come from later Parthian and Elymaean coins, cf. Klose and Müseler, *Statthalter, Rebellen, Könige*, 54.

53. Strab. 12.3.31.

54. Cf. on this cult McGing, “Iranian Kings in Greek Dress?” 27

55. However, Perseus would still have been seen as a Greek mythological figure by Greeks. Cf. Michels, *Kulturtransfer und monarchischer ‘Philhellenismus,’* 196–97, and Sergej J. Saprykin, “The Religion and Cults of the Pontic Kingdom: Political Aspects,” in *Mithridates VI and the Pontic Kingdom* (ed. Jakob Munk Højte; Black Sea Studies 9; Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2009), 249–75 (258–62), who possibly

The only possible examples for a “patronizing of Iranian sanctuaries” are Ameria, where Men Pharnakou was worshipped by the kings, and Zela, where according to Strabo the Mithridatids did not change the traditional position of the priests.<sup>56</sup> The first case has no obvious Persian connection. The report about Zela shows that the dynasty did not object to continuity in a city known for its Achaemenid temple of Anaitis, Omanus and Anadatus,<sup>57</sup> but this hardly qualifies as a deliberate religious policy. Nor do we find a spread of Persian cults in the Pontic kingdom.<sup>58</sup> The dynasty did prefer the name Mithridates, but evidence for the cult of Mithras only comes from the Roman Era; the claim that Mithras was the “royal god” of Mithridates VI cannot be substantiated.<sup>59</sup> When Strabo says about Amisos that “Eupator adorned it with temples,” the reference is to a standard euergetic procedure; what kind of temples he built, we do not know.<sup>60</sup>

So all the more depends on a famous passage in Appianus’ *Mithridatic Wars* that mentions a sacrifice performed by Mithridates VI Eupator for Zeus Stratios after the victory against Murena in 81 B.C.E.

[Mithridates ...] offered a traditional sacrifice to Zeus Stratios on a lofty pile of wood on a high hill. First, the kings themselves carry wood to the heap. Then they make a smaller pile encircling the other one, on which they pour milk, honey, wine, oil, and various kinds of incense. A banquet is spread on the ground for those present (as at the sacrifices of the Persian kings at Pasargadae) and then they set fire to the wood. The height of the flame is such that it can be seen at a distance of 1000 stades from the sea, and they say that nobody can come near it for several days on account of the heat. Mithridates performed a sacrifice of this kind according to the traditional custom.<sup>61</sup>

To cite Mitchell again: “The mention of Pasargadae surely implies that Mithridates was concerned to assert an explicit link between his kingdom

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overemphasizes Perseus’s significance as a syncretistic symbol connecting Greek and Iranian traditions.

56. Strab. 12.3.31 (Ameria); 11.8.4; 12.3.37 (Zela).

57. Strab. 11.8.4; cf. 15.3.15 on the cult of Anahita and Omanus in Cappadocia.

58. Cf. Saprykin, “Religion and Cults of the Pontic Kingdom,” who, however, speculates about a rather large number of syncretistic combinations that allowed the Mithridatids to invoke at least some Iranian traditions under a Greek cover.

59. Contrast Merkelbach, *Mithras*, 44.

60. Strab. 12.3.14.

61. App. Mithr. 66 (trans. White in LCL, slightly modified).

and that of Cyrus.”<sup>62</sup> This can only be accepted if we assume that Appianus has preserved an authentic piece of Mithridatic propaganda. It is possible, after all, that he has introduced this comparison himself, in order to show just how “oriental” and anti-Roman Mithridates Eupator was.<sup>63</sup> The source of Appianus for the Zeus Stratios-episode has been argued to be the lost historical works of either Strabo or Nicolaus of Damascus; both theories have their difficulties, but would in any case bring us back only to the Augustan Era.<sup>64</sup> As we know that there was some literary production tied to the court of Mithridates,<sup>65</sup> we can perhaps be optimistic and argue that there existed a tradition about the sacrifice that went back to the king’s own self-presentation. And this is where the whole episode becomes interesting.

The realities of the Pontic cult of Zeus Stratios—at least as they are known from the archaeological site of Yassiçal—would not have led anyone to postulate a Persian connection.<sup>66</sup> It was an Anatolian cult of a local character; similar designations in other regions of Asia Minor and even in Greece only show the adaptability of the notion that Zeus could

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62. Mitchell, “In Search of the Pontic Community,” 58.

63. We can compare Tacitus’s claim that Artabanus II, when he installed his son Arsakes on the Armenian throne in 35 C.E., uttered the programmatic statement that he would reclaim for the Arsacids what had once been in possession of Cyrus and Alexander—hardly an authentic speech, but rather a literary cliché (Tac. ann. 6.31; cf. Shayegan, *Arsacids and Sasanians*, 39–40).

64. Cf. on the suggestions Luis Ballesteros Pastor, “El culto de Mitridates a Zeus Estratio,” in *Histoire, espaces et marges de l’antiquité: Hommages à Monique Clavel Lévêque*. (ed. M. Guarrido-Hory and A. Gonzalés; vol. 2. Besançon: Presses Universitaires de Franche-Comté, 2003), 209–22 (221–22).

65. E.g. Metrodoros of Skepsis, who wrote a work *περὶ ἱστορίας*; cf. Wilhelm Kroll, “Metrodoros 23,” *PW* 15 (1932): 1481–82.

66. On this sanctuary near Amaseia, cf. David French, “Amasian Notes 5: The Temenos of Zeus Stratios at Yassiçal,” *Epigraphica Anatolica* 27 (1996): 75–92; Christina G. Williamson, “Power, Politics, and Panoramas: Viewing the Sacred Landscape of Zeus Stratios Near Amaseia,” in *Space, Place and Identity in Northern Anatolia* (ed. T. Bekker-Nielsen; *Geographica Historica* 29; Stuttgart: Steiner, 2014), 175–88; Lâtife Summerer, “Topographies of Worship in Northern Anatolia,” same volume, 189–213 (207–9). While traces of Hellenistic use are not absent (cf. Summerer), all the inscriptions are from the Roman period. The sanctuary has nevertheless been considered to be the place where Mithridates VI performed his sacrifice; on the debate, see Williamson, 179–82.

be a military god.<sup>67</sup> The idea that the Pontic Zeus Stratios emerged out of a syncretism between Ahura Mazda and Zeus<sup>68</sup> is not impossible, especially given the parallels in Commagene, but the local roots and the many comparable gods in other regions of Anatolia speak against it. Still, this does not deprive the story of any value. For our purposes, it would be all the more interesting if Mithridates had modified the rites of an autochthonous cult for his publicly recognized celebrations of victory, under the pretext that this was how the Achaemenid kings had always performed their sacrifices at Pasargadae. Note that it is not the god, but the ritual that is described as traditional by Appianus. This would also explain why Zeus Stratios cannot be found on Mithridatic coinage. The point of the ritual would not have been that Zeus Stratios was Ahura Mazda and therefore the main dynastic god, but rather that Mithridates—like Antiochus I of Commagene—had access to knowledge about Achaemenid royal religion, and was capable of transporting these traditions into the Pontic setting, performing the rituals for a different god (Zeus Stratios instead of Ahura Mazda), in a different place (the environs of Sinope instead of Pasargadae).

The authenticity of the traditions invoked is another matter. Not everything mentioned in Appianus's description is clearly Persian, and one wonders how many inhabitants of first century B.C.E. Pontus would have been able to tell. There was certainly room for yet another rather free reconstruction of "Persian religious policy," adding to the ones we have seen elsewhere.

#### THE HASMONEANS OF JUDEA

So far, we have seen three dynasties from different regions of the late Hellenistic Near East. They can all be labeled heirs of the Seleucids, and they all have in common that their strategies of dynastic legitimation involved reconstructions of Achaemenid, not Seleucid attitudes towards religion. However, due to the lack of narrative texts that can be traced back to the interests of dynastic representation, it has only been possible to scratch the surface of these reconstructions. As a final example, I want to present

67. Cf. Ballesteros Pastor, "El culto de Mitrídates," 211–16.

68. Jakob Munk Højte, "Tempelstater i Pontos: Komana Pontike, Zela og Ameria," in *Mennesker og guder ved Sortehavets kyster* (ed. J. Højte and P. Bilde; Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2004), 75–97 (79–82).

a special case where such material does exist and allows for more complex conclusions.

The Hasmoneans had led the revolt against the suppression of Judean customs under Antiochus IV in 168 B.C.E., but from 152 B.C.E. at the latest, they had acted as Seleucid officials.<sup>69</sup> It was only after the failed Parthian campaign of Antiochus VII in 129 B.C.E. that Hyrcanus I could no longer be regarded as a vassal ruler, and it took the Judeans some time to realize the new possibilities.

Territorial expansion started in 112 B.C.E., and the royal title was taken over by Hyrcanus's son Aristobulus in 104 B.C.E. Around this time (ca. 110), 1 Maccabees was written, a glorifying history of the Hasmonean dynasty from the revolt against Antiochus IV until Hyrcanus came to power. This text ties the legitimacy of the Hasmonean dynasty to a peculiar reconstruction of Seleucid religious policy. Antiochus

wrote to all his kingdom for all to be as one people and for each to abandon his own precepts.... And the king sent documents carried by the hands of messengers to Jerusalem and the cities of Judah for them to follow precepts foreign to the land and to withhold burnt offerings and sacrifice and libation from the holy precinct and to profane sabbaths and feasts and to defile holy precinct and holy ones, to build altars and sacred precincts and houses to idols and to sacrifice swine and common animals and to leave their sons uncircumcised ..., so as to forget the law and to change all the statutes. And whoever would not abide by the command of the king would die.<sup>70</sup>

It has long been recognized that this narrative about the religious policy of Antiochus IV runs counter to everything we know about the attitude of Hellenistic rulers towards local cults, and cannot be substantiated by evidence outside of Judea. We do not need to doubt that Antiochus introduced the cult of Zeus Olympios and a procession in honor of Dionysus

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69. For different narratives, cf. Edward Dąbrowa, *The Hasmoneans and Their State: A Study in History, Ideology, and the Institutions* (Electrum 11; Kraków: Jagiellonian University Press, 2010), 42–66; Benedikt Eckhardt, *Ethnos und Herrschaft: Politische Figurationen jüdischer Identität von Antiochos III. bis Herodes I.* (SJ 72; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013), 165–86; Vasile Babota, *The Institution of the Hasmonean High Priesthood* (JSJS 165; Leiden: Brill, 2014), 119–267.

70. 1 Macc 1:41–50 (trans. Zervos in NETS).

in Jerusalem,<sup>71</sup> but the reason was certainly not religious unification of his empire, but a withdrawal of the right to use the *patrioi nomoi*—a necessary step in the king's eyes after Jerusalem had revolted from him in the course of the sixth Syrian War.<sup>72</sup> The Hasmonean version of the story turns this process into a persecution based on a religious policy that every self-respecting nation should rise against.<sup>73</sup>

In the wake of this extraordinary propagandistic construct, other "religious persecutions" were projected back onto earlier chapters of Judean history. The book of Judith, possibly written around 100 B.C.E., has Nebukadnezzar, king of the Assyrians (!), destroy all the sanctuaries on the Phoenician coast, for "every nation and every tongue should serve Nabouchodonosor and him alone, and their every tribe should invoke him as a god."<sup>74</sup> This is reminiscent of the book of Daniel (chapter 3), where Nebukadnezzar, this time correctly identified as king of Babylonia, has erected a golden image of himself and demands veneration from all his subjects. The final redaction of the book was made in the early days of the Hasmonean revolt, and there are elements in the opening chapters that can easily be related to the Hasmonean period as well.<sup>75</sup> In the light of these reconstructions of Seleucid, Assyrian, and Babylonian religious intolerance that are tied to specific discourses of the Hasmonean period, the two major biblical reconstructions of Achaemenid religious policy become all the more interesting.

The first reconstruction, preserved in Ezra-Nehemiah, presents Persian kings as prime examples of religiously tolerant monarchs, and even as supporters of the Jewish cult. In this version of history, Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes enable the Jews to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem and to repopulate the city, both with legislative actions and material support. If anything can deter them from their religious broadmindedness, it is the bad advice they sometimes get from their counselors, who have been

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71. 2 Macc 6:2–7.

72. Cf. Eckhardt, *Ethnos und Herrschaft*, 53–59.

73. That the "religious persecution" was constructed by the Maccabean books has been repeatedly suggested, with different degrees of historical skepticism. Cf. David Volgger, "1 Makk 1: Der Konflikt zwischen Hellenen und Juden—Die makkabäische Reichspropaganda," *Antonianum* 73 (1998): 459–81; Steve Weitzman, "Plotting Antiochus's Persecution," *JBL* 123 (2004): 210–34.

74. Jdt 3:8 (trans. Boyd-Taylor in NETS).

75. Not only the forced religious adherence, but also the role of gentile food as a critical point of resistance; cf. Eckhardt, *Ethnos und Herrschaft*, 89–90.

bribed by the enemies of Israel, but in the end, their good intentions prevail. The authenticity of the documents cited and the plausibility of the whole story have long been debated. One of Amélie Kuhrt's main points in the article cited at the beginning of this paper is that while support for local cults is generally to be expected, the extent of this support and the procedures involved (Nehemiah sent to Jerusalem, etc.) do not find parallels in Achaemenid realities.<sup>76</sup> In addition, important arguments have been adduced in favor of a Hasmonean date for the final redaction of Ezra-Nehemiah.<sup>77</sup> This does not mean that pre-Hasmonean elements were not used. Nehemiah's (but not Ezra's) role in the reconstruction of Jerusalem is mentioned by Ben Sira.<sup>78</sup> But it is plausible to argue that main elements of the story, including the reconstruction of Persian religious policy and the documents supporting it, do belong to the Hasmonean period and serve as an invented counter-model to the likewise invented "religious policy" of Antiochus IV.

This strategy seems to find a parallel in the letters of Antiochus III cited by Josephus.<sup>79</sup> They are grouped together as a dossier that is used to show the friendship (φιλία) that characterized Antiochus's relations with the Judeans. It is unclear when this was done, but it is probable that the documents were already tied together in the source used by Josephus. Some parts are genuine, others most probably are not. The *programma* for the Jerusalem temple and the praise for Jewish military settlers whose piety will be to the king's advantage should be regarded either as forgeries or as

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76. Kuhrt, "Problem of Achaemenid 'Religious Policy,'" 136–37.

77. Dieter Böhler, "Literarischer Machtkampf. Drei Ausgaben des Esrabuches im Streit um das wahre Israel und die Legitimation von Herrschaft," in *Juda und Jerusalem in der Seleukidenzeit: Herrschaft—Widerstand—Identität* (ed. U. Dahmen and J. Schnocks; BBB 159; Göttingen: Bonn University Press, 2010), 125–45; Israel Finkelstein, "Geographical Lists in Ezra and Nehemiah in the Light of Archaeology: Persian or Hellenistic?" in *Judah between East and West: The Transition from Persian to Greek Rule (ca. 400–200 BCE)* (ed. L. L. Grabbe and O. Lipschits; LSTS 75; London: T&T Clark, 2011), 49–69; cf. David M. Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 168–69.

78. Sir 49:13. Many different explanations have been given for Ben Sira's omission of Ezra; for an overview, see Marko Marttila, *Foreign Nations in the Wisdom of Ben Sira: A Jewish Sage between Opposition and Assimilation* (DCLS 13; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), 192–206.

79. A.J. 12.138–153.



heavily redacted versions of original decrees.<sup>80</sup> On the whole, the impression conveyed by the dossier fits the tendency of Achaemenid religious policy as constructed by Ezra-Nehemiah.<sup>81</sup> The result is clear: the good Seleucids follow the Achaemenid model of religious toleration and support for the Jewish cult; it was only under Antiochus IV that this policy was abandoned, which in turn legitimated the Hasmonean revolt and the establishment of a new ruling dynasty in Judea.

We should reckon with the possibility that this was a more widespread phenomenon than we can actually see in the surviving evidence. It may have happened more often than coins can show that a recourse to an invented Achaemenid religious policy was accompanied by a delegitimation of an invented Seleucid religious policy, or rather the religious policy of a particular Seleucid ruler (e.g., the last one before the revolt). It is evident that religious atrocities committed by the former ruling power are a good foundation legend for newly emerging states.<sup>82</sup> But the case of Judea also shows the complexity of such developments, for the second Hasmonean reconstruction of Achaemenid religious policy is rather different.

In the book of Esther, a Persian king, Ahasverus (= Xerxes<sup>83</sup>), is led by Haman to persecute all Jews everywhere, because they have their own laws that determine their non-integration into the Persian Empire.<sup>84</sup> This is not exactly a story about a purposeful religious policy, because Xerxes is little more than a victim of Haman's manipulations.<sup>85</sup> In fact, he later reverses

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80. In this regard, I follow Jörg-Dieter Gauger, *Beiträge zur jüdischen Apologetik: Untersuchungen zur Authentizität von Urkunden bei Flavius Josephus und im I. Makkabäerbuch* (BBB 49; Bonn: Hanstein, 1977), 53–151; Gauger, “Überlegungen zum Programm Antiochos’ III. für den Tempel und die Stadt Jerusalem (Jos. Ant. Jud. 12, 145–146) und zum Problem jüdischer Listen,” *Hermes* 118 (1990): 150–64; Gauger, “Formalien und Authentizitätsfrage: Noch einmal zum Schreiben Antiochos’ III. an Zeuxis (Jos. Ant. Jud. 12, 148–153) und zu den Antiochos-Urkunden bei Josephus,” *Hermes* 121 (1993): 63–69.

81. Cf. for the connection Jörg-Dieter Gauger, “Antiochos III. und Artaxerxes: Der Fremdherrscher als Wohltäter,” *JSJ* 38 (2007): 196–225.

82. Cf. on the basis of ancient Near Eastern *comparanda* Weitzman, “Plotting Antiochus’s Persecution.”

83. Artaxerxes in the Greek version.

84. Esth 3:8–9.

85. On the comical aspects involved, see Erich S. Gruen, “Persia through the Jewish Looking-Glass,” in *Jewish Perspectives on Hellenistic Rulers* (ed. Tessa Rajak et al.; Hellenistic Culture and Society 50; Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 53–75 (68–69).

his course completely, and the Jews are in turn allowed to persecute their potential persecutors, with 75,000 victims. This is a strange book that is difficult to explain without the Hasmonean interpretation of the events of 168 B.C.E. and the ensuing debates about the right of resistance against an unjust religious persecution.<sup>86</sup>

The Hasmonean claim to heroic resistance against persecution did not go unchallenged. Third Maccabees may be evidence of a reaction from the Diaspora that invents yet another persecution, carried out by Ptolemy IV, suffered and in the end averted by the Egyptian Jews. We also know that the Hasmoneans tried to connect the newly founded festivals that commemorated their war to traditional festivals such as Sukkot and Purim.<sup>87</sup> The book of Esther is of course concerned with the latter. Finally, the Greek version was sent to Alexandria in 78/77 B.C.E., in the final years of Alexander Jannaeus's reign.<sup>88</sup> It contains a number of alterations that seem to be related to the Hasmonean revolt and its aftermath—e.g., Haman becomes a “Macedonian,” and in the persecution carried out by the Jews themselves, their enemies circumcise themselves out of fear, possibly a reference to the Hasmonean ideology of forced circumcision carried out in newly conquered territories.<sup>89</sup> So, in the later days of Hasmonean rule, there was plenty of use for a reconstruction of a Persian religious policy that was not tolerant, but came closer to the supposed ideas of Antiochus IV, and to the ideology of the Hasmoneans themselves.

## CONCLUSION

We have seen four examples of post-Seleucid dynasties using reconstructed Achaemenid attitudes towards religion, or even “religious policies,” for their own advantage. It is only natural, given the geographical

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86. Cf. Reinhard Achenbach, “‘Genocide’ in the Book of Esther: Cultural Integration and the Right of Resistance against Pogroms,” in *Between Cooperation and Hostility: Multiple Identities in Ancient Judaism and the Interaction with Foreign Powers* (ed. Rainer Albertz and Jakob Wöhrle; JAJSup 11; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 89–114. He argues that the book may have been directed towards Jews living in the Seleucid Empire beyond the reach of the newly founded Hasmonean state, and should be dated to the reign of Hyrcanus I.

87. On both debates, see Eckhardt, *Ethnos und Herrschaft*, 100–11.

88. Cf. Elias Bickerman, “The Colophon of the Greek Book of Esther,” *JBL* 63 (1944): 339–62. He also argues for a date around 100 B.C.E. for the Hebrew Esther.

89. On this ideology, cf. Eckhardt, *Ethnos und Herrschaft*, 314–21.

distribution of the examples chosen, that important differences also exist. The Fratarakā established their authority in the very region where the Persian kings had originated from, and both Antiochus I of Commagene and the Mithridatids claimed Achaemenid descent; none of these conditions applies to the Hasmonean case. It is also clear that the more abstract comparisons become, the more phenomena become comparable. But when searching for political memory after the Persian and Seleucid empires, the conditions that unite all the dynasties discussed here are sufficiently similar to make this particular comparison legitimate and meaningful. All of them emerged in the wake of the Seleucid decline, and all of them used claims about an “Achaemenid religious policy” to gain acceptance as rulers of newly founded political entities. Achaemenid attitudes towards religion were used to construct imagined communities that were to be governed by these rulers and not others.

We should also remember that the sources available are of a very different character. Where literary evidence like Ezra-Nehemiah and Esther has survived, the image of Achaemenid religious policy becomes inevitably more complex than in cases where we have only coins. However, it should have become clear that even in cases where no literary sources exist, not every reflection of Achaemenid religion on a coin or in an inscription should be taken at face value. Like the modern theologians referred to by Amélie Kuhrt, post-Seleucid dynasts were very well capable of using anachronisms to their own advantage.

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# MEMORY AND IMAGES OF ACHAEMENID PERSIA IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE\*

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## INTRODUCTION

Political memory, to my thinking, is an integral—and specific—part of collective memory, which includes societal, cultural, and historical aspects and constitutes a backbone of any “national” identity. This memory is based on a variety of different images of the distant and near past, including images of the “Other.” In our case, this “Other” is the mighty Iranian power created and ruled by the Achaemenid dynasty. This eastern empire was the first “Oriental” state confronted with the western world of Greek civilization and which later experienced the retaliatory inrush of Macedonians and Greeks led by Alexander. The great victories gained over the Persians amazed contemporaries and subsequent generations and, strongly engraved into historical memory of the Greeks, formed the core of their identity for centuries. Thus, we must remember that the historical images of the Persians as the “Other” were constructed by the victors, with all the ensuing consequences.

The Romans had never directly faced the Achaemenids, and they demonstrated no interest in the political and administrative structures of the

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Persian Empire, or in its history as such, but they largely inherited Greek knowledge of and attitudes to the Persians, including all their preconceptions and biases. Not infrequently they used these images in literary, political, and ideological contexts for their own purposes, sometimes significantly transforming the original content of their Greek sources. These usages and transformations will be the main subject of the present paper.

The Greek visions and stereotypes of the Persians and Achaemenids have been thoroughly studied, both in specific aspects and in general terms.<sup>1</sup> In contrast, there are relatively few academic studies of Roman views of Achaemenid Persia. Earlier articles of Ettore Paratore and Vincent Rosivach collected and analyzed passages concerning ancient Persia in Roman literature.<sup>2</sup> Anthony Spawforth has studied the Persian Wars tradition in the Roman Empire and demonstrated that the Romans inherited and shared basic Greek attitudes to Achaemenid Persia with their ideologically colored, fundamental opposition between “barbarian degenerating East” and “victorious West,” and that the Romans used the memory of the Greek heroic past and corresponding representations of the Achaemenids

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1. On various aspects of this topic see now Thomas Harrison, *Writing Ancient Persia* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2011), especially 3–37; Dominique Lenfant, ed., *Les Perses vus par les Grecs: Lire les sources classiques sur l'empire achéménide* (Collection U: Histoire; Paris: Armand Colin, 2011); Erich S. Gruen, *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity* (Martin Classical Lectures; Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2011), 9–75; Irene Madreiter, *Stereotypisierung—Idealisierung—Indifferenz: Formen der Auseinandersetzung mit dem Achaimeniden-Reich in der griechischen Persika-Literatur* (CLEO 4; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012). See also Pierre Briant, “Histoire et idéologie: Les Grecs et la ‘décadence perse,’” in *Mélanges P. Lévêque. Vol. 2: Anthropologie et société* (ed. M.M. Mactoux and E. Geny. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1989), 33–47 (English version: “History and Ideology: The Greeks and ‘Persian Decadance,’” in *Greeks and Barbarians* [ed. T. Harrison; New York: Routledge, 2002], 193–210); Eduard V. Rung, “Predstavlenie persov kak varvarov v grecheskoi literatunoi traditsii V v. do n. e.” (The Representation of the Persians as Barbarians in Greek Literary Tradition of the Fifth Century BC), *Mnemon* 4 (2005): 125–66 (in Russian); Maria Brosius, *The Persians: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2006); Sabine Müller, “Die frühen Perserkönige im kulturellen Gedächtnis der Makedonen und in der Propaganda Alexanders d.Gr.,” *Gymnasium* 118 (2011): 105–31.

2. Ettore Paratore, “La Persia nella letteratura latina,” in *Atti del convegno sul tema: La Persia e il Mondo Greco-romano, Roma, 11–14 aprile 1965* (Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei 76; Roma, 1966), 505–58; Vincent J. Rosivach, “The Romans’ View of the Persians,” *Classical World* 78.1 (1984): 1–8.

for the sake of their own political and propagandistic aims.<sup>3</sup> This topic was continued in Philip Hardie's paper.<sup>4</sup> An interesting and comprehensive examination of different images of Xerxes has been carried out by Emma Elizabeth Clough in her PhD thesis and monograph within which not only the Persian and Classical Greek evidence is thoroughly studied, but also Latin traditions and the writings of Greek authors of the Second sophistic.<sup>5</sup> These studies, among other interesting suggestions, have pointed out that the Romans borrowed and adopted from the Greeks many openly anti-Persian clichés, *topoi* and stereotypes, then transferred them to other eastern peoples, particularly to the Parthians with whom Rome did have complex relationships over a long time. All listed works, summarizing extensive source materials, undoubtedly raise important problems, but, nevertheless, by no means exhaust all issues and aspects of the theme. One of the essential aspects, in my mind, is the role played by the Achaemenids' historical images and examples in the formation of the Romans' own political memory and political ("national") identity. That is, what were the *political* and *ideological* meanings and purposes of Roman appeals to episodes, personalities (from Cyrus the Elder to Darius III), anecdotes, and *topoi* of Ancient Persian history? What did Roman intellectuals and average members of the citizen body really know about that history? What attracted them to this "other world"—*orbis alter*?<sup>6</sup> How were knowledge, images, and biases borrowed from the Greeks recoded and transformed in political contexts of the Roman Empire? Taken as a whole, these appeals

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3. Anthony Spawforth, "Symbol of Unity? The Persian-Wars Tradition in the Roman Empire," in *Greek Historiography* (ed. S. Hornblower; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 233–47.

4. Philip Hardie, "Images of the Persian Wars in Rome," in *Cultural Responses to the Persian Wars: Antiquity to Third Millenium* (ed. E. Bridges, E. Hall, and P. J. Rhodes; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 127–44.

5. Emma Elizabeth Clough, "In Search of Xerxes: Images of the Persian King" (Ph.D. diss., Durham University, 2004; online: <http://www.theses.dur.ac.uk/802/>). The revised version of this dissertation has been just recently published as a book: Emma Bridges, *Imagining Xerxes: Ancient Perspectives on a Persian King* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), which I have got to know when the paper was under the first round of editing. So, I give parallel references when it seems necessary.

6. This expression belongs to Manilius and concerns the Parthians (Man. 4. 674–675: *Parthique vel orbis alter*; cf. Tac. *Ann.* 2.2.2: *petitum alio ex orbe regem*). Given the historical, cultural and spatial remoteness of Achaemenid Persia from imperial Rome, it surely was a much more "other" and "alien" world for the Romans than Parthia.

allow us to see how the images of the distant and “alien” past of one people worked in forming self-consciousness of another people. In the following, I will outline some general tendencies, implications, and modalities of the Roman perception of Achaemenid Persia and its rulers.

#### THE ROMAN EMPIRE IN THE SUCCESSION OF WORLD MONARCHIES

To begin with, it is worth noting that the Romans, who by the mid-second century B.C.E. had created a vast and mighty Mediterranean power, seem to have included the history of their own state into world history. This is indicated by the theory of five world empires that emerges in the Roman literature around this time. The first direct reference to this theory is given in Velleius Paterculus, who refers to a certain Aemilius Sura,<sup>7</sup> supposed to be a contemporary of Polybius (who expresses similar ideas, cf. Polyb. 1.2.2–6):

Aemilius Sura says in his book on the chronology of Rome: “The Assyrians were the first of all races to hold world power, then the Medes, and after them the Persians, and then the Macedonians. Then through the defeat of Kings Philip and Antiochus, of Macedonian origin, following closely upon the overthrow of Carthage, the world power passed to

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7. This passage has been assumed to be a later gloss which first occurred in Delbe-  
nius's edition of 1591. Theodor Mommsen has argued that this Sura, who is unknown  
otherwise, may have been an author of universal history in the age of Sulla (Theodor  
Mommsen, “*Mamilius Sura, Aemilius Sura, L. Manlius*,” *Rheinisches Museum für Phi-  
lologie* 16 [1861]: 282–87), but Hermann Peter in his commentary does not propose  
any dating and identification of Sura's fragment (Hermann Peter, ed., *Historicorum  
Romanorum Reliquiae* [vol. 2; Leipzig: Teubner, 1906; repr. Stuttgart: Teubner, 1967],  
ccx). Joseph Swain has dated Sura's *Annales* between 189 and 171 B.C.E., the period  
after the Syrian War, during which the Romans could get acquainted with the ideas of  
those Greeks who were in opposition to the Seleucids (Joseph W. Swain, “The Theory  
of the Four Monarchies: Opposition History under the Roman Empire,” *Classical  
Philology* 35.1 [1940]: 1–21 [2–5]). This point of view is now prevailing in scholarly  
literature. However, Doron Mendels has expressed the opinion that it may be dated  
to the second half or the end of the first century B.C.E., when the conception of the  
five world empires spread in connection with the beginning of Rome's intensive rela-  
tions with the regions of previous great monarchies of the East (Doron Mendels, “The  
Five Empires: A Note on a Propagandistic Topos,” *AJPh* 102.3 [1981]: 330–7). So, the  
problem has not found an unambiguous solution (cf. José Miguel Alonso-Núñez,  
“Aemilius Sura,” *Latomus* 48 [1989]: 110–19).

the Roman people. Between this time and the beginning of the reign of Ninus king of the Assyrians, who was the first to hold world power, lies an interval of nineteen hundred and ninety-five years." (Vell. 1.6.6; transl. Shipley, LCL)

The idea of Rome's rise to world dominance (*hegemonia tes oikoumene*) after four preceding powers became widely popular under the Roman Empire and in Late Antiquity; in modified form it was used by Christian authors who based their view also (and primarily) on the book of Daniel (2:1–40; cf. 7:2–3).<sup>8</sup> Acquaintance with this theory or versions of it is found in writings of such authors as Diodorus Siculus, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Tacitus, Appian, Aelius Aristides, Rutilius Namatianus, Augustine, Orosius,<sup>9</sup> as well as in the Fourth Sibylline oracle (4. 49–104) dated about 80 C.E.<sup>10</sup> The later Roman poet Claudius Claudianus adds Athens, Sparta,

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8. There is vast literature on this theory, see e.g., Conrad Trieber, "Die Idee der vier Weltreiche," *Hermes* 27 (1892): 321–44; Swain, "Theory of the Four Monarchies," 1–21; Mendels, "Five Empires," 330–37; Leonhard Schumacher, "Die Herrschaft der Makedonen im Kanon der 'Weltreich'—Abfolge des Pompeius Trogus (Iustin): Grundlage—Gestaltung—Zielsetzung," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 131 (2000), 279–91; Fernando Gascó le Calle, "La teoría de los cuatro imperios: Reiteración y adaptación ideológica. I. Romanos y Griegos," *Habis* 12 (1981): 179–96; José Miguel Alonso-Núñez, "Die Abfolge der Weltreiche bei Polybios und Dionysios von Halikarnassos," *Historia* 32 (1983): 411–26; José Miguel Alonso-Núñez, "Appian and the World Empires," *Athenaeum* 62 (1984): 640–44; Katherine Clarke, *Between Geography and History: Hellenistic Constructions of the Roman World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 15–16, 226–28; Josef Wiesehöfer, "The Medes and the Idea of the Succession of Empires in Antiquity," in *Continuity of Empire (?): Assyria, Media, Persia* (ed. G. B. Lanfranchi, M. Roaf, and R. Rollinger; Padova: Editrice e Libreria, 2003), 391–96; Victor Passuello, "O mito das quatro idades e as concepções especulativas da história nas tradições clássicas e judaico-hellenísticas" (Ph.D. diss., Porto Alegre, 2004).

9. Diod. Sic. 2.1–34 (based on Ctesias' *Persika*); Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.2–3; Just. *Epit.* 1.3.6; 33.2.6; 41.1.4; Tac. *Hist.* 5.8–9; App. *Praef.* 6–11; App. *Pun.* 132; Aristid. *Or.* 13.234; 26.91; Rutil. *Namat.* 1.81–92; August. *De civ. D.* 18.2.21; 26 (a possible source for Augustine was Varro's *De gente populi Romani* [Mendels, "Five Empires," 334, n. 16]; Oros. 2.1.4–6; 9.10).

10. David Flusser, "The Four Empires in the Fourth Sibyl and in the Book of Daniel," *IOS* 2 (1972): 148–75; John J. Collins, "The Place of the Fourth Sibyl in the Development of Jewish Sibyllina," *JJS* 25 (1974): 365–80; Sheila A. Redmond, "The Date of the Fourth Sibylline Oracle," *SecCent* 7.3 (1989–90): 129–49; Arnaldo Momigliano, "Daniele e la teoria greca della successione degli imperi," in *Settimo Contributo*



and Thebes to the four empires and emphasizes moral degradation as the main reason for the fall of great powers:

Nor will there ever be a limit to the empire of Rome, for luxury and its attendant vices, and pride with sequent hate have brought to ruin all kingdoms else. 'Twas thus that Sparta laid low the foolish pride of Athens but to fall herself a victim to Thebes; thus that the Mede deprived the Assyrian of empire and the Persian the Mede. Macedonia subdued Persia and was herself to yield to Rome. (Claudius Claudianus, *De Consulatu Stilichonis* 3.159–66; transl. Platnauer, LCL)

Thus, in these verses, one can find quite a complete formulation of the Roman vision of Rome's place in global history—a vision that is imperialistic in its nature, and moralizing in its message as well.

The precise date of the emergence of the idea of four or five successive kingdoms remains a matter of debate.<sup>11</sup> But it is not of great importance for our purposes. It is obvious that for the comparison of their empire with its ancient predecessors, the Romans needed some historical knowledge about great oriental monarchies of the past, including Achaemenid Persia. They could find such information only in Greek writings, acquired first of all through the Greek educational system (*paideia*) which was transmitted to Rome at least in the second century B.C.E. and which contributed to the acquaintance of the Romans with the history and Greek images of the Persians.

#### LITERARY CONSTRUCTIONS OF ACHAEMENID PERSIA AS PARADIGMATIC DESPOTISM AND TYRANNY

The fact that Persia played a major role in Greek history is one reason why the Achaemenids are not infrequently referred to in Roman literature as well.<sup>12</sup> There are plenty of references to Achaemenid Persia and her kings in Roman literary traditions from Ennius's *Annales* to the *Latin Panegyrics* and the *Origines* of Isidorus of Seville. Judging by the numerous passages

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*alla Storia degli Studi Classici e del mondo antico* (Roma: Edizione di Storia e Letteratura, 1984), 297–304.

11. A model with three empires (Assyria, Media, Persia) can already be seen in Herodotus (1.95; 1.130) and Ctesias (*FGrH* 688, F 1 and 5).

12. Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004), 371.

in texts of Latin poetry, rhetoric, philosophy and historiography, we may guess that educated (i.e., Hellenized) Romans, at least from the first century B.C.E., learned well the specifically Greek ideas of landmark events and figures of Persian history, above all from the age of the Persian Wars against Greece.<sup>13</sup> Of course, these wars, and Xerxes's invasion above all, were not a subject of interest *per se* for the Romans, and they did not have the same emotional resonance as for the Greeks. Nevertheless, this was one of many literary themes which learned Romans sought to emulate.<sup>14</sup> The schools of rhetoric were important channels for the dissemination of information—not so much factual as mythologized—about the Persian Wars. The principal events of this history were already a popular topic for rhetoricians in the time of Cicero, who stated in one of his treatises (Cic. *Off.* 1.18.61): *Hinc rhetorum campus de Marathone, Salamine, Plataeis, Thermopylis* (“Hence there is an open field for orators on the subjects of Marathon, Salamis, Plataea, Thermopylae”). Such topics are found among the declamations referred by Seneca the Elder (Sen. *Suas.* 2.3; 2.5), who proposes the following questions for discussion: Should the three hundred Spartans defending Thermopylae flee, like the other Greeks, or fight? Should Athenians remove the trophies of their victories over Persians given that Xerxes threatens to invade if these are not taken away?<sup>15</sup> Seneca remarks that the former theme had been treated twelve times, while the latter had been elaborated thrice.<sup>16</sup> Among the Greek rhetorical declamations, according to Donald Russell's estimation, about 12 percent of topics were somehow related to these wars.<sup>17</sup> It is quite natural that the memory of the Persian Wars and associated “Oriental” subjects were of special interest of authors of the Second Sophistic for whom the glorious Greek past, primarily Greece's greatest hour in the fifth century B.C.E., was the

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13. For more details see Spawforth, “Symbol of Unity?”; Hardie, “Images of the Persian Wars in Rome.”

14. Clough, “In Search of Xerxes,” 196; Bridges, *Imagining Xerxes*, 159.

15. This situation is unknown in Greek tradition.

16. Seneca's *Suasoria* attest many other motifs connected with Xerxes—*insolens barbarus* (“arrogant barbarian”), as the orator calls him (*Suas.* 2.7; cf. 2.22)—and with the Persian Wars in general. See Clough, “In search of Xerxes,” 227–30 and Bridges, *Imagining Xerxes*, 165–167, with further references. On Seneca's “Persian” topics, see also Spawforth, *Greece and the Augustan Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 127–28.

17. Donald A. Russell, *Greek Declamation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 107.

foremost object of nostalgic fascination, the crucial point for their cultural identity.<sup>18</sup> However, the Romans referred to these subjects not only in the realm of rhetoric, but in poetry too. For Propertius, Xerxes's invasion was a possible stock-theme for poetry,<sup>19</sup> among such other topics as myths of the Titans, ancient Thebes, and Troy, the history of Remus, Carthage, Cimbrian's threats, and deeds of Marius (*Eleg.* 2.1.19–24). No wonder, therefore, that Roman writers quite frequently mention such episodes as the building of the bridge over Hellespont, Xerxes's wrath at sea, the battle at Thermopylae, and such persons as the Persian magi, and the kings Cyrus, Cambyses, Darius I, Darius III, and so on. The "royal" theme was perhaps the most popular one,<sup>20</sup> especially in moral-political contexts.

Following in the footsteps of the Greeks, Roman authors considered Achaemenid kingship as paradigmatic Oriental despotism and tyranny. It was the common fate of Oriental peoples to live under tyrannical rule, as Lucan claims (*BC* 7.442–3): "Fortunate are the Arabs and Medes and Eastern nations, whom destiny has kept continuously under tyrants" (transl. Duff, LCL). Roman authors not rarely refer to examples of the tyrannical cruelty and madness of Persian kings. Thus, Seneca, following Herodotus's narrative, reports the story about Cambyses's cruel punishment of the Syrian population and recounts his campaign against the Ethiopians undertaken because of the king's anger, and about Cyrus's anger against the river (*Sen. De Ira* 3.20–21). Lucan, also mentioning Cambyses's invasion of Ethiopia (*BC* 10.279–82), considers him insane (*vaesanus*).

Another characteristic feature of despotic tyranny, along with cruelty, was arrogance, proverbial Eastern *hybris*—*superbia*. As it is evident from Claudianus's verses cited above and from other texts (for example, the

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18. Special consideration of this topic is beyond the scope of the present paper. Here it is sufficient to refer to a number of important works. Above all see the pioneering article by Ewen L. Bowie, "Greeks and Their Past in the Second Sophistic," in *Past and Present* 46 (1970), 3–41. In general see Simon Swain, *Hellenism and Empire: Language, Classicism, and Power in the Greek World AD 50–250* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 65–100 (Ch. 3 "Past and Present"). On Xerxes's image and related topics, see Clough, "In Search of Xerxes," 236–85 (Ch. 7 "The Persian Peacock: Xerxes in the Second Sophistic"); Bridges, *Imagining Xerxes*, 179–89. On Plutarch's view, see Eran Almagor, "Plutarch on the End of the Persian Empire," *Graeco-Latina Brunensia* 16 (2011): 3–16.

19. Clough, "In search of Xerxes," 192; and Bridges, *Imagining Xerxes*, 158.

20. Xerxes in particular found his way into almost every genre of Latin literature (Clough, "In Search of Xerxes," 215; and Bridges, *Imagining Xerxes*, 157).

“Persian excursus” in Ammianus Marcellinus’s book 23<sup>21</sup>), the Romans fully shared the Greeks’ conviction that it was the arrogance of Persian kings—*alte spirantium ducum superbia* (Amm. Marc. 23.6.7)—that became the chief cause of grievous disasters for the kingdom. And the most popular example of it in Latin literature was Xerxes’s construction of the bridge across the Hellespont—the story (including the king’s order to whip the sea), which was colorfully described by Herodotus,<sup>22</sup> became a rhetorical *topos* at least from Isocrates (*Pan.* 89). Noteworthy is that the very first mention of Xerxes in Roman literature, in Ennius’s *Annales* (372 Vahlen<sup>2</sup> = 369 Warmington = Varro *LL* 7.21), concerns this episode. It served mainly as a wide-spread rhetorical example of “insane arrogance and godless vanity”—*stulta iactantia et sacrilegis vanitas* (*Pan. Lat.* 5.7). For Trogus/Justin, the grandiose building projects of Xerxes are an instance of overconfidence and boasting (Just. *Epit.* 2.10.23–4). Lucretius, without calling the Persian king by name, uses this example to express the idea that no lifetime power can provide immortality (Lucr. 3.1029–33). The motif of the reversal of fortune also sounds in the tenth Satire of Juvenal (Juv. 10.173–87), which mentions Xerxes’s ships sailing through the mountain Athos, his shameful flight after the defeat at Salamis, and his angry order to castigate the sea—another popular motive.<sup>23</sup> Many Roman writers featured Xerxes’s boundless pride and insolence as an assault on nature itself. As pointed out in Seneca the Elder’s *Suasoria* (2.3), the king *maria terrasque, rerum naturam statione mutavit sua* (“by his construction he has changed seas and lands, the very nature of things”). Lucan in *Bellum Civile* (2.672–7) refers to the example of Xerxes when talking

21. Ammianus uses deeply rooted stereotypes going back to Herodotus, highlighting the “otherness” of the Persians and the foreignness of their manners and customs to the Greco-Roman world. On this excursus, see Hans C. Teitler “*Visa vel lecta?* Ammianus on Persia and the Persians,” in *The late Roman World and its Historian: Interpreting Ammianus Marcellinus* (ed. J. W. Drijvers and D. Hunt; London: Routledge, 1999), 216–23; Jan W. Drijvers, “Ammianus Marcellinus’ Image of Sasanian Society,” in *Ērān ud Anērān. Studien zu den Beziehungen zwischen dem Sasanidenreich und der Mittelmeerwelt* (ed. J. Wiesehöfer and Ph. Huyse; Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2006), 45–69; Jan W. Drijvers, “A Roman Image of the ‘barbarian’ Sasanians,” in *Romans, barbarians, and the transformation of the Roman world: cultural interaction and the creation of identity in late antiquity* (ed. R. W. Mathisen and D. Shanzer; Ashgate: Ashgate Publishing, 2011), 69–72.

22. Hdt. 7.33–40; cf. Strabo 2.5.22; 13.1.22; Plin. *Nat.* 4.11.49.

23. Clough, “In search of Xerxes,” 191; and Bridges, *Imagining Xerxes*, 157.

about Caesar's attempt to block Brundisium harbor with huge rafts in order to prevent Pompey's flight by sea. The very choice of this example is intended to emphasize despotic intentions of Caesar, the main anti-hero of the poem.<sup>24</sup>

At the same time, this action of Xerxes, like the similar bridge building by Darius,<sup>25</sup> was sometimes treated as an example of grandiose, superhuman power dominating nature. In this regard, Florus's reference to rumors being spread in Rome on the eve of the Roman campaign against Antiochus III is notable: in connection with the king's war preparations the Romans thought of the Persians and the East, about Xerxes and Darius (Flor. *Epit.* 2.8.2). It is noticeable that in Roman texts, Xerxes's sea bridge is often mentioned together with the renowned channel through Athos.<sup>26</sup> In Cicero's wording, "Xerxes led forth his huge fleets and armies of horse and foot, bridged the Hellespont, cut through Athos, marched over sea and sailed over land"<sup>27</sup> (Cic. *Fin.* 2.112; transl. Rackham, LCL). Such a contamination of two constructions in one *topos* is absent in Herodotus's narrative.<sup>28</sup>

The Romans, however, did so firmly associate the name of the Persian king with these grandiose undertakings, that Pompey could count on the success of his witticism, when he called Lucius Lucinius Lucullus *Xerxes togatus*, "Xerxes in a toga," because of Lucullus's famous construction of a seaside villa after becoming very wealthy as a result of his successful command in the East in the 60s B.C.E.<sup>29</sup> It was especially poignant in this *bon mot* that its addressee was the Roman general who had waged

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24. Hardie, "Images of the Persian Wars," 134.

25. This was the bridge across Thracian Bosphorus constructed in 512 B.C.E., before the campaign against the Scythians (Hdt. 4.83–9; cf. Strabo 2.5.23; Plin. *Nat.* 4.12.76).

26. The source is also Herodotus (7.21–24) who clearly considered this grandiose operation as an unnecessary act of arrogance on the part of Xerxes: "because of pride ... wanting to demonstrate his power and to leave a reminder of his presence" [7.24]).

27. Cf. Sall. *Cat.* 13.1; Vell. 2.33.4; *Culex* 31–34.

28. Rosivach, "Romans' View of the Persians," 4–5.

29. *Lucullus exciso etiam monte iuxta Neapolim maiore impendio quam villam exaedificaverat euripum et maria admisit, qua de causa Magnus Pompeius Xerxen togatum eum appellabat* ("Lucullus even excavated a mountain near Naples and, at more expense than it had cost to build his villa, constructed a channel and let in the sea; and this is the reason that Pompey the Great used to call him 'Xerxes in a toga'" [Plin. *Nat.* 9.170; transl. Rackham, LCL]). Cf. Vell. 2.33.4, Plut. *Luc.* 39.2–3 (Plutarch ascribes this joke to the Stoic Tiberon). On Lucullus's constructions see also Varro *Rust.* 3.17.9;

war against the Eastern king.<sup>30</sup> It is curious that Pompey himself earned, among his friends, the nickname of “king of kings and Agamemnon” for his deeds in the East (App. *B. Civ.* 2.67). Luxurious building projects were often subjected to severe criticism by Roman moralists as a sign of tyrannical tendencies and as contrary to traditional Roman simplicity and rigor.<sup>31</sup> In the case of Lucullus, aligning him with the Persian king suggests that his extravagance had separated him from Republican values. His nickname makes an allusion to Herodotus’s characterization of Xerxes as insane (hubristic) and appeals to stereotypes of a race castigated as morally inferior and prone to luxury; these views inherited from the Greeks had transferred into Roman cultural stereotypes. As Rhiannon Evans convincingly demonstrates, the essence of Pompey’s joke of *Xerxes togatus* is the incongruity of the ancient Persian king being dressed up as a Roman citizen, so that, conversely, as *Xerxes togatus* Lucullus embodies foreignness: an Easterner in a thin veneer of Romanness.<sup>32</sup> It is noticeable that Plutarch, telling about Lucullus’s decline (*Luc.* 1.5), points out that he “eats like a satrap.” Therefore, the famous “feasts of Lucullus” were directly associated with Eastern luxury—one more popular *topos* in representations of the Persians (see below).

#### THE MEMORY OF THE PERSIAN WARS IN THE ROMAN POLITICAL AGENDA

Thus, the famous building projects of Persian kings, in the eyes of Romans, were firmly and directly associated with tyrannical arrogance and vanity; and, as Emma Clough rightly concludes, the very frequency of these mentions illustrates how well the theme had become embedded in the collective consciousness of the Romans.<sup>33</sup> No wonder, therefore, that the floating bridge built by Gaius Caligula at the Bay of Naples<sup>34</sup> was connected by

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Vincent Jolivet, “Xerxes togatus: Lucullus en Campanie,” *Mélanges de l’École française de Rome: Antiquité* 99.2 (1987): 875–904.

30. Hardie, “Images of the Persian Wars,” 133.

31. Catherine Edwards, *The Politics of Immorality in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 145–49.

32. Rhiannon Evans, *Utopia Antiqua: Readings of the Golden Age and Decline at Rome* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 101–105.

33. Clough, “In Search of Xerxes,” 233.

34. On different aspects and background of this episode, see Marc Kleijwegt, “Caligula’s Triumph at Baiae,” *Mnemosyne* 47 (1994): 665–671; Alessandro Saggioro, “Calpestore acque marine: I ponti di Serse e Caligola e l’abuso contro la natura,” in

ancient authors with his aspiration to exceed Darius and Xerxes, to demonstrate, on the one hand, the Roman superiority over great achievements of the past and, on the other hand, the supremacy of the West over the East.<sup>35</sup> To this end, Caligula emphasized the larger length of his bridge and included among the “captives” one Darius from the family of the Arsacids who was a Parthian hostage (this act was undoubtedly intended as an anti-Parthian gesture<sup>36</sup>). For riding across the bridge, the princeps donned the cuirass of Alexander the Great allegedly taken out of the Macedonian’s tomb—a conscious *imitatio Alexandri*, so popular among Roman generals (Pompey among others) and emperors.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, in the reports of Caligula’s action, the emphasis is rather on comparing the Roman emperor with Eastern rulers. Seneca defines Caligula’s behavior as *furiosi et externi et infeliciter superbi regis imitatio*, “an imitation of a mad, foreign and calamitously proud king” (*Brev. vit.* 18.5).<sup>38</sup> Suetonius directly points at *aemulatione Xerxis* (*Cal.* 19.3), while Dio Cassius notes that he laughed at Darius and Xerxes, being proud of the greater length of his bridge<sup>39</sup> (Dio Cass. 59.17.11; cf. also Jos. *AJ* 19.5–6).

Many scholars have noticed that the theme and memory of the Greco-Persian wars were actualized in the last decades of the Republic

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*Naturaleza y religion en el mundo clásico: Usos y abusos del medio natural* (ed. S. Montero and M. C. Cardete; Madrid: Signifer Libros, 2010), 165–84.

35. Aloys Winterling, *Caligula: Eine Biographie* (München: Beck, 2003), 122, 124; Spawforth, “Symbol of unity?” 241; Hardie, “Images of the Persian Wars,” 132; Evans, *Utopia Antiqua*, 105–7.

36. John P. V. D. Balsdon, *The Emperor Gaius (Caligula)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934), 50–54.

37. See in general J. M. Croisille, ed. *Neronia IV. Alejandro Magno, modelo de los emperadores romanos: Actes du IVe Colloque international de la Société Internationale d’Etudes néroniennes (13–15 oct. 1987 à Madrid)* (Bruxelles: Latomus, 1990); Maria Luisa Sánchez León, “Los emperadores romanos y la imitatio de Alejandro Magno,” *Veleia: Revista de prehistoria, historia antigua, arqueología y filología clásicas* 17 (2000): 93–102, particularly on Caligula: Simon J. V. Malloch, “Gaius’ Bridge at Baiae and Alexander-imitatio,” *CQ* 51 (2001): 206–17; Angela Kühnen, “Die imitatio Alexandri als politisches Instrument römischer Feldherren und Kaiser in der Zeit von der ausgehenden Republik bis zum Ende des dritten Jahrhunderts n. Chr.” (Ph.D. diss., University of Duisburg–Essen, 2005), 169–173.

38. Cf. Evans, *Utopia Antiqua*, 105.

39. The anonymous author of the Panegyric of Constantine (*Pan. Lat.* 7.13) also compares the bridges of Xerxes and Gaius, accentuating the uselessness of the latter: *delicata fuit illa uectatio principis otiosi* (“that was a pleasure ride for an otiose emperor”).



and during Augustus's reign.<sup>40</sup> Philip Hardie is perfectly right when he argues: "Despite the long—perhaps universal—history of defining the Self through contrast with the Other, and the extensive previous history of the use of the fifth-century Athenian Persian Wars model, the original model held an especial attraction for Romans in the 30s and 20s B.C.E., offering as it did a myth of new beginnings and fresh power after a conflict almost fatal to the survival itself of the state, with the particular attraction that enmity between Roman and Roman could be projected on to a myth of enmity between Roman and an oriental foreigner."<sup>41</sup>

The Roman emperors' interest in these events manifests itself in the use of episodes from the Persian Wars in public spectacles staged in Rome. A mock naval battle (*naumachia*) was arranged by Augustus at the Forum on the occasion of the consecration of the temple for *Mars Ultor* in 2 B.C.E. The gladiators presented a battle between "Persians" and "Athenians" at Salamis.<sup>42</sup> As Ronald Syme has remarked, in this splendid show Rome was manifested as defender of Hellas against the East.<sup>43</sup> A similar battle between "Persians" and "Athenians" was organized by Nero in 57 or 58 C.E. (Suet. *Nero* 12.1; Dio Cass. 61.9.5). By choosing such a theme for the entertainment of a wide Roman audience, the emperor obviously assumed some acquaintance with this iconic historical event, but at the same time these games will have triggered associations with the Roman-Parthian conflict. The tradition of commemorating the Persian Wars in the form

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40. Rolf M. Schneider, "Die Faszination des Feindes: Bilder der Parther und des Orients in Rom," in *Das Partherreich und seine Zeugnisse; The Arsacid Empire: Sources and Documentation* (ed. J. Wiesehöfer; Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1998), 95–127 (110–13); Spawforth, "Symbol of unity?," 237–43; Susan E. Alcock, *Archaeologies of the Greek Past: Landscapes, Monuments, and Memories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 82–3.

41. Hardie, "Images of the Persian Wars," 136.

42. *Res Gestae* 23; Vell. 2.100; Ov. *Ars* 1.171–2; Plin. *Nat.* 16. 190. 210; Stat. *Silv.* 4.4.7; Tac. *Ann.* 14.15; Suet. *Aug.* 43.3; Suet. *Tib.* 7.3; Dio Cass. 55.10.7. It is notable that in the same year, Gaius Caesar, Augustus' adopted son, was sent to the East to settle the Armenian succession (Tac. *Ann.* 2.4), and Ovid explicitly connected these two events (*Ars* 1.171–2). Shayegan is right arguing that such a dispute over the Armenian succession, as a threat to Roman suzerainty, could be compared in Rome to the Achaemenid attempts to destroy the sovereignty of Athens (M. Rahim Shayegan, *Arsacids and Sasanians: Political Ideology in Post-Hellenistic and Late Antique Persia* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011], 339).

43. Ronald Syme, *Roman Papers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 3:922.

of public games continued even in the third century C.E. It is known that emperor Gordian III in 235 C.E. (before his departure to campaign against Parthia) established an *agon* in honor of *Athene Promachos*, the Athenian patroness in the battle at Marathon.<sup>44</sup>

#### PERSIAN LUXURY VERSUS ROMAN MORES

Another widespread *topos* in Roman literature is that of Persian luxury and effeminacy, in Roman eyes—and in those of the Greeks as well—perhaps the most important “ethnic” feature of the Persians.<sup>45</sup> Suffice it to recall Horace’s proverbial lines in *Odes* 1.38: *Persicos odi, puer, apparatus* (“No Persian cumber, boy, for me”; trans. Conington), where the poet opposes Persian complexity to Roman simplicity (symbolized by *simplici myrto* (“uncomplicated myrtle”), extending in some sense a binarism already present in Greek thought (cf. Archil. 25 and *Anth. Pal.* 11.3).<sup>46</sup> For him *Achaemeniumque costum* is a synonym of Eastern sumptuousness (Hor. *Carm.* 2.12.21). In these verses Horace perhaps follows Callimachos, who had used, for his own aims, the classical contradistinction of “Oriental” and “Greek,” but the Roman poet keeps his own ideological and poetic position using this *topos* for his own epicurean predilections.<sup>47</sup>

The motif of Persian luxury appears already in Plautus who speaks of Persian mountains abounding in gold (cf. Varro *Men.* 36), while king Darius I for him is almost a common noun to refer to the fabulously wealthy (Pl. *St.* 24–5; *Aul.* 86).<sup>48</sup> Juvenal (16.328–9) and Statius (*Silv.* 1.3.105) identify Persian opulence with that of Croesus. Ammianus Marcellinus recalls the Persian victory over the Lydian king and links it with the characteristically Persian custom of wearing jewelry and precious stones (23.6.84).<sup>49</sup> It is the Persians with whom Pliny the Elder connects

44. Louis Robert, “Deux concours grecs à Rome,” *CRAI* 114.1 (1970): 6–27 (11–17).

45. Rosivach, “Romans’ View of the Persians,” 3.

46. Evans, *Utopia Antiqua*, 102.

47. Hardie, “Images of the Persian Wars,” 141.

48. Paratore, “Persia nella letteratura latina,” 509–10.

49. *Armillis uti monilibusque aureis, et gemmis, praecipue margaritas, quibus abundant, assuefacti post Lydiam victim et Croesum* (“To the use of golden armlets and neckchains, gems, and especially pearls, of which they possess a great number, they first became accustomed after their victory over Lydia and Croesus.” Transl. Rolfe, LCL).

the origin and dissemination of perfumes (*unguenta*), which were from the Roman point of view associated with Eastern luxury and viciousness (*luxuria* and *mollitia*) and considered the antipode of traditional Roman virtues.<sup>50</sup> In this context, it is very characteristic that the use of perfumes was one of the features of “bad” emperors, such as Caligula, Nero, or Otho (Plin. *Nat.* 13.22).<sup>51</sup> Athenaeus in his *Deipnosophists* (“*Banquet of the Learned*”) appears to express widespread opinion in saying that the Persians were the people who first became famous for their luxury (Ath. 12.513a; cf. Strabo 14.3.22); and, citing ancient historians, he gives numerous examples of Persian sumptuousness and wealth (12.513 f; 514 a–f; 515 a–d; 531 a–c; cf. also 4.144–145).<sup>52</sup> The Persian luxury (like that of other Eastern peoples, including Hellenistic Greeks and Capuans) that penetrated Rome was not only regarded by Roman writers as the embodiment of Eastern vices and effeminate Orientalism, but it was also contrasted to native Roman mores.<sup>53</sup> It served as an instructive example of the detrimental effects of luxury on the morale of the state and its elites. There are numerous references and allusions to the pernicious effect of luxury in anecdotes about Persian kings. Cicero, for example, in one of his speeches against Caius Verres (*Ver.* 3.76) mentions the custom of Persian kings (as well as Syrian ones) to have several wives and to give them cities for dressing the woman’s waist, for dressing her neck, and for

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50. Plin. *Nat.* 13.3: *Unguentum Persarum gentis esse debet. Illi madent eo et accersita commendatione inluvie natum virus extingunt* (“Perfume ought by right to be accredited to the Persian race; they soak themselves in it, and quench the odour produced from dirt by its adventitious attraction.” Transl. Rackham, LCL). See for more details: Jean Colin, “Luxe oriental et parfums masculins dans la Rome Alexandrine (d’après Cicéron et Lucrèce),” *RBPH* 33.1 (1955): 5–19; Edwards, *The Politics of Immorality*, 68; Michel Blonski, “Pline, les Perses, le parfum: Analyse d’un fantasme,” *RevPhil* 81 (2007): 13–24.

51. Michel Blonski, “Pline, les Perses, le parfum,” 18.

52. On the *topos* of Persian luxury, cf. also Xen. *Cyr.* 8.8.15; Nep. *Paus.* 3.2 (*epulabatur more Persarum luxuriosius quam qui aderant pati possent*, [Pausanias] “dined in the Persian fashion, more extravagantly than his associates could tolerate.” Transl. Rolfe, LCL); Plut. *De Alex. fort.* 342a; *Corp. paroem. gr.* 2.38. See Briant, “Histoire et idéologie: les Grecs et la ‘décadence perse’”.

53. Cf. Rhiannon Evans, “Learning to be Decadent: Roman Identity and the Luxuries of Others,” in *Thirty-Second Annual Conference of the Australasian Society for Classical Studies; Selected Proceedings* (ed. A. Mackay. Online: <http://www.ascs.org.au/news/ascs32/> Evans.pdf).

dressing her hair.<sup>54</sup> Isidore of Seville, clearly based on the ancient tradition, describes in detail the sumptuousness of the royal palace built by Cyrus in Susa (*Orig.* 15.1.10). In his narration about Cambyse's invasion of Ethiopia, Seneca reports that during the Persian army's retreat hunger was so strong that soldiers had to eat by lot every tenth, but at the same time camel in the royal convoy carried rare birds and other edibles for the king's sumptuous feasts (Sen. *De Ira* 3.20.4; cf. Hdt. 3.25).

Why was the *topos* of Persian luxury and effeminacy so attractive to moralizing Roman writers? The historical fate of the Persians and their kingdom illustrated the perniciousness of boastful wealth; as such, the *topos* served as a good warning for Roman rulers. This idea was expressed directly by Valerius Maximus. Reporting the story about Xerxes's promise to award any person who would invent a new kind of enjoyment,<sup>55</sup> he ascertains that the king, enjoying immense pleasures, led to the downfall of the most extensive empire:

Then Xerxes. In the extravagant ostentation of royal wealth he so reveled in luxury that he published an edict offering a reward to anyone who discovered a new sort of pleasure. A prisoner to excessive enjoinder, what ruin he brought upon his vast empire! (V. Max. 9.1, ext. 3; transl. Shackleton Bailey, LCL)

At the same time, the inherent bravery of the ancient Persians is very rarely mentioned by Roman authors.<sup>56</sup> Sometimes it is transferred to the Parthians,<sup>57</sup> as in Silius Italicus's *Punica* (7.646–7), which tells about

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54. *Solere aiunt reges barbaros Persarum ac Syrorum plures uxores habere, his autem uxoribus civitates attribuere hoc modo: Haec civitas mulieri in redimiculum praebeat, haec in collum, haec in crinis. Ita populos habent universos non solum concios libidinis suae, verum etiam administros* ("They say that the barbarian kings of the Persians and Syrians are accustomed to have several wives, and to give to these wives cities in this fashion:—that this city is to dress the woman's waist, that one to dress her neck, that to dress her hair; and so they have whole nations not only privy to their lusts, but also assistants in it." Translated by C. D. Yonge, *The Orations of Marcus Tullius Cicero* [vol. 1; London: G. Bell and Sons, 1916]). It is noteworthy that Metellus in Lucan's *Bellum Civile* (8.396–411) attributes polygamy and incestuous marriages to Parthian kings.

55. Cf. Cic. *Tusc.* 5.20.

56. Although a "philobarbaros" Herodotus often pays tribute to the courage of the Persians (e.g., Hdt. 1.136; 7.238; 9.63; 9.71).

57. On Roman assessments of Parthian warfare and military power, see Charlotte

Cleadas of Sydon fighting “in Persian fashion” (*Achaemenio ritu*), shooting arrows over his shoulder. More often, as a characteristic feature of Persian military practice, are reported arrows—*Achaemeniis sagittis* (Prop. 2.13.1–2), at times said to be poisoned, like those of Arabians or Parthians (Sen. *Med.* 710–1: “plants wherewith the rich Arabians smear their arrows, and the bold Mede ... or the light-armed Parthians”; transl. Miller, LCL). Perhaps, the only passage which directly gives its due to Persian fortitude is a phrase in one of Seneca’s letters: “Fortitude, energy, and readiness for battle are to be found among the Persians, just as much as among men who have girded themselves up high” (Sen. *Ep.* 33.2; transl. Gummere, LCL). Cornelius Fronto in one poorly preserved passage of his letter to Marcus Aurelius (*Aur. Haines*, I, p. 106 = *Ad M. Caes.* iii, 16, Naber, p. 53) mentions *Persarum disciplina* in connection with the meaning of the verb *battunt* (to beat), perhaps, in a report about how the Persians taught their young men to tell the truth.<sup>58</sup>

#### PARTHANS AS “NEW” PERSIANS

At last, but not at least, we must remind ourselves that references to examples and images of Persian history should be understood in light of Rome’s direct confrontations with the Parthian kingdom. From the early first century B.C.E. onward, Parthia was regarded by Romans as a “reincarnation” of the Achaemenid Empire, just as the Seleucids did at an earlier time,<sup>59</sup> even if the Romans were perfectly aware that the Parthians and the Persians were two distinct peoples.<sup>60</sup> However, it is true, the Arsacids themselves claimed to be the heirs of the Achaemenid Persians<sup>61</sup> (although how much the Par-

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Lerouge, *L'image des Parthes dans le monde gréco-romain: Du début du Ier siècle av. J.-C. jusqu'à la fin du Haut-Empire romain* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2007), 305–8.

58. *Quom Persarum disciplinam memorares, bene battunt ais* (“When you spoke of the Persian training, *battunt* was a happy word of yours.” Transl. Haines, in LCL).

59. Christopher Tuplin, “The Seleucids and Their Achaemenid Predecessor: A Persian Inheritance?” in *Ancient Greece and Ancient Iran: Cross-Cultural Encounters. First International Conference (Athens, 11–13 November 2006)* (ed. S. M. R. Darbandi and A. Zournatzi; Athens: National Hellenic Research Foundation, 2008), 109–36.

60. This is evident, for example, from Pliny the Elder in *Nat.* 6.41: *Persarum regna, quae nunc Parthorum inellegimus* (“The Persian kingdom, which now we consider the Parthian one”).

61. On Parthian claims of continuity with the Achaemenids, see e.g. Józef Wolski, “Les Achéménides et les Arsacides: Contribution à l’histoire de la formation des tradi-

thian royal ideology is based on Achaemenid models is debatable).<sup>62</sup> Because of that fact, as well as by virtue of the literary, rhetorical, and educational traditions based on Greek models and usage, Persian and Parthian realities were very often intermixed. Roman authors not only interchangeably call contemporary Parthians *Persae* and *Medes* (sometimes, possibly, because of stylistic considerations), but *de facto* identify them. Such identification already occurs in Cicero (*Dom.* 60: *Persas*) and becomes commonplace in the writings of Augustan poets<sup>63</sup> and other authors of the first century C.E.<sup>64</sup> Given that this material has frequently been the subject of scholarly attention, two instances will suffice here. Horace in his *Odes* (2.2.17), tells how the Parthian king Phraates “had been restored to the throne of Cyrus” (*reditum Cyri solio Phraaten*). Emperor Hadrian, in his Greek epigram composed in the name of Trajan and dedicated to Casian Zeus (the god of the mountain near the mouth of the Orontes), appeals to the deity for glorious accomplishment of the Parthian expedition, which he calls “campaign against the Achaemenids,” that is “Persian war,” although the Arsacids are mentioned too (*Anth. Pal.* 6.332). Certainly, these expressions may be just an element of poetic imagery and convention, but they confirm the steadiness of the identification between Arsacids and Achaemenids.

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tions iraniennes,” *Syria* 43 (1966): 65–89 (especially 72–6); Shayegan, *Arsacids and Sasanians*, 330–31.

62. Richard Fowler, “Most Fortunate Roots: Tradition and Legitimacy in Parthian Royal Ideology,” in *Imaginary Kings: Royal Images in the Ancient Near East, Greece and Rome* (ed. O. Hekster and R. Fowler; Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2005), 125–55.

63. Hor. *Carm.* 1.2.22 (*graves Persae*), 1.2.51 (*sinas Medos*), 1.21.15 (*Persas*), 1.27.5 (*vino et lucernis Medus*), 1.29.4 (*Medo*), 2.1.31 (*Medis*), 2.9.21 (*Medumque flumen*), 2.12.21 (*dives Achaemenes*), 2.16.5 (*Medi*), 3.3.43–4 (*posit Roma ferox dare iura Medis*), 3.5.9 (*sub rege Medo*), 3.9.4 (*Persarum rege*), 4.15.23 (*infidique Persae*); Hor. *Ep.* 13.8 (*Achaemenio nardo*); Ov. *Ars.* 1.225 (*Persis*), 1.226 (*in Achaemeniis valibus*); Ov. *Fast.* 1.385 (*Persis radiis*); Ov. *Met.* 1.62 (*Persidaque*). See in detail Michael Wissemann, *Die Parther in der augusteischen Dichtung* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1982), 24–6; Shayegan, *Arsacids and Sasanians*, 336; Schneider, “Faszination des Feindes,” 110–13; Rolf M. Schneider, “Friend and Foe: The Orient in Rome,” in *The Age of the Parthians* (ed. V. S. Curtis and S. Stewart; The Idea of Iran 2; London: Tauris, 2007), 50–86 (84, n. 91).

64. Paratore, “Persia nella letteratura latina”; Rosivach “Romans’ View”; Hardie, “Images of the Persian Wars,” 128–30; Holger Sonnabend, *Fremdenbild und Politik: Vorstellungen der Römer von Ägypten und dem Partherreich in der späten Republik und frühen Kaiserzeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1986), 198–9; Lerouge, *Image des Parthes*, 122–28.

Moreover, the tendency to equate Parthia with Persia and the Arsacids (later, Sasanids) with the Achaemenids continues in the works of later authors, such as Eutropius and in the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*.<sup>65</sup> This identification is not a simple historical aberration, it is neither a tribute to tradition nor a result of misinformation; it is rather, in the words of Anthony Spawforth, “almost cultural reflex.”<sup>66</sup> By mixing Persians, Parthians, Achaemenids, Arsacids, and Sasanians, Roman authors, explicitly or implicitly, refer their audiences to that global historical perspective, in which the memory about past victories of the Hellenes and defeats of the Persians was the foundation of a common, unified Greco-Roman identity. Traditional “Oriental” features in the image of the Persians were “discovered” in the history told by the Greeks and transferred to the Parthians in order to legitimize anti-Parthian feelings. Consciously or spontaneously, the Romans represented themselves as the “new Greeks” of 480–479 B.C.E., who advocated Western values against Eastern despotism, defending Europe against Asia.<sup>67</sup> Thereby, they included their confrontation with Parthia in a common mythical-historical tradition, within which the struggle between civilization and barbarism went back to the past as far as the fighting between gods and Titans.<sup>68</sup> The representation of Achaemenid Persia as a barbarian society contributed to the idea of the Greco-Roman world as a dominant force, since the East was the world that might be defeated and conquered, as the victories of Athenians, Spartans, Macedonians, and later the Romans themselves showed.<sup>69</sup> Also, the Romans inherited that Asian/European binarism which is apparent in Greek thought as early as Aeschylus’s *Persae* (181–214),<sup>70</sup> and Latin texts give numerous examples of that kind of thinking.<sup>71</sup>

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65. Alain Chauvot, “Parthes et Perses dans les sources du IV<sup>e</sup> siècle,” in *Institutions, société et vie politique dans l’Empire romaine au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle ap. J.-C. Actes de la table ronde autour de l’œuvre d’André Chastagnol* (Paris, 20–21 janvier 1989) (Rome: École française de Rome, 1992), 115–25, especially 117, n. 15.

66. Spawforth, “Symbol of Unity?” 240.

67. Cf. Schneider, “Faszination des Feindes,” 96–146; Brosius, *Persians*, 138.

68. Spawforth, “Symbol of Unity?” 240.

69. Drijvers, “Roman Image of the ‘Barbarian’ Sasanians,” 66.

70. See Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge; Kegan Paul, 1978), 56–57; Edith Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-definition through Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 69–100.

71. Cf., e.g., Nep. *Paus.* 3.2–3; Nep. *Alc.* 11.5; V. Max. 9.1. ext. 3; Curt. 4.6.3, 5.7.3, 9.7.15; Plin. *Nat.* 6.111; Tac. *Ann.* 2.57.5.



## CONCLUSION

As in many other cases, the Roman perception of Achaemenid Persian history reveals that the Greek past also functioned as a common base for the communication between Greeks and Romans.<sup>72</sup> Under the Empire, Greek literature of the Second Sophistic revived interest in the glorious past of Greece, including the great confrontation with Achaemenid Persia and Alexander the Great's deeds, which provided very popular themes for rhetorical declamations. For the most part, these commonplaces and anecdotes (concerning Persian luxury and wealth, the arrogance of the Persian kings, their grandiose constructions, and so on) occurred in moralizing or rhetorical contexts, serving primarily as didactic *exempla* and often being far from historically reliable. All these topics and stereotypes, via rhetorical teaching and popular moral philosophy, as well as historical narratives of different kinds, had become shared symbols of Greek and Roman cultural and historical memory, but in some regards they were conceived in different ways. In Roman historical memory, standard images of Achaemenid Persians as the "Other" took an abstract, timeless character, having been transposed onto the contemporary enemies of Rome, Parthia and Sasanian Persia. These images were used as devices for constructing Roman identity, by highlighting the opposition between West and East, for the ideological justification of Rome's confrontation with Iranian powers in the first four centuries C.E.<sup>73</sup> At the same time, Romans used the idea of the four great kingdoms of the past to justify their own domination as the fifth world empire. So, perhaps we can paraphrase the famous dictum of Edward Said and say that in Rome Achaemenid Persia was something more than what was empirically known about it.<sup>74</sup> One empire was a peculiar mirror—and, in some aspects, a forewarning—of another.

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72. Swain, *Hellenism and Empire*, 67.

73. A noticeable but methodologically problematic example of how the very distant past of the Achaemenid Empire may be actualized and used for debating contemporary problems is the recent book by Bruce Lincoln, *Religion, Empire, and Torture: The Case of Achaemenian Persia, with a Postscript on Abu Ghraib* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007). Critical comments on this book: Henry P. Colburn, "Orientalism, Postcolonialism, and the Achaemenid Empire: Meditations on Bruce Lincoln's Religion, Empire, and Torture," *BICS* 54.2 (2011): 87–103.

74. The original phrase is: "Almost from earliest times in Europe the Orient was something more than what was empirically known about it" (Said, *Orientalism*, 55).

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## YAHWEH'S ANOINTED: CYRUS, DEUTERONOMY'S LAW OF THE KING, AND YEHUDITE IDENTITY\*

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Hey, you! I am Cyrus son of Cambyses, who founded the Persian empire  
and was king of Asia. Do not envy my memorial.<sup>1</sup>

### I

According to the Roman historian Arrian,<sup>2</sup> Alexander the Great wished for some time to visit the tomb of Cyrus. The historian suggests that the Macedonian conqueror was a zealous devotee of the long dead Achaemenid ruler. In the story, when Alexander finally arrives at the tomb, however, he is disappointed to find it “ruined and ransacked,” despoiled and vandalized. Indeed, he is so distressed by its condition that he tortures the Magi responsible for its upkeep.<sup>3</sup> Alexander, one might conclude, was

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1. Arrian, *Anabasis Alexandrou* 6.29.8. Translations are my own, unless noted otherwise.

2. Arrian wrote in the second century C.E., when there was a revival of interest in the classical Greek writers of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E. (the “Second Sophistic”). It seems that Arrian found great influence in the work of Xenophon. See Paul Cartledge, “Introduction,” in *The Landmark Arrian: The Campaigns of Alexander (Anabasis Alexandrou)* (ed. J. Romm; New York: Pantheon, 2010), xiii–xxviii, xiii–xv.

3. But the Magi had nothing to do with it, apparently, so he lets them live. For the full account see *Anabasis Alexandrou* 6.29.4–11.

something of an obsessed fan. Memories of great admiration for Cyrus are abundant in the literature of the ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern world. The memories persisted for centuries, from the early Persian period itself on into late antiquity. Without a doubt, Cyrus was a shrewd politician and employed many of the practices of his imperial predecessors, his reputation as a great liberator and ecumenist notwithstanding.<sup>4</sup> There is even evidence that at least some Babylonians did not remember Cyrus's rule with fondness.<sup>5</sup> Nonetheless, as Amélie Kuhrt puts it, Cyrus enjoyed very good press in the ancient world,<sup>6</sup> and he continues to enjoy it today, as evinced by the Cyrus Cylinder's highly publicized "US Tour" in 2013.<sup>7</sup> The 2,600-year-old Persian king maintains political rock star status. Memories of this ancient figure have contributed much to the negotiation and formation of individual and group identities. Of course, these negotiations and formations have panned out differently and have had different sociocultural implications, in different localities in the ancient world and today.

For Greeks of the classical era, for example, Cyrus was a site of memory that provided something of a foil for outright anti-monarchic statements in political discourse, while also reinforcing the Greek commitment to anti-

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4. Cf. Amélie Kuhrt, "The Cyrus Cylinder and Achaemenid Imperial Policy," *JSTOT* 25 (1983): 83–97; also R. J. van der Spek, "Cyrus the Great, Exiles, and Foreign Gods: A Comparison of Assyrian and Persian Policies on Subject Nations," in *Extraction and Control: Studies in Honor of Matthew W. Stolper* (ed. M. Kozuh et al.; SAOC 68; Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2014), 233–64.

5. See the "Dynastic Prophecy," a Seleucid-era *vaticinia ex eventu*, written in Akkadian, which tells how the "king of Elam" (i.e., Cyrus) will remove Nabonidus from the throne and subsequently "oppress the land" (for text, comment, and further references, see Amélie Kuhrt, *The Persian Empire: A Corpus of Sources from the Achaemenid Period* [London: Routledge, 2007], 49, 80–81; Matthew Neujahr, *Predicting the Past in the Ancient Near East: Mantic Historiography in Ancient Mesopotamia, Judah, and the Mediterranean World* [BJS 354; Providence, R.I.: Brown Judaic Studies, 2012], 58–71; and also Caroline Waerzeggers, "Babylonian Kingship in the Persian Period: Performance and Reception," in *Exile and Return: The Babylonian Context* [ed. J. Stökl and C. Waerzeggers; BZAW 478; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015], 181–222).

6. Kuhrt, "Cyrus Cylinder," 83.

7. The tour, sponsored primarily by the non-profit organization Iran Heritage Foundation America, promoted the cylinder as "a symbol of multi-culturalism, tolerance, diversity, and human rights." See the tour's official website: [cyruscylinder2013.com](http://cyruscylinder2013.com) (accessed 20 March 2014). This is only one example of many in which Cyrus has been held up as a great champion of tolerance and human rights. See van der Spek, "Cyrus the Great," 233–35, for additional references.

authoritarianism and a kind of disciplined individualism within that same discourse. Classical historians tend to emphasize Cyrus's military genius in his capturing of Babylon, a city celebrated for its defensive structures and supposed impregnability (e.g., Herodotus, *Hist.* 1.177–91; Xenophon, *Cyr.* 7.5.1–26).<sup>8</sup> The Greeks also marvel at the Persian monarch's ability to capture the love of his people. They remember him as a leader with great political savvy. Xenophon, for example, speaks very highly of Cyrus's rule and, concerning the Persian's ongoing reputation, he states, "Even today, the barbarians recount in tales and songs how Cyrus was the most handsome, most generous-spirited, most devoted to learning and most ambitious, so that he endured all kinds of hardships and submitted to all sorts of danger in order to be praised" (*Cyr.* 1.2.1).<sup>9</sup> Herodotus likewise claims that the Persians considered Cyrus to be incomparable among men (cf. *Hist.* 3.160). In general, Greek literature remembers Cyrus's leadership with great esteem. He embodied, at least in part, what Rebecca Newberger Goldstein calls the Greek "Ethos of the Extraordinary," that is, the prominent Greek ideal that "one must live so that one will be spoken about, by as many speakers as possible and for as long as possible."<sup>10</sup> That said, there is a well-known tendency in the same corpus of literature to criticize monarchy as a political institution, even in relation to Cyrus himself. Consider, for example, Herodotus's account of Cyrus's death. The historian is implicitly critical of the king's fateful dealings with the Massagetae people: Cyrus goes against the advice of the "foremost Persians" and instead follows the words of the former Lydian king Croesus, whose plan leads to full-scale conflict and to Cyrus's eventual demise (*Hist.* 1.201–14).<sup>11</sup> Herodotus's narrative is part of a larger Greek discourse that respects and even reveres Cyrus as a king, but is nevertheless critical of the institution of kingship because of its tendency to lack discipline and to overreach its bounds of

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8. Cf. David Vanderhooft, "Cyrus II, Liberator or Conqueror? Ancient Historiography concerning Cyrus in Babylon," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (ed. O. Lipschits and M. Oeming; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 351–72, esp. 354–60.

9. Trans. Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 98.

10. On this ethos, Goldstein comments, "It is only by making oneself extraordinary that one can keep from disappearing without a trace, like some poor soul who slips beneath the ocean's waves." See eadem, *Plato at the Googleplex: Why Philosophy Won't Go Away* (New York: Pantheon, 2014), 8–9; also 123–62.

11. Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 99–100, calls it a "moralising tale."

power.<sup>12</sup> “In a culture that was so interested in monarchy,” writes Lynette Mitchell, “where even Athenian democracy concerned itself with monarchs in democracy and democracy as monarch, Cyrus provided a convenient lens at one remove, through which the potentialities of monarchy could be tested.”<sup>13</sup> Remembering the foremost Persian king enabled at once admiration for the strengths of a particular ruler and criticism for the institution that he embodied. The case of classical Greece involves memories of Cyrus from just beyond the reach of Persian imperial rule: historical and political ratiocinations from a people that (famously) avoided Achaemenid imperialization. But what do we find when we turn to the empire itself? How did memories of the empire’s celebrated founder impact the political discourses and identities of the peoples directly under Persian imperial rule?

In the late Persian era in Yehud—a relatively insignificant province on the western periphery of the empire, but nevertheless a significant locality for Western sociocultural history—we find a discourse not unlike the Greek one. The Yehudite discourse tends toward multivocality with regard to kingship as a political institution, and it prominently features the figure of Cyrus in its remembering of kingship, in its negotiation and formation of political identity.<sup>14</sup> My primary goal in this essay is to work toward explicating this Yehudite discourse and the function of Cyrus-memories within it. Working toward explication, I will focus on one issue in particular: namely, how to understand the relationship between Deuteronomy’s law of the king (Deut 17:14–20) and the memories of Cyrus in Yehudite literature. There exists a strong tension between these texts: Deuteronomy strips the royal office of its conventional Near Eastern powers (horses, wives, wealth) and strongly stipulates that no foreigner may rule over the Israelites; yet the books of Isaiah and Chronicles memorialize the foreigner Cyrus as a *de facto* king of Israel, placing him on par with David, the great king of Israel’s monarchic era. In short, the images of Cyrus in Yehudite literature provided a minority report on what it meant to be an Israelite king

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12. Cf. Lynette Mitchell, “Remembering Cyrus the Persian: Exploring Monarchy and Freedom in Classical Greece,” in *Remembering Biblical Figures in the Late Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods: Social Memory and Imagination* (ed. D. V. Edelman and E. Ben Zvi; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 283–92, esp. 290–91.

13. Mitchell, “Remembering Cyrus,” 291–92.

14. Cf. Klaus Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah: A Commentary on Isaiah 40–55* (trans. M. Kohl; Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 223–25.

and, by extension, what it meant to be an Israelite altogether. The hopeful visions of Cyrus provided another take on what constituted the identity of Israelite political leadership in Israel's postmonarchic era. Thus in the social remembering of kingship in late Persian Yehud, we can observe, in at least one strand of thought, a hybridization of Yehudite political identity, in which the Great King of Persia was "Davidized" in such a way that the identity of Israelite kingship (and Israelite/Yehudite identity in general) could be maintained in an imperial milieu.

## II

Following the work of Barry Schwartz, who draws on the influential cultural anthropology of Clifford Geertz, I understand social memory as a cultural system that functions as a model *of* and a model *for* society.<sup>15</sup> Social memory or remembering, like the widespread literary memorialization of Cyrus one finds in the ancient world, acts as a "*template* that organizes and animates behavior and a *frame* within which people locate and find meaning for their present experience."<sup>16</sup> Schwartz, working on American memory and politics, shows time and again how memories and images of Abraham Lincoln have been consciously and unconsciously recycled to frame the society's remembering of later political leaders—like John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr., for example—and how perceptions of these later figures have (re)shaped understandings of Lincoln's role(s) in America's past. An example relevant for scholars of the ancient Near Eastern world is Saddam Hussein's attempts in the 1990s to align himself with memories of Mesopotamian kings and emperors.<sup>17</sup> Another

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15. See, e.g., Schwartz's monograph-length studies on Abraham Lincoln and social memory in the United States: *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); and *Abraham Lincoln in the Post-Heroic Era: History and Memory in Late Twentieth-Century America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008). Cf. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 93–94 and *passim*.

16. Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory*, 18 (italics original).

17. Hussein actually installed bricks at the base of Babylon's ancient walls with Cuneiform inscriptions that read, "In the era of President Saddam Hussein, the President of Iraq, God preserve him, who rebuilt Babylon, as protector of the great Iraq and the builder of civilization." See Douglas Jehl, "Look Who's Stealing Nebuchadnezzar's Thunder," *New York Times* (2 June 1997); online: <http://www.nytimes.com/1997/06/02/>

scholar, Jeffrey Olick, states that social remembering “express[es] neither the past nor the present but the changing interactions between past and present: Past meanings are malleable to varying degrees and present circumstances exploit these potentials more or less.”<sup>18</sup> In other words, when a Persian-, Hellenistic-, or Roman-era (or later) society invoked memories of Cyrus the Great, the society saw something in Cyrus that spoke to its present condition and its future hopes and desires, or else the society never would have recalled him in the first place. But at the same time, present discourse shaped and reshaped understandings of Cyrus as part of the society’s past. This generates, in a particular milieu, a discursive feedback loop that cycles from past to present to future and vice versa. All that said, it is important to note that social remembering, though sometimes it is consciously manipulated for propagandistic purposes, often works unconsciously and organically. Indeed, this is how human cognition functions: the brain makes links between memories and experiences with apparent affinities, which model one another in the mind’s perception. Societies do something similar when trying to work out the interrelationship between the shared past, its potential meanings and its import in the present.<sup>19</sup> Social memory and remembering, then, is a complex process of signification, in which symbolic links are created over and through time and space in order to make sense of the moment at hand, in order to approach questions such as: Who are we? Where have we come from? Where are we going? And who are we to become?—questions of identity. Narratives are,

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world/look-who-s-stealing-nebuchadnezzar-s-thunder.html (accessed 13 May 2014). Hussein also authored a novel, *Zabiba wal-Malik*, which first appeared in 2000 (English and German versions are available), and which uses elements of *Gilgamesh* and *The Thousand and One Nights* as allegory for the Gulf War of 1990–1991. See David Damrosch, *The Buried Book: The Loss and Rediscovery of the Great Epic of Gilgamesh* (New York: Holt, 2006), 254–72.

18. Jeffrey K. Olick, *The Politics of Regret: On Collective Memory and Historical Responsibility* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 55–56. He emphasizes that this is never a one-time event, but an ongoing interaction and negotiation.

19. Admittedly, this is an overly schematic presentation. For recent and helpful discussions of memory, see the collection *Memory in Mind and Culture* (ed. P. Boyer and J. V. Wertsch; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), which covers the study of individual cognition and its relationship to social and cultural remembering; and also *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies* (ed. A. Erll et al.; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), which presents a number of summaries and critiques of various approaches to memory studies.

thus, also an essential aspect of social memory. Social remembering necessarily generates, and is informed by, communally shared and constructed narratives—(hi)stories that continually shape identity and vice versa.

Turning now to political memory, imagination, and identity in the province of Yehud, one finds a society with a corpus of literature—a corpus that goes to great lengths recounting, glorifying, and critiquing its monar-chic past as well as the import of this past for the present and future.<sup>20</sup> It

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20. This statement naturally raises the questions: What literature? What evidence do we have to work with for this period? And how do we know? Unfortunately, answers to these questions are plagued by dangers of circular argumentation and by necessary speculation, but we have some good ideas nonetheless. Below I provide some additional notes on the specific books I deal with in this essay, but some general comments are necessary here. Recent work on the compositional history of the Hebrew Bible suggests that the conditions of possibility for many of its *books* are to be found in the late Persian/(early Hellenistic) era, during the fourth and early third centuries B.C.E. (I put “early Hellenistic” in brackets because, in the southern Levant at least, there was general continuity in settlement patterns and governmental administrative systems from the Achaemenids to Alexander to the Ptolemies, and widespread Hellenistic sociocultural influence was not manifest until well into the third century B.C.E. and later; cf. Oded Lipschits and Oren Tal, “The Settlement Archaeology of the Province of Judah,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.E.* [ed. O. Lipschits et al.; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2007], 33–52). This is *not* to deny that these books are composite works of literature that drew on much older source-texts, nor is it to say that issues of composition history are entirely settled in biblical studies (they likely never will be). The point is, the “textualization”/“scripturalization”/“codification”/“proto-canonization”/“stabilization” (pick your terminological poison) of many of the Hebrew Bible’s books likely occurred in the sociocultural milieu of late Persian Yehud. These books include the Pentateuch; Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings (i.e., the “Deuteronomistic” books or “Former Prophets”); the prophetic books (i.e., the “Latter Prophets”); and Chronicles; inter alia. Codified as works of literature in the late Persian era, these books are literary artifacts from that period, and their discourses (those within each book and those that stretch across the boundaries of books) reflect the discourses of the community that produced and maintained them. For examples of scholarship that support this stance on the books’ primary milieu (but with different approaches, aims, and outcomes), see Lester Grabbe, “The Law, the Prophets, and the Rest: The State of the Bible in Pre-Maccabean Times,” *DSD* 13 (2006): 319–38; Reinhard Achenbach, “The Pentateuch, the Prophets, and the Torah in the Fifth and Fourth Centuries B.C.E.,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.E.*, 253–85; Ehud Ben Zvi, “Reconstructing the Intellectual Discourse of Ancient Yehud,” *SR* 39 (2010): 7–23; David M. Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 221–24; and also the very recent essay by Diana Edelman, “Introduction,” in *Deuteronomy–Kings as Emerging Authoritative*



is important to emphasize here that Yehud was certainly not Babylon or Egypt, nor was it Athens; the literati of Yehud—who were responsible for the production and maintenance of Yehudite literature such as the books of Deuteronomy, Isaiah, and Chronicles—were a very small and politically insignificant group on the outskirts of an imperial world. This imperial backwater had suffered great devastation from the Neo-Babylonian conquests of the early sixth century, and its population and economy never really recovered during the Neo-Babylonian/early Persian period (the sixth and fifth centuries). Even in the late Persian/early Hellenistic era (the fourth and third centuries) the entire province was home to no more than 30,000—and as few as 15,000—persons, and its sociocultural and political center, Jerusalem, was home to only 1,000 or so.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, literacy rates were extremely low in the ancient Near East—one percent at best and probably even lower—and a high level of reading comprehension was limited to sociocultural “elites,” that is, royal and cultic functionaries, persons with extensive formal education.<sup>22</sup> In the case of Yehud, then, we are talk-

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*Books: A Conversation* (ed. D. V. Edelman; ANEM 6; Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical, 2014), 1–25. That said, I should also emphasize that this is *not* to say these books were completely stabilized by the late Persian period. The texts remained fluid to a certain extent throughout antiquity, and in some cases may have circulated in different versions (cf. LXX Jeremiah). Carr, *Formation*, 180–203; and also Konrad Schmid, *The Old Testament: A Literary History* (trans. Linda M. Maloney; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 183–209; have recently argued that some of these books may have been expanded and/or edited in a third-century, Hellenistic milieu. However, as Carr acknowledges, spotting potential Hellenistic-era expansions in these books, which are more or less Persian-era compositions, is extremely difficult (*Formation*, 188).

21. See, e.g., Avraham Faust, “Settlement Dynamics and Demographic Fluctuations in Judah from the Late Iron Age to the Hellenistic Period and the Archaeology of Persian-Period Yehud,” in *A Time of Change: Judah and Its Neighbors in the Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods* (ed. Y. Levin; LSTS 65; London: T&T Clark, 2007), 23–51; Oded Lipschits, “Persian Period Finds from Jerusalem: Facts and Interpretations,” *JHS* 9 (2009): article 20 (online: <http://www.jhsonline.org>); Israel Finkelstein, “Persian Period Jerusalem and Yehud Rejoinders,” in *Focusing Biblical Studies: The Crucial Nature of the Persian and Hellenistic Periods: Essays in Honor of Douglas A. Knight* (ed. J. L. Berquist and A. Hunt; LHBOTS 544; New York: T&T Clark, 2012), 49–62; and their bibliographies.

22. Cf. Christopher A. Rollston, *Writing and Literacy in the World of Ancient Israel: Epigraphic Evidence from the Iron Age* (Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical, 2010), 132–34. Rollston’s study focuses on the Iron Age, but his observations are applicable to the Persian period as well, when literacy was, without doubt, even less common. See also Ehud Ben Zvi, “Introduction: Writings, Speeches, and the Prophetic Books—Set-

ing about a very minimal number of highly literate persons who were tradents of the literature.<sup>23</sup> This is important to keep in mind because it suggests that various and competing “schools” or multiple and independent “factions” most likely did not exist in Persian Yehud.<sup>24</sup> Instead, it is much more likely that a single group of highly literate individuals, who worked and lived together closely, debated and embraced a number of diverse and sometimes divergent ideas about history—past, present, and future—drawing on these ideas in their constructions of identity. Notably, one may observe a similar phenomenon in late Persian- and Hellenistic-era Babylon, where one finds different opinions in different narrative forms within the “active lifespan” of the Babylonian library at Esagil; it seems that, for the literati there, remembering the transition from Babylonian kingship to Persian rule presented a “hermeneutical problem” that allowed for multiple and divergent interpretations of the past.<sup>25</sup> To explain away multivocality or tensions in the discourse by simply assigning different strands of thought to separate ideologically/theologically minded groups within the Yehudite population is, therefore, unfounded.<sup>26</sup>

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ting an Agenda,” in *Writings and Speech in Israelite and Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy* (ed. E. Ben Zvi and M. H. Floyd; SBLSymS 10; Atlanta, Ga.: SBL, 2000), 1–29, esp. 5–6; David M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 13–14.

23. Cf. Ehud Ben Zvi, “The Urban Center of Jerusalem and the Development of the Literature of the Hebrew Bible,” in *Aspects of Urbanism in Antiquity: From Mesopotamia to Crete* (ed. W. E. Aufrecht et al; JSOTSup 244; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 194–209.

24. It is not impossible, of course, but it is extremely unlikely.

25. Waerzeggers, “Babylonian Kingship,” 209, 222. On Babylonian literary culture in general, see Michael Jursa, “Cuneiform Writing in Neo-Babylonian Temple Communities,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Cuneiform Culture* (ed. K. Radner and E. Robson; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 184–204.

26. Although here I am emphasizing the social mnemonics of literature within a literary culture, it is important not to forget that this society lived in an actual locale, with its own geographical and physical features that would have contributed to social memory as well. For example, the ruins of Persian-era Jerusalem, with its destroyed temple and palace structures and its depleted economy, would have (re)shaped political memories past and future. For a recent study of Jerusalem in this vein, see Daniel D. Pioske, *David's Jerusalem: Between Memory and History* (New York: Routledge, 2015). Moreover, the grandeur of Persian kingship was not far away. The palatial structure of Ramat Rahel, only a few short kilometers from Jerusalem, boasted impressive “royal” architecture and an exotic garden, and was probably the Persian governor’s residence

## III

Immersing oneself in Yehudite literature, one quickly observes certain multivocality or polyvalence concerning the institution of kingship as part of Yehud's past. As mentioned, Deut 17:14–20 allows for and forecasts kingship in the land of Israel, yet it proffers a very unconventional vision of the office, which does not accord with ancient Near Eastern standards. Moreover, the very kingly things that Deuteronomy prohibits (horses, wives, wealth) and the political powers they represent (war, diplomacy, economy) serve in part as cause for celebration in the memories of Davidic kingship. One cannot have an effective army without horses, and one cannot build a palace or a temple without wealth. Solomon, indeed, receives direct criticism for his love of foreign women (1 Kgs 11:1–5), but his acquisition of horses and chariots (from Egypt no less!) and his amassing of impressive wealth is *praised* in Yehud's historiographical books of Kings and Chronicles (1 Kgs 5:6; 10:10–29; 2 Chr 9:22–31). To complicate matters further, it is Yahweh, the deity responsible for Deuteronomic law in the first place, who grants Solomon his wealth and prestige (1 Kgs 3:13). “Solomon's opulence, power, and international trade,” argues Gary Knoppers, “are regarded as signs of divine *favor* in the Deuteronomistic History”—not Deuteronom(ist)ic criticisms.<sup>27</sup> The problem of Solomon and his wives and possessions is only one example. There are tensions in the

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and the seat of imperial administration for the province. See Oded Lipschits et al., “Palace and Village, Paradise and Oblivion: Unravelling the Riddles of Ramat Raḥel,” *Near Eastern Archaeology* 74 (2011): 2–49; and Oded Lipschits, Yuval Gadot, and D. Langgut, “The Riddle of Ramat Raḥel: The Archaeology of a Royal Persian Period Edifice,” *Transeu* 41 (2012): 57–79. At Ramat Raḥel, the glories of the Persian empire and present-day Persian kingship (and also foreign kingship in general) would have stood juxtaposed with memories of Judahite/Israelite kingship past and future. These physical sites of memory are not the focus of this essay, but they are worth mentioning as important issues to keep in mind for the study of Yehudite identity in the late Persian era.

27. Gary N. Knoppers, “The Deuteronomist and the Deuteronomic Law of the King: A Reexamination of a Relationship,” *ZAW* 108 (1996): 329–46, 337 (italics added). *Pace* Marc Zvi Brettler, “The Structure of 1 Kings 1–11,” *JSOT* 49 (1991): 87–97; and Marvin Sweeney, “The Critique of Solomon in the Josianic Edition of the Deuteronomistic History,” *JBL* 114 (1995): 607–22; who, in different ways, argue for pronounced anti-Solomon content in 1 Kgs 1–10. Also, I disagree with Thomas Römer's recent statement: “[The law of the king] was probably written in order to summarize the Deuteronomistic discourse about kingship” (“Moses, The Royal Lawgiver,”

Yehudite literature's representations of dynasty (Davidic and otherwise), of Yahweh's kingship, of the people's power vis-à-vis kingship, of the utility and viability of kingship over time, etc. These issues provide a never ending supply of thorny problems for historians interested in the milieu of Yehud, and the roots of the issues stretch from the Deuteronomic king-law to the multiple and various representations of kingship in Yehud's historiographical and prophetic books.

In Deut 17:15 we find the root of the problem at hand: the question of the king's Israelite identity.<sup>28</sup> After forecasting that the people of Israel

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in *Remembering Biblical Figures*, 81–94, 86). There is, to the contrary, good evidence to think that the king-law is *at odds* with Deuteronomistic discourse.

28. The book of Deuteronomy, as a whole, bridges concerns of sociocultural(/ethnic) and geopolitical(/national) identities. It is concerned with the definition of, interrelationship between, and maintenance of cultural and geographical boundaries in ancient Israel(/Judah). Cf. E. Theodore Mullen Jr., *Narrative History and Ethnic Boundaries: The Deuteronomistic Historian and the Creation of Israelite National Identity* (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1993), 55–85. Most scholars tend to situate the composition of the *book* in the postmonarchic era, even though some of its texts may have origins in Israel's/Judah's monarchic period (Juha Pakkala and Nathan MacDonald cover the major issues in a series of articles in ZAW 121–123 [2009–2011]; see also the recent and cogent essay by Philip R. Davies, “The Authority of Deuteronomy,” in *Deuteronomy-Kings as Emerging Authoritative Books*, 27–47). Indeed, as C. L. Crouch argues in her recent work, many of the sociocultural concerns and debates reflected in the book likely have their roots in the late Iron Age, during Judah's monarchic period, especially in the seventh century B.C.E. (*The Making of Israel: Cultural Diversity in the Southern Levant and the Formation of Ethnic Identity in Deuteronomy* [VTSup 162; Leiden: Brill, 2014]; cf. Ian Douglas Wilson, “Judean Pillar Figurines and Ethnic Identity in the Shadow of Assyria,” *JSOT* 36 [2012]: 259–78, which investigates the role of material culture in Judah's identity discourse during the Neo-Assyrian era). Nevertheless, *pace* Crouch, I seriously doubt that Deuteronomy's king-law in particular was extant in the monarchic era (see Crouch, *Making of Israel*, 177–84). It is difficult to see how a strongly political text such as Deut 17:14–17 would have had any cultural capital among literati in monarchic Judah, who were almost certainly associated in some way with the *actual* Judahite king. Do we know of any highly literate groups in the ancient Near East who were *not* directly connected to and in support of the political powers that be? In what monarchic-period social context would the production of such a text likely have taken place? In other words, why would the literati bite the hand that fed them? This, to me, is the biggest problem for any attempt to date the king-law to the monarchic era, and the problem often goes unaddressed by scholars who see the king-law as a monarchic-era text (e.g., Bernard M. Levinson, “The Reconceptualization of Kingship in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History's Transformation of Torah,” *VT* 51 [2001]: 511–34; and recently, Baruch Halpern, “Between

will eventually request a king, the law states: “You may indeed set over you a king, whom Yahweh your God will choose. From among your brothers you may set over you a king; you may not put over you a foreigner, who is not one of your brothers.” The Israelites may have the political office of king, as do other nations, but Yahweh has specific ideas concerning the nature of the office. First of all, Yahweh himself will “choose” (בחר) the king, just as he chose/will choose the people themselves (e.g., Deut 4:37; 7:6; 10:15; etc.), the central place of worship (e.g., Deut 12:5; 14:23; 16:2, etc.), and the levitical servants and priesthood (e.g., Deut 18:5; 21:5). C. L. Crouch writes, “If Israel’s king cannot be distinguished from non-Israelite kings in his royal capacity as such, he should be distinguished by virtue of the Israelite deity who renders him royal.”<sup>29</sup> The king is to be an exclusive Yahwist by association (Yahweh alone chooses him) and by practice (he devotes himself solely to Yahweh via the Torah; cf. Deut 17:19). Moreover, the king is to be from Israel exclusively. The law leaves no doubt about this, giving both positive and negative commands concerning the king’s family lineage: he is to be from among the Israelites (“your brothers”) and *not* a foreigner (נכרי). Notice that the prohibition uses the particularly forceful verb לא תוכל (“you may not/are not allowed”).<sup>30</sup> Notice, too, in Deut 17:20, the law places the successful king and dynasty בקרב ישראל (“in the midst of Israel”), a phrase with great import for the discourse (more below). The no-foreigner stipulation—which one would think goes with-

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Elective Autocracy and Democracy: Formalizing Biblical Constitutional Theory,” in *Literature as Politics, Politics as Literature: Essays on the Ancient Near East in Honor of Peter Machinist* [ed. David S. Vanderhooft and Abraham Winitzer; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2013], 165–83, esp. 176–82). There are texts from monarchic milieu in the ancient Near East that, one can argue, represent somewhat critical stances against the institution of kingship: the Kirta legend from Ugarit (CAT 1.14–16) is an example (cf. Gary N. Knoppers, “Dissonance and Disaster in the Legend of Kirta,” *JAOS* 114 [1994]: 572–82). The Deuteronomistic king-law, though, is not a legend that offers a veiled critique of the institution and its problems in general; it is a legal text that puts direct and extreme limitations upon the office of king in Israel. Thus, I have difficulties envisioning the law of the king as a creation of monarchic-era literati.

29. Crouch, *Making of Israel*, 179; cf. Assnat Bartor, *Reading Law as Narrative: A Study in the Casuistic Laws of the Pentateuch* (SBLAIL 5; Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010), 47.

30. Ernest Nicholson, “‘Do Not Dare to Set a Foreigner over You’: The King in Deuteronomy and ‘The Great King,’” *ZAW* 118 (2006): 46–61, 47–48; cf. Nicholson, *Deuteronomy and the Judaeon Diaspora* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 117–34, which contains a revision of the *ZAW* article.

out saying—is obviously and directly related to issues of social identity and points to a discourse concerned with international politics.

Within Yehudite literature, this sets the stage for narratives that have a pronounced negative take on foreign influences on the monarchy, including Jezebel the Phoenician's marriage to Ahab (1 Kgs 16:29–33)<sup>31</sup> and Ahaz's submission to Tiglath-pileser III, which makes the Assyrian Judah's overlord (2 Kgs 16:7–9).<sup>32</sup> In any case, the prohibition on foreigners in the office of king, in the words of Andrew Mayes, “strengthen[s] the positive demand that the king must be a member of the covenant people.”<sup>33</sup>

Within the milieu of Persian Yehud, then, the stipulation helped define and defend the boundaries of Yehudite identity with regard to ideally imagined political leadership in a postmonarchic, imperialized milieu. It helped conceive at least one vision of kingship that was wholly Yahwistic and wholly “Israelite,” within an ancient Near Eastern political climate dominated by non-Israelite power. By the late Persian period, Yehud had been under the control of imperial governance for several centuries. The prohibition of foreign kings, as codified in the book of Deuteronomy, framed memory of Israelite kingship past (good and bad), and it guided imagination of ideal kingship future. It functioned both as a prefatory note on what Israelite kingship should have and should *not* have been in Yehud's monarchic past and as an abstract ideal for any conceptualization of Israelite kingship in Yehud's present and future.

With the law, for instance, Yehudites would have found support for partly blaming outsiders for Yehud's present sociopolitical condition: doubtless, the law justified readings of the literature that would emphasize the impact of foreign figures—like Solomon's wives, for example, or Mesopotamian emperors—on the eventual downfall of Judah's kingdom in the past. To be sure, in Yehudite historiographical literature, a foreign king never actually sits directly on Israel's or Judah's throne. By marrying

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31. Andrew D. H. Mayes, *Deuteronomy* (NCBC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1979), 272.

32. Nicholson, “Do Not Dare,” 48–50; Nicholson, “*Traditum* and *Traditio*: The Case of Deuteronomy 17:14–20,” in *Scriptural Exegesis: Essays in Honour of Michael Fishbane* (ed. D. A. Green and L. S. Lieber; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 46–61, esp. 51–52; and cf. Nicholson, *Deuteronomy*, 108–9 and 120–22. Note, however, that 2 Chr 28:20 claims that Tiglath-pileser did not come to Judah's aid, balancing the picture one finds in 2 Kings.

33. Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, 272.



into the Israelite/Judahite royal line or by ruling over Israel/Judah from afar, however, the foreigner attains some level of power within the Israelite/Judahite political realm. In other words, from this mnemonic perspective: if only the Israelite kingship had avoided foreign influence and connections, the litany of apostasies that eventually led to the kingdom's collapse might never have happened. Note, for example, how Chronicles depicts Ahaz's apostasy as a corollary of his turning to foreign aid in a moment of desperation (2 Chr 28:22).<sup>34</sup> Of course, Yehudite literati could not have seen foreign influence as an excuse for the kings of old—they could not remove any blame from the past leaders of Israel and Judah—for, according to Yehudite historiography, Torah had always warned the Israelites and Judahites of the disastrous effects of outside influence (e.g., 2 Kgs 17:13–21).

Also, for the Persian-period community, the law, along with anti-foreigner tendencies in Yehudite historiography, established a precedent for

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34. This is part of Chronicles's tendency to keep foreigners and Israelites categorically separate. In Chronicles, there are seemingly only insiders and outsiders; making political alliances represents a grey area that goes against the book's ideological grain (cf. Sara Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and Its Place in Biblical Thought* [trans. Anna Barber; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2009 (original 1989)], 261–74). One finds a similar system of thought in Assyria, where the king was understood to be the only person capable of and necessary for his divinely appointed tasks: to make alliances, as weak foreign kings did, was to question the absolute power of Assur and the Assyrian pantheon (cf. Mario Liverani, "The Ideology of the Assyrian Empire," in *Power and Propaganda: A Symposium on Ancient Empires* [ed. Mogens Trolle Larsen; Mesopotamia 7; Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1979], 297–317, 310–11; also C. L. Crouch, *War and Ethics in the Ancient Near East: Military Violence in Light of Cosmology and History* [BZAW 407; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009], 38–48 and passim). This tendency is also present, to a certain extent, in the Deuteronomistic books (cf. Nadav Na'aman, "The Deuteronomist and Voluntary Servitude to Foreign Powers," *JSOT* 65 [1995]: 37–53). There are, however, notable exceptions that challenge the trend. Asa's alliance with Ben-Hadad of Aram, for example, receives some criticism in the literature (1 Kgs 15:18–20; cf. 2 Chr 16:7–13), but on the whole the king's life and deeds garner a very positive assessment (cf. 1 Kgs 15:9–15; 2 Chr 14:1; 15:16–17; cf. 20:32). Moreover, Hiram/Huram of Tyre is portrayed as an unquestionably positive foreign influence on the Israelite monarchy in both Sam-Kings and Chronicles (e.g., 2 Sam 5:11/1 Chr 14:1; 1 Kgs 5:21–22; 2 Chr 2:10–11; etc.). As an ally of David and Solomon, he helps advance Israel's economic power, supplies builders and building supplies for the Jerusalem temple, and even blesses Yahweh. And as I argue below, Cyrus's role at the end of Chronicles likewise blurs the boundaries of insider/outsider and subverts the book's tendency to keep foreigners separate.



any and all future Israelite kings imagined in the literature. Any king over Israel was to be a Yahwist and an Israelite—or he was nothing. This was obviously true for the images of Yahweh as king, as it was for the various depictions of a future Davidide. One thinks of the “shoot” from the “stump of Jesse” in Isa 11, for example: this Davidide is imagined as one who will rule, under Yahweh’s aegis, with superhuman senses. He is a type of ruler the world has never seen, who rules with divine olfaction<sup>35</sup> and who wipes out enemies with mouth and breath (Isa 11:1–5). Within Isa 10–12, this future king is juxtaposed with the Assyrian tyrant in such a way that promotes a unique vision of Israelite kingship vis-à-vis kingship as the world knows it.<sup>36</sup> Imagining a king who brought justice to the lowly and who struck down the wicked is not out of the ordinary,<sup>37</sup> but the means by which the Davidide would accomplish this is unusual, especially when one compares it with the depiction of Assyria in the preceding chapter, within the same sequence of oracles. Assyria wields the mighty staff with his hand (10:5; cf. 10:13), not his mouth (cf. 11:4), and he relies on his own wisdom (10:13) not wisdom granted by Yahweh (cf. 11:2). Isaiah 11 takes a somewhat ordinary or expected idea of kingship in the ancient Near East and recasts it with an extraordinary vision. Yahweh’s goals for the Davidide are

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35. On the difficult phrase *והריחו ביראת יהוה* in Isa 11:3, see Jeremiah Unterman, “The (Non)sense of Smell in Isaiah 11:3,” *HS* 33 (1992): 17–23; and Arie Shifman, “A Scent’ of the Spirit: Exegesis of an Enigmatic Verse (Isaiah 11:3),” *JBL* 131 (2012): 241–49. Unterman encourages textual emendation (*והרהו*) [“and it shall teach him”]), and Shifman suggests that *הריח* (“scent/smell”) should be interpreted metaphorically to indicate the Davidide’s supreme discernment. I take the phrase as is, in line with the superhuman nature of the Davidide throughout the passage.

36. On this passage, see, e.g., Peter R. Ackroyd, “Isaiah I–XII: Presentation of a Prophet,” in *Congress Volume: Göttingen 1977* (VTSup 29; Leiden: Brill, 1978), 16–48, esp. 35–40 and 43–44; Marvin Sweeney, “Jesse’s New Shoot in Isaiah 11: A Josianic Reading of the Prophet Isaiah,” in *A Gift of God in Due Season: Essays on Scripture and Community in Honor of James A. Sanders* (ed. R. D. Weis and D. M. Carr; JSOTSup 225; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 103–18 (though I disagree with Sweeney’s ultimately dating the composition to the late monarchic period); Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39* (AB 19; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 251–70. Notably, the book of Isaiah’s presentation of Assyria as a tyrant uses the same language that Assyria used to aggrandize itself (cf. Peter Machinist, “Assyria and Its Image in the First Isaiah,” *JAOS* 103 [1983]: 719–37; also Mary Katherine Y. H. Yom, *The Characterization of the Assyrians in Isaiah: Synchronic and Diachronic Perspectives* [LHBOTS 559; London: T&T Clark, 2012], 36–52).

37. Cf. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 263–65.

standard: peace, justice, righteousness. But the means of accomplishing those goals are not. The Davidide has no strong arm, no armies run by lesser, subservient kings, but he will succeed nonetheless, with his preternatural gifts. The passage subverts ancient Near Eastern conventions of power and in doing so promotes Yahweh's absolute control over the cosmos—a vision that is, ideologically, not unlike that of Deut 17:14–20. For those Yehudites framing their memories of kingship (past or future) with Deuteronomic law in mind, the king of Israel was to be Israelite in terms of his lineage, a part of Yahweh's covenant people, which set him apart from other kings, and he was also to be distinct in his method of rule, thus making the practice of Israelite kingship unique.

#### IV

Now, thus far I have sidestepped a key question: What exactly is an Israelite? Or better: How did Yehudite literati speak to each other about what being an Israelite actually means? This is a question that I can hardly begin to approach here in this essay,<sup>38</sup> but nonetheless I hope to show how the discourse on kingship stretches (or blurs) the boundaries of Israelite identity as it is conceived in Deuteronomy's law of the king and elsewhere in the Yehudite corpus of literature. Cyrus is our parade example. Although the literature never refers to the Persian as "king of Israel," Yehudite readers of the books of Isaiah and Chronicles<sup>39</sup> certainly construed him as

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38. There is an abundance of work on Israelite identity, both as it appears in the ancient literature and in the archaeological record. In addition to works already cited above, see, e.g., Peter Machinist, "The Question of Distinctiveness in Ancient Israel," in *Essential Papers on Israel and the Ancient Near East* (ed. F. E. Greenspahn; New York: NYU Press, 1991 [original 1990]), 420–42; Kenton L. Sparks, *Ethnicity and Identity in Ancient Israel: Prolegomena to the Study of Ethnic Sentiments and Their Expression in the Hebrew Bible* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1998); Avraham Faust, *Israel's Ethnogenesis: Settlement, Interaction, Expansion, and Resistance* (London: Equinox, 2006); Philip R. Davies, *The Origins of Biblical Israel* (LHBOTS 485; New York: T&T Clark, 2008); James C. Miller, "Ethnicity and the Hebrew Bible: Problems and Prospects," *CBR* 6 (2008): 170–213; also the collections *Historiography and Identity (Re) Formulation in Second Temple Historiographical Literature* (ed. Louis Jonker; LHBOTS 534; New York: T&T Clark, 2010); and *Texts, Contexts and Readings in Postexilic Literature: Explorations into Historiography and Identity Negotiation in Hebrew Bible and Related Texts* (ed. Louis Jonker; FAT 2/53; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011).

39. In Isaiah, Cyrus features prominently in the so-called "Second Isaiah" or

such. The figure of Cyrus plays the part of Israelite king both linguistically and thematically, forcing readers to rethink Deuteronomy's king-law and its prohibition on foreigners ruling Israel.

First, Cyrus is Yahweh's "shepherd" (רעה, Isa 44:28). The metaphor of king as shepherd is ubiquitous in the ancient Near East. In the Yehudite discourse in particular it has a strong association with David, the foremost human king in Yehud's social memory. In David's youth, he is literally a herder of sheep (1 Sam 17:15), and after his accession Yahweh charges him to shepherd Israel, the deity's chosen people (1 Sam 5:2//1 Chr 11:2; cf. Ps 78:70–72). The prophetic books, situated as authoritative voices from

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"Deutero-Isaiah" (Isa 40–55): he is perhaps the section's central figure and may even have served as the framework for its initial composition and subsequent redactions (see, e.g., John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 34–66* [WBC 25; Waco: Word Books, 1987], 109–79; Reinhard G. Kratz, *Kyros im Deuterjesaja-Buch: Redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu Entstehung und Theologie von Jes 40–55* [FAT 1; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991]; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *David Remembered: Kingship and National Identity in Ancient Israel* [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2013], 64–70). The texts of Second Isaiah may be products of the sixth, fifth, or even fourth century (see, e.g., the various views of Philip R. Davies, "God of Cyrus, God of Israel: Some Religio-Historical Reflections on Isaiah 40–55," in *Words Remembered, Texts Renewed: Essays in Honour of John F. A. Sawyer* [ed. Jon Davies, Graham Harvey, and Wilfred G. E. Watson; JSOTSup; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995], 207–25; Lisbeth S. Fried, "Cyrus the Messiah? The Historical Background to Isaiah 45:1," *HTR* 95 [2002]: 373–93; Rainer Albertz, "Darius in Place of Cyrus: The First Edition of Deutero-Isaiah (Isaiah 40.1–52.12) in 521 BCE," *JSOT* 27 [2003]: 371–83; Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, *For the Comfort of Zion: The Geographical and Theological Location of Isaiah 40–55* [VTSup 139; Leiden: Brill, 2011], 13–51; Simeon Chavel, "Prophetic Imagination in the Light of Narratology and Disability Studies in Isaiah 40–48," *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 14 [2014]: article 3 [online: <http://www.jhsonline.org>]). However, it is widely acknowledged among scholars that the *book of Isaiah*—of which the scholarly construct of "Second Isaiah" is only one part—is to be situated within the milieu of the late Persian period, post 400 B.C.E. and prior to the full advent of Hellenism in the Levant. Given evidence from Qumran, the LXX, and Ben Sira, the *terminus ad quem* for the book is the early second century. But 2 Chr 32:32 reasonably allows one to push the date further back, probably into the fourth century (see, e.g., Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 84), since Chronicles likely emerged in the late Persian/early Hellenistic period as well (see Gary N. Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 1–9* [AB 12; New York: Doubleday, 2003], 101–17, with detailed discussion of Chronicles' date and additional references). To be clear, as I noted above, the point is not to disregard the books' compositional histories, but to emphasize that these books, including their contents in toto, may be thought of as literary artifacts from late Persian Yehud, sources for the study of that particular time period and discursive locality.

Yehud's past, can be critical of these shepherds of people,<sup>40</sup> but they nevertheless look forward to a David-like shepherd who will rule justly and rightly.<sup>41</sup> The depiction of Cyrus clearly signifies the good shepherd. The Persian king is also Yahweh's "anointed" (משיח, Isa 45:1). Like being Yahweh's shepherd, being anointed by Yahweh as king also carries a caveat: it does not guarantee success per se (after all, Saul is a "messiah" too; see 1 Sam 10:1; 12:3; 24:7; etc.). It does, however, connote an exalted, divinely adopted king, even the deity's own son, whom the deity knows personally and for whom the deity fights, especially in conjunction with Davidic kingship. Consider, for instance, Pss 2, 18, and 20 (and, with qualification, Ps 89). Cyrus, like the king of these psalms, is also a משיח whom Yahweh knows and for whom Yahweh fights, as Isa 45:1–7 clearly states.<sup>42</sup> Yahweh grasps Cyrus by his right hand (ימין) so that he may conquer and humiliate

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40. E.g., Isa 56:11; Jer 23:1–2; Ezek 34:1–10; also the ambiguities of the imagery in Zech 10–11. See Roddy L. Braun, "Cyrus in Second Isaiah and Third Isaiah, Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah," in *The Chronicler as Theologian: Essays in Honor of Ralph W. Klein* (ed. M. P. Graham et al; JSOTSup 371; London: T&T Clark, 2003), 146–64, 148.

41. E.g., Jer 3:15; 23:3–6; Ezek 34:23; 37:24.

42. It is clear that Yahweh knows Cyrus, but some scholars maintain that, in this passage, Cyrus does not know or even acknowledge the deity (see NRSV and cf. Braun, "Cyrus in Second Isaiah," 148–49; John Goldingay and David Payne, *Isaiah 40–55* [2 vols.; ICC; London: T&T Clark, 2006], 2:24–26 [cf. John Goldingay, *The Message of Isaiah 40–55: A Literary-Theological Commentary* (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 265–68]; Mitchell, "Remembering Cyrus," 284). Isaiah 45:4–5 twice states that Cyrus did/does not know Yahweh, but this likely refers to the state of their relationship prior to Yahweh's call to service. In both verses, the negated *qatal* verb לא ידעתני ("you did/do not know me") stands in juxtaposition with the preceding *yiqtol* verbs. The Hebrew thus places Cyrus's lack of knowledge in the past, with either a perfective or pluperfective aspect (cf. LXX, Luther Bibel, KJV, NJPS; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55* [AB 19A; New York: Doubleday, 2002], 244). The verses do not necessarily imply that Cyrus continued to be ignorant of the deity after he became the deity's servant (*pace* Goldingay, who seems hesitant to place Cyrus in the role of servant in the first place). In any case, Cyrus calls Yahweh by name in 2 Chr 36:23, even calling him "God of the heavens" (cf. Ezra 1:2). Yehudites/Judeans thus remembered Cyrus as one who came to know his role as a servant of their universal deity. Cf. also Nebuchadnezzar's portrayal in the later text of Dan 4. The Babylonian king, also remembered as Yahweh's "servant," finally submits to the Judean deity, exclaiming, "I ... praise, exalt, and glorify the King of Heaven!" (Dan 4:34). N.B. by remembering Nebuchadnezzar in the book of Daniel, Judean literati effectively *forgot* the figure of Nabonidus (see Carol A. Newsom, "Now You See Him, Now You Don't: Nabonidus in Jewish Memory," in *Remembering Biblical Figures*, 270–82).

lesser kings, all for the glory of Yahweh.<sup>43</sup> Lisbeth Fried argues, "The term 'YHWH's anointed' is more than a title. It connotes a theology. It refers to the legitimate Judean ruler, divinely installed, divinely protected, even numinous."<sup>44</sup> By handing over this title to Cyrus, the discourse also hands over all of the title's theological implications.<sup>45</sup> The same is true for the title of "shepherd." To be sure, if Cyrus were called merely "shepherd" or "messiah" alone, then the connection with David would be uncertain or perhaps even unlikely. But the fact that Cyrus is cast at once as the specially chosen shepherd of the deity's people and as one anointed by the deity, in a passage that is so strongly reminiscent of Davidic and royal psalms, suggests that Yehudites remembered Cyrus with David in mind.<sup>46</sup>

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43. Notice, too, that in this image Cyrus is reminiscent of the elevated king in Ps 110, who sits at Yahweh's right hand and whose enemies Yahweh crushes. See Ps 110:1, 5; cf. Ps 18:36; 20:7; 89:14, 26 (contrast 89:43). In Isaiah, to be sure, Cyrus lacks the priestly element famously emphasized in Ps 110:4. The depiction of Cyrus and Persian kingship in Ezra does, however, include something of a priestly element. See note 47 below.

44. Fried, "Cyrus the Messiah?" 380. Fried refers to Frank Moore Cross's discussion of Judean royal ideology (*Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973], 241–73).

45. Cf. Fried, "Cyrus the Messiah?" 390. Pace Ronald E. Clements, "The Davidic Covenant in the Isaiah Tradition," in *Covenant as Context: Essays in Honour of E. W. Nicholson* (ed. A. D. H. Mayes and R. B. Salters; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 39–69, 61–63, whose argument relies too heavily upon linking Cyrus with the tribute-bearing kings of Ps 72:10–11. Note that Yahweh has given his servant Cyrus "all the kingdoms of the earth" (2 Chr 36:23; cf. Isa 45:1).

46. Of course, classifying and representing the foreign emperor in local rubrics was not limited to the Yehudite context. In Egypt, for example, at the temple of Neith in Sais, Cambyses is dubbed "King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Mesuti-Re [Offspring of Re]," and on the walls of the Hibis temple in the Kharga oasis Darius is represented as Pharaoh. See Fried, "Cyrus the Messiah?" 383–85. Persia's long and complicated relationship with Egypt engendered a blend of imperial ideology and political pragmatism that manifested itself in different ways (from the Egyptian perspective as well as the Persian), depending upon the specific sociohistorical and political situations under each Persian ruler. Cf. Damien Agut-Labordere, "The Fluctuation in the Relationship between Persian Kingship and the Egyptians during the First Persian Domination (526–ca. 404 BC)," at the symposium. The famous Cyrus Cylinder, mentioned above, is another example, which, drawing on conventional Mesopotamian royal ideology, presents the Persian conqueror as a loyal servant of Marduk. Although modern readers of this text (scholarly and otherwise) have tended to see the Cylinder as a testament to Cyrus's charity and goodwill, it more likely represents "a manifesto of

Further strengthening this mnemonic link with David, the Yehudite image of Cyrus takes part in the prominent leitmotif of temple. The book of Isaiah recounts how Yahweh charges the Persian king, his servant and anointed shepherd, with restoring the temple in Jerusalem in order to reunite the people of Israel with Yahweh there (Isa 44:24–28; cf. 45:13). In Chronicles, too, there is a strong thematic link between the temple, David and Solomon, and Cyrus: the temple is David's initiative (1 Chr 17), passed down to his son Solomon (1 Chr 28), and Chronicles' historiography concludes with Cyrus restoring the Davidic initiative, as per Yahweh's command (2 Chr 36:22–23).<sup>47</sup> Of course, the leitmotif of temple and Davidic kingship is present in the Deuteronomistic books as well (2 Sam 7; 1 Kgs 8), but there are some differences worth mentioning. In Samuel–Kings, David's line is promised a place on the throne of Israel "forever" (2 Sam 7:12–16) and his son Solomon builds Yahweh's temple. But their posterity ends up exiled in Babylon (2 Kgs 25:27–30; cf. Jer 52:31–34) with no explicit mention of restoration or rebuilding the destroyed Jerusalem. In

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conditional collaboration by the vanquished" (Waerzeggers, "Babylonian Kingship," 191; cf. Amélie Kuhrt, "Cyrus the Great of Persia: Images and Realities," in *Representations of Political Power: Case Histories from Times of Change and Dissolving Order in the Ancient Near East* [ed. Marlies Heinz and Marian H. Feldman; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2007], 169–91, esp. 172–76).

47. See also Ezra 1, which contains a verbatim parallel to 2 Chr 36:22–23. Biblical scholarship has tended to focus on the interdependence of the two texts, which came first, etc., with many arguing that Chronicles borrowed the text from Ezra (e.g., Braun, "Cyrus in Second Isaiah," 152, 154–55). I see Ezra as a distinct composition from Chronicles (cf. Knoppers, *I Chronicles 1–9*, 93–100), and I am not so sure that it was part of Yehud's literary corpus, at least not in the form of anything close to the book we have now (note that Ben Sira fails to mention Ezra in his catalogue of famous men: Sir 44–50; cf. James W. Watts, "Scripturalization and the Aaronide Dynasties," *JHS* 13 [2013]: article 6, esp. pp. 8–15 [online: <http://www.jhsonline.org>]; Lisbeth S. Fried, *Ezra and the Law in History and Tradition* [Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2014], 28). In any case, the details found in Ezra would not alter the trajectory of my argument. In fact, bringing Ezra into the discussion would only strengthen it. In Chronicles, Cyrus falls in line with a glorified David, Yahweh's specially chosen regent and temple builder; in Ezra, this same Persian king, with the same declaration of temple building for Yahweh, begins the narrative of a new epoch in Yehud, an epoch that eventually witnesses the official (re)establishment of Torah in Jerusalem (cf. Ezra 7). In effect, then, the book of Ezra brings Cyrus and his fellow Persian kings *more* in line with Deuteronomy's king-law, since they become responsible for the successful promulgation of Torah among the Judeans.



Chronicles, on the other hand, the *regency* of David's kingship is emphasized (not its "foreverness"); kingship is positioned underneath the universal and eternal rule of the deity,<sup>48</sup> and the narrative concludes with Cyrus becoming regent and filling the void left by the exiled Davidic line.<sup>49</sup> Cyrus's appointment as temple builder creates a literary bridge back to Solomon and David: in the words of Louis Jonker, "What has been lost through a whole series of Judahite kings not doing right in the eyes of Yahweh will be regained by Cyrus the Persian."<sup>50</sup> At the end of Kings, then, one finds an actual Davidide living in the court of Babylon, far from his throne, while in Chronicles one finds a Davidized foreigner standing in

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48. Cf. H. G. M. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles* (NCBC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1982), 26–27. On the Davidic promises in Samuel and Chronicles, see Gary N. Knoppers, "David's Relation to Moses: The Contexts, Content and Conditions of the Davidic Promises," in *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar* (ed. J. Day; JSOTSup 270; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 91–118; and on David, Davidic kingship, and the temple in Chronicles in particular, Mark J. Boda, "Gazing through the Cloud of Incense: Davidic Dynasty and Temple Community in the Chronicler's Perspective," in *Chronicling the Chronicler: The Book of Chronicles and Early Second Temple History* (ed. P. S. Evans and T. F. Williams; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 215–45.

49. Cf. William Riley, *King and Cultus in Chronicles: Worship and the Reinterpretation of History* (JSOTSup 160; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 151–55, 178, 193; also Boda, "Gazing through the Cloud of Incense," 229–33. Riley, though he does cite Isa 44:28–45:4, wants to emphasize the non-Davidness of Cyrus in his discussion; and Boda, likewise, does not mention the possibility of Cyrus, as Yahweh's temple-rebuilder, being a David-like figure. On foreign rulers taking over the regency, see, e.g., Diana Edelman, "David in Israelite Social Memory," in *Remembering Biblical Figures*, 141–57, esp. 145–46. In addition to Cyrus, there is Nebuchadnezzar, conqueror and destroyer of Jerusalem itself, whom Jeremiah (MT) nevertheless calls Yahweh's "servant" (25:9; 27:6; cf. David in 33:26). Nebuchadnezzar, however, unlike Cyrus, has a negative side in Yehudite memory—he is a hubristic tyrant—which balances the images of servanthood (see Jonathan Stökl, "Nebuchadnezzar: History, Memory, and Myth-Making in the Persian Period," in *Remembering Biblical Figures*, 257–69). As a divine servant functioning in the role of punisher and temple-destroyer, Nebuchadnezzar could never function as a quasi-Davidide, as does Cyrus, who is a restorer and temple-rebuilder.

50. Louis Jonker, *1 and 2 Chronicles* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 2013), 312.



Persia as Yahweh's chosen hero, the one to restore Israel and its cult in the proper place of Jerusalem.<sup>51</sup> This is a significant statement.<sup>52</sup>

In sum, in Yehudite literature, Cyrus—remembered as the one who defeated Babylon and restored Israel to its promised land and city—is imagined as the prototypical and ideal Davidide: Yahweh's shepherd and temple builder, the foremost Israelite king.<sup>53</sup> The Persian is cast in the same

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51. The end of Kings *an sich* is mostly pessimistic. At best, Jehoiachin's exalted place in the Babylonian court mitigates the severe tragedy of Judah's destruction and exile; at worst, it is an ironic indictment of the failed Davidic king, whose line is supposed to remain "forever" on the throne in *Jerusalem* (see 2 Kgs 25:28; and compare 2 Sam 7:13). Read within the larger context of Yehudite literature, however, it perhaps has a positive outlook. For instance, Michael Chan in a recent article argues that the observed intertextual relationship between 2 Kgs 25:27–30 and Gen 40–41 suggests that Kings' conclusion points to a forthcoming exodus from Babylon back to Jerusalem, i.e., the reversal of exile ("Joseph and Jehoiachin: On the Edge of Exodus," ZAW 125 [2013]: 566–77; see also Ian Douglas Wilson, "Joseph, Jehoiachin, and Cyrus: On Book Endings, Exoduses and Exiles, and Yehudite/Judean Social Remembering," ZAW 126 [2014]: 521–34). Thus, in terms of theme and outlook, the conclusions to Kings and Chronicles are indeed similar. The major difference, then, lies in the identities of Jehoiachin and Cyrus: their identities are wrapped up with each other via the figure of David, but they are also noticeably distinct. Jehoiachin, despite his exaltation in the Babylonian court, sits under the thumb of a foreign emperor, while Cyrus *is* the foreign emperor, the great king of Persia and king of kings.

52. Pace Braun, "Cyrus in Second Isaiah," 155, who states that Chronicles (and Ezra) does not have the "bold theological interpretation" of Cyrus one finds in Isaiah. In this case he fails to recognize the significance of Cyrus replacing David in the context of the book of Chronicles, and thus the Davidization of Cyrus.

53. Notably, Katherine Stott compares the story of David's rise in 1–2 Samuel with the story of Cyrus's rise in Herodotus 1.95–131 ("Herodotus and the Old Testament: A Comparative Reading of the Ascendancy Stories of King Cyrus and David," SJOT 16 [2002]: 52–78). Many of the shared themes she identifies in the two stories (e.g., "Humble Beginnings," "Jealousy of the Reigning King," "Departure from the Court," etc.) are common tropes for stories of usurpation in the ancient Near East. E.g., see Mario Liverani, "Memorandum on the Approach to Historiographic Texts," *Orientalia* 42 (1973): 178–94, who looks at the David story vis-à-vis the Idrimi narrative (the latter being inscribed on a votive statue from the late Bronze Age site of Alalakh in southern Turkey); or P. Kyle McCarter, "The Apology of David," JBL 99 (1980): 489–504, who compares the story of David's rise with that of the Hittite king Hattušili. One can also make similar observations about the relationship between the David story and accounts of Nabonidus's rise, for example (cf. Michael B. Dick, "The 'History of David's Rise to Power' and the Neo-Babylonian Succession Apologies," in *David and Zion: Biblical Studies in Honor of J. J. M. Roberts* [ed. B. F. Batto and K. L. Roberts;

mold as Yahweh's anointed and kingly son (cf. Ps 2). "Cyrus," writes Joseph Blenkinsopp, "has taken the place of the Davidic royal house, at least for the time being."<sup>54</sup> As Yahweh's anointed, the deity's shepherd and servant and perhaps even his son, Cyrus is certainly something of an Israelite.

## V

This should strike one as curious, for Cyrus is clearly not an "Israelite" in the typical sense of the term. He is not a descendent of Jacob, nor did Yahweh rescue any of his ancestors from Egyptian bondage and bring them to the promised land. Moreover, Cyrus seems an unlikely fit for the role of Israelite king, at least as it is envisioned in Deuteronomic law. The Deuteronomic king, recall, is one whose dynasty is meant to last long "in the midst of Israel" (בְּקֶרֶב יִשְׂרָאֵל, Deut 17:20). Cyrus is never remembered explicitly as an *Israelite* dynast *in* Israel: this is a definite tension in the discourse. Blenkinsopp therefore states, "We suspect not all of the prophet's audience would have agreed with [this affirmation of Cyrus]."<sup>55</sup> Indeed, Isa 45:9–12 seems to anticipate the discord:

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Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2004], 3–19). Ultimately, what Stott's analysis tells us is that both the Yehudite literati and Herodotus understood David and Cyrus, respectively, as usurpers whose apologetic stories were told in conventional ancient Near Eastern fashion. But I do not think her comparison tells us much about the dating of the "Primary History" as a collection of books (Stott, "Herodotus," 77–78). In other words, although I agree with Stott that 1–2 Samuel, in its "book" form, is probably a Persian-period composition, I do not think the comparison between David's and Cyrus's narratives necessarily leads us in that direction.

One should also note here, David is not the only site of memory that has strong connections with Cyrus. In the book of Isaiah, Cyrus links up with the figure of Moses via the prominent theme of exodus and return (cf. Graham S. Ogden, "Moses and Cyrus: Literary Affinities between the Priestly Presentation of Moses in Exodus vi–viii and the Cyrus Song in Isaiah xlv 24–xlv 13," *VT* 28 [1978]: 195–203). In recent years, as the likely place of composition for the Second-Isaiah texts has moved from Babylon to Jerusalem (see Davies, "God of Cyrus," 210–15), scholars have revised their ideological and theological understandings of the motif of exodus/return/renewal in these chapters (and throughout the book). See, e.g., Tiemeyer, *For the Comfort of Zion*, 155–203; also Ian Douglas Wilson, "The Song of the Sea and Isaiah: Exodus 15 in Post-monarchic Prophetic Discourse," in *Thinking of Water in the Early Second Temple Period* (ed. E. Ben Zvi and C. Levin; BZAW 461; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), 123–48.

54. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 40–55, 249; cf. Edelman, "David," 145–46.

55. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 40–55, 249.

Woe to the one who contends with his maker,  
 a pot among earthen pots.  
 Does the clay say to his maker, "What are you doing"?  
 or "Your work lacks handles"?  
 Woe to one who says to a father, "What are you begetting?"  
 or to a mother, "What are you bearing?"  
 Thus says Yahweh,  
 the holy one of Israel, and its maker:  
 Concerning the things to come,  
 you would question me about my children,  
 about the work of my hands you would command me!?  
 I made the earth,  
 and humankind upon it I created.  
 It was I; my hands stretched out the heavens,  
 and all their host I commanded.

It seems these verses are meant to squelch any potential criticism, by shaming anyone who would argue with the deity, in order to "facilitate local acceptance of this foreign ruler."<sup>56</sup> Nonetheless, the tension with Deuteronomy's king-law—part of Yahweh's Torah mediated by Moses—stands.

On account of this tension, Anselm Hagedorn suggests that the non-foreigner injunction in Deut 17:15, in its postmonarchic context, was meant to counter Isaiah's depiction of Cyrus as one of Yahweh's specially chosen kings.<sup>57</sup> Hagedorn makes an important observation here, but one that I would approach from a slightly different angle. Rather than seeing the king-law's distaste for foreigners as a response to pro-Persian statements in Yehudite discourse, I suggest that the images of Cyrus, as part

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56. Fried, "Cyrus the Messiah?" 390. Note also that the "I am" statements in 45:5–7 might be meant to ensure the supremacy of Yahweh as the sole deity (see esp. v. 7) despite the anointing of an ostensibly non-Yahwistic Persian king (cf. Antti Laato, *The Servant of YHWH and Cyrus: A Reinterpretation of the Exilic Messianic Programme in Isaiah 40–55* [ConBOT 35; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1992], 184; Braun, "Cyrus in Second Isaiah," 148). I am, however, hesitant to label the passages in Isa 40–55 as absolutely "monotheistic" (cf. Saul Olyan, "Is Isaiah 40–55 Really Monotheistic?" *JANER* 12 [2012]: 190–201). One must consider statements such as Isa 45:5 in light of texts like Isa 40:1–8, 25–26; 51:9–11, which take seriously the existence and even volition of other deities.

57. Anselm C. Hagedorn, *Between Moses and Plato: Individual and Society in Deuteronomy and Ancient Greek Law* (FRLANT 204; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004), 141.

of Yehud's mnemonic system in the late Persian era, provided a minority report—"radical" in its formulation and implications<sup>58</sup>—on what it meant, to Yehudites, *to be* an Israelite. In other words, instead of having the king-law provide a corrective to pro-Cyrus (and thus pro-foreigner) sentiments, these hopeful visions of Cyrus constructed an alternative narrative, a counterbalancing memory, of how one defined and demarcated the identity of Israelite political leadership in the postmonarchic era. Not all of Isaiah's and Chronicles' audience would have agreed with this affirmation of Cyrus, but some certainly did. To support Cyrus's role as Yahweh's anointed king and temple builder, literati would have sought continuities between Cyrus and Israelite kingship. They would have framed their remembering of Cyrus with memories of the great Israelite kings of old; Israelite kingship would have functioned as a model of and for Cyrus, and Cyrus, in turn, would have functioned as a model of and for present understandings of Yehudite politics and society. There was no past king that represented Israel more than David; Cyrus was, therefore, remembered as a kind of Davidide, as an Israelite king *par excellence*. From this symbolic perspective, I argue, memories of the "foreigner" Cyrus remained partly within the bounds of Deuteronomy's king-law (at least as much as David and Solomon did). Concomitantly, memories of the Persian altered what it meant to be a "foreigner" with regard to the law. This is not the dominant position in the discourse, but it is a prominent statement nonetheless.

That said, I do not want to give the impression that memories of Cyrus somehow fulfilled the Deuteronomic law. Again, he is not the king Deuteronomy envisions: the discourse never portrays him as reading or meditating upon Torah, for example.<sup>59</sup> But one can say the same about Israel's own great kings: as mentioned above, David and especially Solomon have a hard time meeting the requirements of Deuteronomy.<sup>60</sup> Cyrus, via David, carries the mark of "Israeliteness," but he is nonetheless the "king

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58. Blenkinsopp, *David Remembered*, 70.

59. As noted above, however, the book of Ezra does depict Persian kingship promulgating Torah.

60. In addition to Solomon's issues with women, horses, and wealth, one can add his and David's active involvement in the cult (e.g., 2 Sam 6:17; 1 Kgs 8:63–64), which is not compatible with Deuteronomy's vision for kingship or the cult in general. Josiah, whose reforms scholars often want to link with the book of Deuteronomy, also seems to transgress the book's bounds for cultic leadership (cf. 2 Kgs 23:20; see Knoppers, "Deuteronomist," 336; Levinson, "Reconceptualization," 525–26).

of Persia” (cf. 2 Chr 36:22–23). In some respects he remains an outsider, simply an agent of Yahweh’s purposes, like all other foreign kings. In the end, we must wrestle with what amounts to two discontinuous strands of thought: (1) the Torah-promulgating king of Deuteronomy, who has no real political power; and (2) the politically powerful Near Eastern king, embodied in David and Solomon (and Cyrus), whose divinely granted powers ensure the construction of Yahweh’s temple in Jerusalem. Despite the *convergence* between Cyrus and David, there is an undeniable *divergence* between Cyrus (and Davidic kingship) and the law of the king. The relationship between Cyrus and David likely stretched understandings of the king-law, but it did not eliminate the general discursive tension that existed between the king-law and Davidic kingship in general.

Also, one is still left with the problem of a dynasty **בְּקֶרֶב יִשְׂרָאֵל** (Deut 17:20). Historically speaking, we know that Cyrus’s own dynasty became a problem.<sup>61</sup> Of course, the narratives of Samuel and Kings portray David’s dynasty as no less problematic. Dynasty is, not surprisingly, a recurring issue in Yehudite kingship-discourse. With the Davidization of Cyrus, however, dynasty is maintained: Cyrus steps into the Davidic line, at least temporarily preserving the “foreverness” of Davidic rule.<sup>62</sup> But what about the qualification “in the midst of Israel”? In Deuteronomy, the phrase **בְּקֶרֶב יִשְׂרָאֵל** refers foremost to presence among the *people* of Israel, not necessarily presence in the land.<sup>63</sup> As Yahweh’s anointed, as one functioning in the role of a Davidide, the readership could have easily understood Cyrus to be a symbolic member of the Israelite people—one “in their midst,” despite a lack of physical nearness to or presence in the land. Similarly, those in the diaspora were thought to be part of “Israel” despite their

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61. On Cyrus’s dynasty and Darius’s rise to power, see Amélie Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East c. 3000–300 BC* (2 vols.; New York: Routledge, 1995), 2:664–67; Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire* (trans. Peter T. Daniels; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 107–38.

62. As Knoppers argues, the important issue is not Davidic succession *per se*, but the ongoing significance of the concepts of Davidic kingship for the community (“David’s Relation to Moses,” 117–18). Cyrus preserves Davidic kingship and its ideals without preserving the actual blood line.

63. See Deut 11:6; 21:8; also cf. Exod 17:7; 33:5; Num 11:4; Josh 7:13; 1 Sam 4:3; etc. However, in a few instances the phrase may refer to either the people or the physical land (e.g., Josh 6:25). Of course, on the whole, the people and the land are practically inextricable, but at least here within Deuteronomy the phrase points toward the people.

distance from the land of Israel, and, in at least one strand of thought, literati looked forward to the day when all would return to the land (e.g., Isa 11:11–15). Like the Mesopotamians Noah and Abraham, then, Cyrus functions as an important symbol of “Israeliteness,” one who faithfully responds to Yahweh’s call to service, despite his not actually being an Israelite in terms of lineage. In this way he certainly shaped the literati’s understandings of empire and of kingship, as they are framed in the discourse.<sup>64</sup>

These tensions aside, the undeniable convergence in the figures of Cyrus and David must have impacted readings of the king-law in the late Persian period. There is no question that David was understood to be an Israelite, and there is no question that Cyrus was understood to be a type of Davidide. Cyrus’s “otherness,” writes Ehud Ben Zvi, “is consistently blurred.”<sup>65</sup> This fuzzy vision of Cyrus’s identity, in turn, would have forced the literati to (re)consider the meaning of the prohibition against foreigners in the king-law, and would have pushed the limits of Israel’s (the people’s) sociocultural boundaries. The convergence between David and Cyrus likely provided one means for balancing out criticisms of empire, and for helping Yehud deal with the realities of its marginalized and subjugated place in an imperialized world. Israelite and Persian kingship were hybridized. The literati, in this way, (partly) appropriated the Great King of Persia as their own and, in turn, expanded the horizons of Israelite kingship-identity in their postmonarchic era. In certain cases, even a Persian emperor could function as a proper, Yahwistic king of Israel, with his Davidic persona satisfying and even revising the requirements of identity as foreseen in Deuteronomy’s king-law.<sup>66</sup>

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64. While Persian kingship is glorified, Assyrian and Babylonian kingship is denigrated, especially in the prophetic books (with the occasional exception of Nebuchadnezzar, as noted above; see Stökl, “Nebuchadnezzar,” 262–67). Assyria and Babylon function, for the most part, as foils to Persia in the kingship-discourse, presenting a strongly negative take on imperialism and foreign kingship.

65. Ehud Ben Zvi, *History, Literature and Theology in the Book of Chronicles* (London: Equinox, 2006), 279. Cf. Jonker, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 316–18.

66. Notice, too, that Cyrus’s military power, his wealth and prestige, any hints of self-aggrandizement, etc., are conveniently *forgotten* in the Yehudite depictions of him (unlike the depictions of Assyrian and Babylonian kings). To be sure, he is credited with great power and even “goods/treasures” (Isa 45:3), but the literature makes it clear, especially in Isa 45, that these actually belong to Yahweh, and that these divine gifts are for the exclusive purpose of making known Israel and Yahweh himself.

## VI

The identity of Yehudite literati, as a group, was not monolithic and static, nor were the identities of Yehudite individuals. Negotiation of identity in Yehud, and its ongoing formations, was correlate to the narratives in Yehud's emerging corpus of literature, its (hi)stories of past, present, and future. The identities generated by the reading of said literature were attached to certain strands of thought within the literature, certain preferences concerning issues of boundaries, definitions, categorization, classification. And all this, in turn, contributed to the (re)formations of Yehudite identity.

In the foregoing analysis I have called attention to (at least) three narrative formations of identity in Yehud's social remembering, each of which concerns itself primarily with kingship. First, according to Deuteronomic law, Israel may be a people governed by kingship and dynasty, but any king must be exclusively Israelite, devoting himself solely to the Israelite deity Yahweh and Yahweh's divine instruction. Second, in the aftermath of foreign conquest and destruction, Yahweh may legitimately choose a foreigner—even a non-Yahwist—to rule over Israel, to step into the void left by the failed and apostate Israelite monarchy (cf. Isa; Chr). One could feasibly stop there, seeing these two narrative constructions as antithetical and competing: two opposed opinions concerning the legitimacy of Israelite kingship in the past and its place in the future, with one simply countering the other or vice versa. A third, synthetic narrative emerges, however, when one recognizes that these narratives are two statements in a discourse that stretches across the demarcations within Yehud's literary corpus and thus within Yehudite literate society. As Yahweh's anointed shepherd and servant, Cyrus is a kind of Israelite, and not just any kind of Israelite: he is a kind of Davidide. The first two narratives are, thus, brought into conversation via the third, which, like the purported inscription on Cyrus's tomb, seems to say: do not begrudge Cyrus his Davidic memorial, indeed.

This essay, though, admittedly invites more than it concludes. The issue of Cyrus, David, and Deuteronomy's king-law is part of an extensive Yehudite discourse on kingship and political identity. The issue of who may be king of Israel (as imagined in the past and in the future) does not limit itself to options of Israelite or foreigner, Yahwist or not. It also introduces abstractions such as, for example, the "democratization" of kingship, that is, the Davidization of Israel as a whole (e.g., Isa 55:3–5)—the sort



of political conceptualization typically understood to be the sole property of Greek thought. Further complicating matters, in addition to *who* should be king, one encounters concomitant questions of *how* to be king. Consider, for example, the idea of a “kingdom of priests” in Exod 19:6, which has implications for understandings of democratization and for the interrelationship between kingship and cult. These questions are equally tricky, perhaps even more so, and they too find much discursive fuel in the king-law, representations of Davidic kingship, and the ancient Near Eastern conventions of power. These considerations of the past informed the literati’s visions of themselves and of Israel going forward. As part and parcel of Yehudite social remembering of kingship, Cyrus was a bridge connecting diverse sociopolitical landscapes in Israel’s recent and distant pasts: a conspicuous marker of division itself, a monumental construction calling attention to an impasse, but also a means of conjoining the disjunction, of eliminating the impasse altogether. In this way, in Yehud one individual might have looked back at the Persian king as a figure who marked the end of Israelite kingship and Davidic hope, while another might have seen him as its new beginning. And yet for another, might Cyrus have been both at once?

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THE TESTAMENT OF DARIUS (DNa/DNb)  
AND CONSTRUCTIONS OF KINGS AND  
KINGSHIP IN 1–2 CHRONICLES

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INTRODUCTION

The Testament of Darius (DNa and DNb), from the early fifth century B.C.E., presents Darius's views on himself as king and on the ideal properties possessed by kings that might follow him. Even given the paucity of evidence, it is still clear that the text was disseminated widely: DNa was reused by Xerxes at Persepolis (XPh); the first part of DNb was reused by Xerxes (XPl); the last lines of DNb have been found in Upper Egypt on a late fifth-century copy of an Aramaic translation of the Bisitun inscription (TAD C2.1).<sup>1</sup> Therefore, we can expect that the ideology promoted in the Testament of Darius was influential, and we might hypothesize that traces of this ideology of kingship can be found in texts of the Hebrew Bible. The biblical book of Chronicles, written in the fourth century B.C.E., presents a meditation on kings and kingship: both in the Judahite past and in the Achaemenid present. The book was written two centuries after the end of the indigenous Judahite monarchy, and well into the period of Persian domination; it reused earlier textual material that we have access to (including the biblical books of Samuel and Kings) while adding its own new text. As such, its unique understanding of kings and kingship can be analyzed by comparing kingship as depicted in the earlier books to its own depiction of kingship.

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1. Bezalel Porten and Ada Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt* (4 vols.; Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1986–1999), henceforth referred to as TAD.

In this paper I argue that many aspects of the distinctive vocabulary and themes of 1–2 Chronicles reflect Achaemenid ideology as seen in the Testament of Darius. The doctrine of immediate retribution, the motif of seeking-and-finding, the use of the words *ma'al* and *hithazzeq*, the motif of the deity choosing the king, and other features are discussed. Close readings of the Old Persian of DNa and DNb, the Aramaic of DNb 50–60, and the Hebrew texts attempt to demonstrate the validity of the hypothesis. I conclude with a brief excursus on the role of foreign monarchs in Chronicles and how the portrayals of those figures impinge on ideology of kingship.

### ARAMAIC AND SCRIBAL CULTURE

The evidence—scanty as it is—demonstrates that a common Aramaic, Chancellery Aramaic, was taught and used throughout the Persian Empire, whether in Upper Egypt, Persepolis, or Bactria. The evidence of the Bisitun copy at Elephantine (TAD C2.1), particularly column XI, which has an interpolation from DNb, also shows that at least some of the Aramaic translations of royal inscriptions were made directly from Old Persian; there are two loan words from Old Persian that correspond exactly to those Old Persian words in DNb in four fragmentary lines of Aramaic text.<sup>2</sup> Some recent investigation has demonstrated that Old Persian narrative had an influence on Aramaic; Old Persian structuring words such as *pasāva*, “afterwards,” were rendered by native Aramaic terms used in innovative ways.<sup>3</sup> For scribes whose native language was not Aramaic, but was a language closely related to Aramaic, such as Hebrew or “Judaean,” their imperial scribal training would have been easily transferrable to their indigenous language.<sup>4</sup> I speak here not of linguistic borrowing, as the

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2. Nicholas Sims-Williams, “The Final Paragraph of the Tomb-Inscription of Darius I (DNb, 50–60): The Old Persian Text in the Light of an Aramaic Version,” *BSOAS* 44 (1981): 1–7; Jonas C. Greenfield and Bezael Porten, *The Bisitun Inscription of Darius the Great, Aramaic Version* (Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum 1.5; London: Lund Humphries, 1982), argue that the Aramaic version (except the portion corresponding to DNb) was made from the Akkadian translation.

3. John Makujina, “Old Persian and the Marking of Narrative Sequence in Biblical Aramaic: The Possible Influence of *pasāva* on *bēdayin* and *ēdayin*,” *JNES* 72 (2013): 93–96.

4. Jan Tavernier, “Multilingualism in the Fortification and Treasury Archives,” in *L'archive des Fortifications de Persépolis: État des questions et perspectives de recher-*

influence of Aramaic on the Hebrew of texts such as Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah has been well-detailed, but instead of genres, scribal forms, themes, and motifs: the aspects that are more nebulously transmitted from Old Persian through Aramaic to Hebrew.<sup>5</sup> Just as the Neo-Assyrian treaty-form was used as a template probably naturally and unconsciously by the author of Deuteronomy, we should expect to find Achaemenid forms in texts such as Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah. Indeed the Hebrew and Aramaic letters in Ezra-Nehemiah, whether actual Achaemenid letters or not, seem to adhere to Achaemenid letter forms as seen in such things as the Aršama correspondence.

The case of Chronicles, however, is slightly different from that of Ezra-Nehemiah. The author of Chronicles had a basic narrative framework and a large body of texts that he worked with. Within these constraints, Chronicles is actually quite an innovative text, as has been extensively demonstrated over the past two decades, but still, there was quite a bit of content that he could not or did not want to alter. The sheer bulk of Chronicles is also unlike anything in the Achaemenid evidence. Nevertheless, I propose that scribal training in texts such as DNa and DNb (in Aramaic) may be reflected in Chronicles.<sup>6</sup> I have chosen DNa and DNb, which I shall call the Testament of Darius, because of the focus on kingship; kingship and the qualities of an ideal ruler are also one of themes of Chronicles.

#### THE TESTAMENT OF DARIUS

The text at Naqš-e Rostam on Darius's tomb is both one text, the Testament of Darius, and two, known as DNa and DNb, sometimes referred to as

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ches (ed. P. Briant et al; Persika 12; Paris: de Boccard, 2008), 59–86; Cf. William M. Schniedewind, *A Social History of Hebrew: Its Origins through the Rabbinic Period* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2013), 141–45, who argues that in fact the native language of the scribes would have been Aramaic, and Hebrew was a learned literary language.

5. Jason M. Silverman, *Persepolis and Jerusalem: Iranian Influence on the Apocalyptic Hermeneutic* (LHBOTS 558; New York: T&T Clark, 2012), 111–19.

6. For a very general discussion of how DB might have come to be known in Yehud and had an influence on biblical texts, see Gard Granerød, “‘By the Favour of Ahuramazda I Am King’: On the Promulgation of a Persian Propaganda Text among Babylonians and Judaeans,” *JSJ* 44 (2013): 455–80. He does not provide specific examples of how the Achaemenid ideology may be reflected in biblical texts, although he does discuss Elephantine in some detail.

Darius's political testament and his moral testament. The entire Testament makes up the tomb inscriptions, but it has two parts, easily seen by the fact that each part was reused separately as a discrete inscription of Xerxes. I will examine the text first as two parts, and then show how the two parts can be read as a whole.

DNa begins with the creation formula: "A great god is Ahuramazda, who established this earth, who established that sky, who established humanity, who established happiness [*šiyāti-*] for humanity, who made Darius king, one king over many, one commander over many" (ll. 1–8).<sup>7</sup> The dynamics of the creation formula have been well-discussed by Clarisse Herrenschmidt in her classic article,<sup>8</sup> but what is most significant is the verbs used in the formula: *dā-* for the establishment of earth, sky, humanity and happiness, and *kar-* for the making of Darius as king: the first four were primordial acts, while the latter was an act within history. The repetition of *aiva-*, "one" in the description of Darius as "one king over many, one commander over many" emphasizes two things: first, that in Darius there is a step towards restoration of the unity of the primordial state, and second, that a single individual, Darius, is involved in this restoration.

The next part of DNa, its second paragraph, is the royal titulary formula, again, well-discussed by Herrenschmidt.<sup>9</sup> The variations in the formula here are those that emphasize the vastness and diversity of the empire: "I am Darius, Great King, King of Kings, King of lands/peoples [*dahayu-*] of many kinds [*vispazana-*], king of this great earth-empire [*būmī-*] far and wide [*dūraiṣ apiy*], son of Hystaspes, an Achaemenian, a Persian, son of a Persian, an Iranian of Iranian lineage" (ll. 8–15). The Persian ethnicity of Darius is also highlighted.

The third paragraph begins Darius's direct speech: "Thus says Darius the King" (ll. 15–16), but even this paragraph is a formulaic text, recording in detail the lands/peoples under Darius's rule, using the phrase "they bore me tribute" (so also DPe and DSe). It is with the fourth paragraph that a less-formulaic text begins, in which Darius describes in direct speech how

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7. Texts follow those given in Rüdiger Schmitt, *Die altpersischen Inschriften Der Achaemeniden* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2009). Transliterations and translations are my own.

8. Clarisse Herrenschmidt, "Les créations d'Ahuramazda," *Studia Iranica* 6 (1977): 17–58.

9. Clarisse Herrenschmidt, "Désignations de l'empire et concepts politiques de Darius Ier d'après ses inscriptions en vieux perse," *Studia Iranica* 5 (1976): 33–65.



he became king. The fifth paragraph continues with Darius speaking in the first person, and has two parts: first Darius claims that he did all that Ahuramazda had made him for (*kar*-repeated three times); and second, Darius asks for Ahuramazda's continued blessing for himself, his house, and his land/people.

These five paragraphs of DNa are arranged in a ring structure: creation-titulary-empire-becoming king-maintenance of creation, with strong repetition or catchword links between paragraphs 2, 3, and 4. So the empire in its breadth and diversity of lands/peoples of paragraph 2 is spelled out in more detail in paragraph 3: the lands/peoples in addition to Persia, and in paragraph 4: of what sort are the lands/peoples far [*dūrai*y] from Persia. Persia is also named in paragraphs 2, 3, and 4, but not in 1 or 5. Between paragraphs 3 and 4 is the repetition of "what was said by me (I said to them); thus they did." Paragraph 4 also spells out in more detail *why* Ahuramazda made (*kar*-) Darius king in paragraph 1: "When he saw this earth-empire in disorder." The ring structure is marked by the last line of paragraph 5, in which the language of creation (*dā*-) reappears: "This [protection] may Ahuramazda establish [*dadātuv*] for me!"

The sixth paragraph of DNa continues with direct speech, but is not introduced by the "Thus says Darius the King" formula. Instead, it begins with the vocative *martiyā*, "O human," and continues with an exhortation: "O human, let not the thought of Ahuramazda seem evil to you! Do not leave the right path! Do not rebel!" (ll. 56–60). This paragraph picks up the word *gasta*-, "evil," in paragraph 5 as a catchword, but in form and address it is very different, using the vocative and second-person imperatives.<sup>10</sup> Yet second-person imperatives were also used in paragraph 4, and although there is no vocative, there is second person address: "If also you should think [*maniyāhay*; 2 sing. mid. subjunctive] ... look [*didiy*; 2 sing. aor. imper.] ... you will know [*xšnāsāhay*; 2 sing. act. subjunctive] ...." Presumably the person addressed in paragraph 4 is also then addressed in the final paragraph. It is a generic person, any person who might see the inscriptions.

The second half of the Testament, DNb, begins with an abbreviated and unusual creation formula: "A great god is Ahuramazda, who has estab-

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10. Rüdiger Schmitt, *The Old Persian Inscriptions of Naqsh-e Rostam and Persepolis* (Corpus inscriptionum Iranicarum 1.1.2; London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 2000), 32, notes that there is a blank between ll. 55 and 56 that physically marks the break before the final section.

lished [*dā-*] this wonder [*fraša-*] that is seen, who has established [*dā-*] happiness [*šiyāti-*] for humanity, who understanding [*xraθu-*] and physical ability [*aruvasta-*] upon Darius the King has bestowed [*nisaya-*]" (ll. 1–5). Note again the contrast between the creation language of the "wonder" and happiness, shorthand for earth-sky and humanity-happiness, respectively,<sup>11</sup> and the historic language of the giving of qualities to Darius.

The very long second paragraph is introduced by the phrase "Thus says Darius the king," and spells out the mental and physical qualities given to Darius. Here the emphasis is on the contrast between right and wrong, and on immediate rewards and punishment for actions. On right and wrong: "I am pleased with right [*rāsta-*]; I am not pleased with wrong [*miθa-*]" (ll. 7–8), where wrong is later defined as "the person who lies" (l. 12) in opposition to right in l. 11. On reward and punishment: "The person who cooperates, according to his achievement I reward him; he who does harm, according to his offense I punish him" (ll. 16–19). There is also a strong sense of balance and proportion, which can be seen in statements like: "A person who speaks (ill) of another person—I do not believe it until I know both stories" (ll. 21–24). The entire second paragraph ends with a summary that picks up the language of the first paragraph, especially with the repetition of *nisaya-*, "bestow": "These are the abilities that Ahuramazda has bestowed on me, and I am able to bear them. By the grace of Ahuramazda, this is my work, and I did (it) by these abilities which Ahuramazda bestowed on me" (ll. 45–49).

The third paragraph begins at line 50 not with "Thus says Darius the King," but with *marikā*, "young man," in the vocative. This third paragraph actually has three sections, each beginning with *marikā*, although the second and third sections are highly fragmentary. It also uses a catchword to link with the long second paragraph: *hūvnara-*, "ability," in ll. 45, 48, and 51. Another catchword is *ayāumainiš*, "weak, unskilled," in l. 59, which contrasts with *yāumaniš*, "strong, skilled, coordinated," in l. 40, used by Darius to refer to his physical abilities. A third catchword is *skauθiš*, "weak, poor," in l. 56 (reconstructed from Aramaic), which looks back to its double use in ll. 8–10 referring to the weak/poor man. The sense of proportion or balance seen in the second paragraph may also be seen in ll. 52–55: "Let not what is spoken to you in secret (lit. in your ears) seem best; hear also what is spoken openly." Considering the fragmentary

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11. Ibid., 41.

nature of the third paragraph, there are a lot of extant links back to the second paragraph.

Bruce Lincoln has noted that the use of *šiyāti-* in l. 58 is almost unique in the Old Persian corpus: “do not also become weak [*ayāumainiš*] with regards to (your) happiness/security [*šiyātiyā*].” There are only a few non-formulaic uses of the term in the extant corpus, but all are intensely cosmological, referring to the sliver of happiness available in the current state of the cosmos.<sup>12</sup> He suggests that *šiyāti-* is the theme of the entirety of DNB, pointing to its cosmic appearance in l. 4 in the abbreviated creation formula, and again here near the end of the inscription; the second paragraph is the list of characteristics that Darius possesses and that enable him to be the instrument by which happiness may be regained.<sup>13</sup> I will return to the issue of theme, but for the moment, it is important to note the catchword that indicates a ring structure for DNB: creation-Darius-maintenance of creation.

The Aramaic of the third paragraph is important for enabling the partial reconstruction of the damaged Old Persian text, but it is also significant that in these few lines of fragmentary text there are two Old Persian loan words: פִּרְתָּר; OP \**paratar*, “openly,” and אֵימָנִישׁ; OP *ayāumainiš*, “weak, uncoordinated, unskilled (physically?).” This demonstrates that concepts important in Old Persian that the scribes thought did not have an equivalent in Aramaic could be imported directly into the language. We know that Persian administrative vocabulary provided dozens of loan words into Aramaic, but both of these loan words denote more abstract concepts; thus, not only concrete but abstract concepts could be loaned. It is striking, therefore, that the key concept of *šiyāti-* is translated as טוב, “good, benefit, welfare.” The semantic field of שָׁלֵם, “peace, wholeness,” would seem to have greater overlap with *šiyāti-* than the rather common טוב.

If the theme of DNB is *šiyāti-*, then it is striking that the text is addressed to *marikā*, “O young man,” rather than *martiyā*, “O human.” The person being addressed is not a generic human being who might read the inscription, but more specifically to a young man.<sup>14</sup> In the ancient Near Eastern wisdom traditions, the “son” or “young man” is the addressee of

12. Bruce Lincoln, “Happiness for Mankind”: *Achaemenian Religion and the Imperial Project* (AclR 53; Leuven: Peeters, 2012), 258–65.

13. *Ibid.*, 253–57.

14. Contra Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire* (trans. P. Daniels; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 212.

texts that seek to impart the wisdom of the sage: a student. More to the point, using “young man” implies that *šiyāti*-is not available as a pursuit to people in general: there is an aspect of the initiate or member of a special class to the address. Whether the *marikā* is Darius’s successor(s)—as is usually argued—or the class of Persian nobles, or the scribal elite, or something else, is difficult to determine. It is unfortunate that the Aramaic is not preserved in any of the three places in DNb where *marikā* is used.

One aspect of the Aramaic version of the third paragraph that has not been fully investigated is how its placement into the Aramaic of DB operates within the context of DB itself. It does not supplement or add something to DB, rather it is substituted for a portion of DB (paragraph 65) that talks about the preservation of the actual inscription and carvings at Bistun. It therefore continues Darius’s description of himself in paragraph 63 and his exhortation in paragraph 64, which is explicitly addressed to “you who may be king hereafter.” In its new context within DB, the *marikā* of DNb 50–60 would be a future ruler: making explicit what is only implied in DNb itself. The substitution of one text for another in a context like this one is part of the same range of scribal practices that we also see in the biblical book of Chronicles.<sup>15</sup>

When we place the two parts of the Testament of Darius together, we can read them as a coherent whole with a mirroring structure. Both begin with a creation formula ending with the selection of Darius. Both end with an exhortation addressed directly to an unnamed individual: a citizen of the Empire in DNa and a specific type of elite individual in the case of DNb. Both have a middle section structured with the “Thus says Darius the King” formula. Both have a ring structure in which themes and/or catchwords from the first section are picked up in the last.

#### **DNa**

Creation (§1)  
 Titulary (§2)  
 Empire (§3)  
 Becoming King (§4)  
 Creation Maintenance (§5–6)

#### **DNb**

Creation (§1)  
 Darius’s character (§2)  
 Darius’s physical ability (§2)  
 Summary (§2)  
 Creation Maintenance (§3)

15. E.g., Isaac Kalimi, *The Reshaping of Ancient Israelite History in Chronicles* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 63–64.

While DNa paragraph 2, the Titulary, is balanced by the reasons for Darius's choice as king in paragraph 4, with the Empire section in the middle, DNB's ring structure is less complex: Darius's character and physical ability, summarized at the end of paragraph 2 is not structured as a ring. However, it is noteworthy that both DNa and DNB begin with creation and end with an exhortation to those charged with the maintenance of creation. What is in the middle of each ring is telling: the Empire and Darius's character. When the two texts are read as one, the Empire is the means by which the turmoil of the earth is restored to creational design, and Darius's character is the means by which the Empire is created. If Lincoln is correct that the theme of DNB is the pursuit and maintenance of *šiyāti*-, then the text as a whole is deeply imbued with creation theology, and obsessed with the maintenance of the restored creation.

#### CHRONICLES

Perhaps the most obvious thematic connection within the topic of kingship between Chronicles and the Testament of Darius is the theme of immediate retribution. It has long been noted that while many texts of the Hebrew Bible make the connection between actions and reward/punishment, Chronicles takes this connection to an extreme not seen in other texts. There is no delayed punishment, as in 2 Kings, where the fall of Jerusalem is linked to the sin of Manasseh two generations earlier. The story of every king in Chronicles is told in such a way as to demonstrate how his actions led immediately to either reward or punishment. Sara Japhet noted that in every case in his source-text (Samuel-Kings) where: sin was left unanswered, the Chronicler added a punishment; a bad thing happened, the Chronicler added a prior sin; a righteous act was left unanswered, the Chronicler added a reward; a good thing happened, the Chronicler added a prior righteous act; et cetera.<sup>16</sup> While the "doctrine of immediate retribution" is a logical extension of other doctrines of divine justice, and is also a bit utopian (everything has a clear cause and effect), it is also a prominent feature of the Testament of Darius. It may also be rather utopian in the Testament as well! In both texts, justice is clear and logical, and follows directly from an individual's actions. The individual

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16. Sara Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and Its Place in Biblical Thought* (trans. A. Barber; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 130–31.

in the text of Chronicles is always the king or equivalent; the case of Zechariah the prophet in 2 Chr 24:20–21, who was executed despite acting according to the will of God, reminds us that the doctrine of immediate retribution does not apply to everyone in Chronicles.<sup>17</sup>

Related to the doctrine of immediate retribution is what Ehud Ben Zvi has called the Chronicler's "sense of proportion."<sup>18</sup> In Chronicles, everything is balanced: not only in the matter of reward and punishment, but in such things as the balance between good kings and bad kings; the balance between David as a man of war and Solomon his son as a man of peace (1 Chr 22:7–10); sinners being given a chance to repent, etc. Nothing is out of place. This sense of proportion is seen also in the structure and contents of the Testament of Darius: the balanced ring structure, the sets of pairs, Darius being "in control of [him]self" (DNb 15). This balance is symptomatic of the Achaemenid ideal of a cosmos under control, as also seen in the iconography of Persepolis and in the concept of *arta*, "order."<sup>19</sup> The many good qualities of Cyrus the Great praised by Xenophon in the *Cyropaedia* may owe much to Xenophon's own Greek philosophical background and to Herodotus, but they also reflect qualities praised in the Testament of Darius.<sup>20</sup> The sense of self-control and moderation seen in the Old Persian texts also characterizes Chronicles. It may account for the reality behind the perception that Chronicles is dull, idealized, and *boring*. No one can accuse any of the Old Persian inscriptions, even DB, of being exciting.

A strong motif in Chronicles is that of seeking-and-finding. Most often applied to the seeking-and-finding of Yhwh, its classic expression may be found in 1 Chr 28:9: "If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you

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17. Ehud Ben Zvi, *History, Literature and Theology in the Book of Chronicles* (London: Equinox, 2006), 22.

18. *Ibid.*, 160–73.

19. Margaret Cool Root, *The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art* (AcIr 9; Leiden: Brill, 1979); Lindsay Allen, "Le Roi Imaginaire: An Audience with the Achaemenid King," in *Imaginary Kings: Royal Images in the Ancient Near East, Greece and Rome* (ed. O. Hekster and R. Fowler; Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2005), 44–45; Lincoln, *Happiness for Mankind*, 416–23, who notes that "order" is never used as a noun on its own in any of the extant inscriptions.

20. Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones, *King and Court in Ancient Persia 559 to 331 B.C.E.* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 27–28; Amélie Kuhrt, "The Achaemenid Persian Empire (c. 550–c. 330 B.C.E.): Continuities, Adaptations, Transformations," in *Empires: Perspectives from Archaeology and History* (ed. S. E. Alcock et al.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 107–9.

abandon him, he will reject you forever.” The two verbs for seeking, **דרש** and **בקש**, occur forty-one and thirteen times respectively in Chronicles; 25 percent of the occurrences of **דרש** in the Hebrew Bible are in Chronicles. Almost all of the occurrences of **דרש** in Chronicles are unique to Chronicles (thirty-seven of forty-one), not paralleled in the source texts. The earliest is in 1 Chr 10, the beginning of the main narrative, and the last is in 2 Chr 34, the account of Josiah, the last real king in the Chronicler’s estimation. The word ties the book together. In five instances, it is paired with **מצא**, “to find”: 1 Chr 26:31, 28:9, 2 Chr 15:2, 19:3, 34:21 (**בקש** is also paired with **מצא** in 2 Chr 15:4, 15). The latter two instances are a play on the motif rather than a strict expression of it. We may consider that the uses of **דרש** without **מצא** imply the “finding” as a result of the “seeking” or the converse: not-seeking leading to not-finding, as in 1 Chr 10:13–14.

It is important to note that Yhwh is also the subject of **דרש**: he does the seeking and presumably the finding, as in 1 Chr 28:9: “Yhwh is seeking the whole-hearted.”<sup>21</sup> This seeking by Yhwh is similar to the occurrences of *vaina-*, “to see,” in DNa and DNb: “When Ahuramazda saw [*avaina*] this earth-empire in disorder, then he gave it to me” (DNa 31–33). The seeing (or seeking) by the deity inevitably leads to the choice of the righteous king. Lincoln has pointed out the importance of *seeing* in these texts: in DNa, the “wonder” that is the cosmos being seen, and seeing by Ahuramazda; seeing by Darius in DNb.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, looking-and-knowing is an important part of DNa: “Look at the sculptures ... then you will know” (ll. 41–42). Most significant, however, is Darius’s insistence on finding out information in DNb: “I do not believe until I hear [*āxšnavaiy*] both sides” (ll. 21–24) and “Let not what is spoken to you in secret seem best; hear [*āxšnudi*] also what is spoken openly” (ll. 52–54). Darius’s entire self-encomium is presented *yaθāmaiy taya kartam vaināhi yadivā āxšnavāhaiy*, “so that my work you may see or hear” (DNb 28–30). The ability of a person to find information if they would but seek it is implied throughout the Testament, just as seeking inevitably leads to finding in Chronicles.

Just as Darius was chosen to be king by Ahuramazda, so David was chosen by Yhwh to be king, despite the seeming lack of qualifications for the position: “Yhwh God of Israel chose me from the whole house of my

21. Translations from Hebrew and Aramaic are my own. Hebrew follows the text of *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*; Aramaic follows the text of TAD.

22. Lincoln, *Happiness for Mankind*, 191–97.



father to be king over Israel forever" (1 Chr 28:4), and "Who am I, O Yhwh God, and who is my family, that you should have brought me to this point?" (1 Chr 17:16). While outside the Testament of Darius, Xerxes's description of his accession in XPf, and Darius's description of his accession in DB might fruitfully be compared to Solomon's accession in Chronicles, especially where Xerxes says that Darius made (*kar-*) him greatest (*maθišta*) after himself even though he had other sons (XPf 32); David says that out of his many sons, Yhwh had chosen Solomon to be king (1 Chr 28:5).

Up to this point I have examined thematic and motif similarities between Chronicles and the Testament of Darius. I would like to turn to two vocabulary items in Chronicles that I think show Achaemenid influence, although not the influence of the OP language: מעל, "unfaithfulness," and התחזק, "to strengthen oneself." The root מעל has a ritual or cultic meaning, and is found almost exclusively in a few late texts: primarily Chronicles, Ezekiel, and Leviticus. It is often translated as "unfaithfulness," but that does not fully express the depth of the wrong against the deity. When used in Chronicles it is always used in the material unique to Chronicles, and it connotes a sin or sacrilege of the highest order. It is beyond sin or wrong of the more usual type, for which other more usual words are used. Like the motif of seeking-and-finding, it runs throughout the book, with its first occurrence in 1 Chr 2:7, its last in 2 Chr 36:14, and its first narrative occurrence in the story of Saul in 1 Chr 10:13–14: "Saul died because of his *ma'al*, which he *ma'al*-ed against Yhwh, on account of: the word of Yhwh which he did not keep, and asking of a necromancer in order to seek, and not seeking Yhwh." I have kept the rather fractured syntax intact, with its repetition of both דרש and מעל, because both the repetition and the syntax signal the extreme importance placed upon this statement. It was because of this מעל that Yhwh "turned the kingdom over to David, son of Jesse" (v. 14), who then proceeded to put it into order: the next two chapters of Chronicles show David's organization of his kingdom. In this case, the מעל of Saul is very like the *yaudanti*-, "disorder," that the earth-empire was in before Ahuramazda handed it over to Darius (DNa 31–32). It is from other texts that we can deduce that the disorder was a result of the entrance of the Lie (*drauga-*) into the cosmos.<sup>23</sup> This highest of wrongs against the deity thus might be analogous to מעל in

23. The literature is vast: for a summary see Kuhrt, "Achaemenid Persian Empire," 103–7; Lincoln, *Happiness for Mankind*, 1–19.

Chronicles: the good kings vanquish מעל just as the bad kings commit מעל, culminating with the priests and the people as a whole continuing and increasing their מעל in 2 Chr 36:14, leading ultimately to the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple (cf. 1 Chr 9:1). מעל is not *drauga-*, but it operates in a manner similar to *drauga-*: it leads to chaos and destruction.

The second word I wish to examine is התחזק, the hitpa'el of the root חזק, "to be strong," having the sense of "to be established," or better, "to strengthen oneself." It is well known that this form of חזק is rare in the Hebrew Bible, with about half of all its occurrences in Chronicles; it occurs fifteen times. Most of the occurrences refer to the king "strengthening himself," usually at or shortly after his ascending the throne. The first occurrence in this sense is 2 Chr 1:1, Solomon's accession. It may be significant that the only occurrences previous to Solomon have to do with David's military; in 1 Chr 11:10, the warriors (גברים) with David in his kingdom "strengthened themselves," and in 1 Chr 19:13, Joab exhorts the army of warriors (גברים) before fighting the Ammonites and Aramaeans: "Let us strengthen ourselves for the sake of our people and the cities of our God." It is surely significant that none of the irredeemably bad kings are described as having strengthened themselves.<sup>24</sup> The last king described as having strengthened himself is Hezekiah in 2 Chr 32:5. In this light, I suggest that the description of Darius in DNb is pertinent. His mental and physical qualities have the effect of making him able to rule, as he says in DNb 45–46: "These are the abilities [*hūvnarā-*] that Ahuramazda has bestowed on me, and I am able to bear them." The young man that he addresses in the third paragraph of DNb he exhorts to show "of what sort are your abilities [*hūvnarā-*]" (l. 51). I suggest that this set of abilities is what is implied by the use of התחזק in Chronicles: the king displays or makes known his abilities for rule, which comprise both mental and physical abilities. This was a key part of the Testament of Darius, and presumably of Achaemenid ideology of kingship.

More tentatively, I have investigated the use of שלם, "peace," and טוב, "good," in Chronicles, in the hope of finding a reflex of OP *šiyatī-*. As I noted above, *šiyatī-* was translated into Aramaic as טוב, rather than what I would have expected, שלם. Neither word is particularly common or used particularly characteristically in Chronicles. The closest use of טוב to OP *šiyatī-* is in 2 Chr 6:41, which has a parallel in Ps 132:8–9:

24. With the possible exception of Jehoram in 2 Chr 21:4.

2 Chr 6:41

And now arise, O Yhwh God to your resting-place,  
 You and the Ark of your strength.  
 Your priests, O Yhwh God,  
 Let them be clothed in salvation;  
 And your loyal ones,  
 Let them rejoice in the good [בטוב].

Ps 132:8–9

Arise, O Yhwh to your resting place,  
 You and the Ark of your strength.  
 Your priests,  
 Let them be clothed in righteousness;  
 And your loyal ones,  
 Let them shout for joy.

In 2 Chr 6:41, טוב is parallel to תשועה, “salvation,” which suggests that טוב is understood here as being more specific than “good,” or even “benefit” or “welfare.”<sup>25</sup> It has more cosmic overtones in this enthronement prayer. The kind of “good” that comes from salvation is much more like שלם, “peace, wholeness, completeness,” and thus much like *šiyatī*. The word שלם is almost never used in the non-parallel portions of Chronicles: it is added in 2 Chr 19:1 to show fulfillment of the oracle of 2 Chr 18;<sup>26</sup> it is used to play on Solomon’s name in 1 Chr 22:9. Perhaps the only significant use is in 1 Chr 12:18–19, where it appears four times: “[David] said to them, ‘If in שלם you have come to me ...’ And the spirit enveloped Amasai ... ‘We are yours, O David, and we are with you, O son of Jesse. שלם, שלם to you and שלם to your help, for your help is your God.’” David’s straightforward question about intentions for peace or war is answered with a blessing almost cosmic in scope. It is not just peace as opposed to war that is being invoked, but a blessing of wholeness, completeness, or in OP terms, *šiyatī*-. Yet it must be said that these occurrences in Chronicles of טוב and שלם, although suggestive, are not determinative.

25. Ralph W Klein, *2 Chronicles: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 99, suggests “prosperity,” citing similar uses in Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Qohelet, and Jeremiah.

26. Ibid., 267.

## FOREIGN MONARCHS IN CHRONICLES

The foreign monarchs in Chronicles have been well studied of late, particularly those who speak or write: Hiram, the Queen of Sheba, Sennacherib, Neco, and Cyrus.<sup>27</sup> The speeches of these monarchs all “support the theological message of the narrator and of the authorial voice.”<sup>28</sup> In other words, they are “Israelitized,”<sup>29</sup> and all but Sennacherib are portrayed positively. Ben Zvi suggests that “a bright future is one in which foreigners will recognize YHWH and the role of Israel in the divine economy.”<sup>30</sup> The ending of the book, with Cyrus providing for the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple and the repopulation of Judah/Yehud, brings the world of Chronicles into direct contact with the Persian Empire. That Cyrus is portrayed positively is a truism of Chronicles scholarship. But is Cyrus portrayed as a Persian? As an Achaemenid, who were the only Persian kings that most of the Empire had ever really known? Three points are pertinent to the analysis of his speech in 2 Chr 36:23, which reads: “Thus says Cyrus, the King of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth Yhwh God of Heaven has given to me, and he has appointed me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah.” First, the formula introducing his speech is “Thus says Cyrus, the King of Persia,” which mirrors the Old Persian formula. Second he refers to the deity as “Yhwh God of Heaven,” which is the only place in Chronicles that “God of Heaven” is used as an epithet for Yhwh. It is the same appellation used in the Aramaic Elephantine papyri when the Judaeans write to Persian authorities: “May the God of Heaven seek the peace/welfare of our lord exceedingly at all times, and favor may he grant you before Darius the King” (TAD A4.7); “saying before Aršama, concerning the house of the altar of the God of Heaven, which is in Yeb the fortress” (TAD A4.9). Third, Cyrus claims he has been given “all the kingdoms of the earth,” which aligns with the creation formula and Darius’s claims of his kingship in DNa. The first part of the edict, therefore, reads exactly as an Aramaic/Hebrew translation of an Achaemenid royal edict (with the pious insertion of Yhwh). Cyrus the Achaemenid indeed!

Notably none of the other royal figures in Chronicles speak in such an Achaemenid way: only Sennacherib in 2 Chr 32:11 begins his letter with

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27. Ben Zvi, *History, Literature and Theology*, 270–88.

28. *Ibid.*, 279.

29. *Ibid.*, 280.

30. *Ibid.*, 282.

“Thus says Sennacherib, the King of Assyria,” and this draws on the parallel text in 2 Kgs 18:38. Only the Persian king looks like a Persian king. Similarly, the features of the ideal Judaeen king built up in Chronicles: seeker of Yhwh, builder of temple, successful in war when necessary, father of many sons, dying in peace, do not bear more than a passing resemblance to the ideology of kingship shown in the Testament of Darius. The ideology of a Judaeen king remains Judaeen at its core, even if the chancellery education of the Chronicler had an impact on its expression. Cyrus the king looks like an ideal *Judaean* king only when Achaemenid and Judaeen ideologies of kingship overlap: subordinate to the deity, recipient of divine favor through holding the kingdom, builder; these are all rather generic traits. Perhaps the most significant difference in the Achaemenid and Judaeen ideologies of kingship is the relationship between king and temple-building: in Chronicles, the king’s main purpose is to build the temple, while the Achaemenids seem to not have had temples at all.<sup>31</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

Chronicles is different from most other biblical texts in terms of language, structure, and relationship to other texts (i.e., reuse). It is a product of a scribal culture that had a high degree of textuality. It was produced in Hebrew in a world that was largely Aramaic-speaking, and certainly using Aramaic for administrative purposes under Achaemenid rule. A few generations ago, scholars attempted to find connections between Zoroastrianism and Second Temple Judaism, and these have largely been discounted.<sup>32</sup> It is only now that scholars are starting to look at how Achaemenid rule influenced the texts of Second Temple Judaism. Without succumbing to an uncritical parallelomania, I have tried to show how some aspects of Old Persian texts and the underlying Achaemenid ideology can be related to the biblical book of Chronicles.

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31. William Riley, *King and Cultus in Chronicles: Worship and the Reinterpretation of History* (JSOTSup 160; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 163. Discussion at the Leiden conference focused on the lack of attention paid by Achaemenid rulers to their subjects’ temples (with the exception of Darius I). See especially the papers by Damien Agut-Labordere and Olaf Kaper.

32. Cf. Silverman, *Persepolis and Jerusalem*, 2–7.

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## NO KING IN JUDAH? MASS DIVORCE IN JUDAH AND IN ATHENS\*

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### THE INTERMARRIAGE BAN

In the mid-fifth century B.C.E.,<sup>1</sup> Pericles in Athens and Ezra in Jerusalem spoke to an assembly of men in Athens and in Judah respectively, demanding that for anyone to be considered a Athenian or a Judean both parents must be of the required ethnic group; that is, both the mother and father had to be an Athenian or a Judean respectively. Many theories have been proposed to explain the heightened awareness of ethnicity and genealogical descent in the mid-fifth century B.C.E. in both Athens and Jerusalem and the mass divorce of the foreign partner that followed in both areas. Biblical scholars discuss the potency of the term “holy seed” used in Ezra 9,<sup>2</sup> but they might equally well apply their discussions to

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1. Or, in Judah, in the beginning of the fourth century.

2. Jonathan Klawans, “Notions of Gentile Impurity in Ancient Judaism,” *AJS Review* 20 (1995): 285–312; Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Christine E. Hayes, “Intermarriage and Impurity in Ancient Jewish Sources,” *HTR* 92 (1999): 3–36; Hayes, *Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities: Intermarriage and Conversion from the Bible to the Talmud* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); David Janzen, *Witch-Hunts, Purity and Social Boundaries: The Expulsion of the Foreign Women in Ezra 9–10* (JSOTSup 350; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002); Saul Olyan, “Purity Ideology in Ezra-Nehemiah as a Tool to Reconstitute the Community,” *JSJ* (2004): 1–16; Ina Willi-Plein, “Problems of Intermarriage in Postexilic Times,” *Shai le-Sara Japhet: Studies in the Bible, Its Exegesis and Its Language* (ed. M. Bar-Asher et al.; Jerusalem: The Bialik Institute, 2007), 177–89;

the use of the phrase “impure genealogy,” or “impure birth,” “*genos*,” in the Periclean law. The effect in both places was the same. The laws created a more specifically ethnic definition of what it meant to be a citizen of Athens or of Judah by emphasizing ancestry. After these laws were promulgated, there was little means of joining the community from the outside, inter-marriage was eliminated, and conversion was not available. Worship of YHWH or worship of Athena could not make those outside the bloodline acceptable. The goal in both Athens and Judah was pure ancestry, pure descent.<sup>3</sup>

#### PERICLES’S AND EZRA’S LAW ON CITIZENSHIP<sup>4</sup>

The wording of Pericles’ Citizenship Law is provided by Pseudo-Aristotle:

And in the year of [the archonship of] Antidotus [451/450 B.C.E.] ... an enactment was passed [in the Assembly] on the proposal of Pericles prohibiting a person from having a share in the city who was not born of two citizens. (*Ath. Pol.* 26.3; H. Rackham, LCL)

The corresponding situation in Judah is given in Ezra:

Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, “You have trespassed and married foreign women, and so increased the guilt of Israel. Now make confession to YHWH the God of your fathers, and do his will; separate yourselves from the peoples of the land and from the foreign women.”

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Armin Lange, “Your Daughters Do Not Give to Their Sons and Their Daughters Do Not Take for Your Sons (Ezra 9, 12): Intermarriage in Ezra 9–10 and in the Pre-Maccabean Dead Sea Scrolls, Part I,” *BN* 137 (2008): 17–39; and Lange, “Your Daughters Do Not Give to Their Sons and Their Daughters Do Not Take for Your Sons (Ezra 9, 12): Intermarriage in Ezra 9–10 and in the Pre-Maccabean Dead Sea Scrolls, Part II,” *BN*, 139 (2008): 79–98; Katherine E. Southwood, “‘And They Could not Understand Jewish Speech’: Language, Ethnicity, and Nehemiah’s Intermarriage Crisis,” *JTS* ns 62 (2011): 1–19.

3. Katherine E. Southwood, *Ethnicity and the Mixed Marriage Crisis in Ezra 9–10: An Anthropological Approach* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 129.

4. This section is based on my article “The Concept of ‘Impure Birth’ in Fifth Century Athens and Judea,” in *In the Wake of Tikva Frymer-Kensky: Tikva Frymer-Kensky Memorial Volume* (ed. S. Holloway et al.; Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias Press, 2009), 121–41. See that article for further discussion of the history of Athenian citizenship laws.

Then all the community answered with a loud voice, “Yes; it is incumbent upon us to do as you have said.” (10:10–12)<sup>5</sup>

For the first time in both Athens and Judah everyone had to prove descent from an Athenian or a Judean mother, that is, a woman whose father was also an Athenian or Judean. Those unable to prove such descent were reckoned as bastards, or of “illicit birth.” Though not often stated, this law recognized for the first time the status of the Athenian and the Judean woman, and may have even elevated it.<sup>6</sup> Plutarch reports that five years later in Athens, in 445 B.C.E., the marriage ban was followed by a public scrutiny (*διαψηφισμός*) when the Egyptian king sent grain to be distributed to Athenian citizens.

And so when the king of Egypt sent a present to the people [of Athens] of forty thousand measures of grain, and this had to be divided up among the citizens, there was a great crop of prosecutions against citizens of *impure birth* by the law of Pericles, who had up to that time escaped notice and been overlooked, and many of them also suffered at the hands of informers. As a result, a little less than five thousand were convicted and sold into slavery, and those who retained their citizenship and were adjudged to be Athenians were found, as a result of this selection, to be fourteen thousand and forty in number. (Plutarch, *Pericles* 37.3–4; B. Perrin, LCL)

Indeed, exactly 4760 Athenians were struck from the citizenship rolls then as being of “impure birth,” “impure origin,” that is, of “impure seed” (*οἱ τω γένει μη καθαροί*) and not entitled to the grain.<sup>7</sup>

#### A LAW ABOUT BASTARDS?

Plutarch claims (*Pericles* 37.2) that Pericles’s Citizenship Law was not about citizenship per se but was a law “about bastards.” In fact, however,

5. Translations of the Hebrew are my own.

6. Robin Osborne, “Law, the Democratic Citizen and the Representation of Women in Classical Athens,” *Past and Present* 155 (1997): 3–33.

7. F. Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1923), 119, 328F “Philochoros”; John K. Davies, “Athenian Citizenship: The Descent Group and the Alternatives,” *CJ* 73 (1977–1978): 105–21.

there already were laws in both Judah and Athens that excluded bastards from citizenship. Regarding Judah, the law is stated in Deut 23:2:

לא־יבא ממזר בקהל יהוה גם דור עשירי לא־יבא לו בקהל יהוה:

Bastards shall never be admitted to YHWH's community. Even to the tenth generation, their descendants shall not be admitted to YHWH's community. (Deut 23:2)

Regarding Athens, in the beginning of the sixth century B.C.E. Solon had already decreed that the bastard could not participate in the rites and privileges of the polis, and could not inherit. In fact, as a result of Solon's law, bastards in Athens had no next-of-kin.<sup>8</sup> The situation may have been the same in Judah. As a result of these laws, in both Athens and Judah, the inheritance of wealth and status was restricted to legitimate children, and at least in Athens bastards could not be adopted into any family as a legitimate heir, not even into their own families.<sup>9</sup> If there were no legitimate sons, rather than adopting a son, Solon permitted the inheritance to be passed to a legitimate daughter, but only if she married a member of her father's line. The identical permission was decreed in Judah as well, as is seen in the matter of Zelophehad's daughters (Num 27:7; 36:6). They were permitted to inherit, but they too were required to marry a member of their father's line.

Although the marriage bans in Athens and Judah were not laws about bastards, *per se*, as a result of the laws, new bastards were created. All those born from a parent of the wrong ethnic group were suddenly disenfranchised. Deprived of their rights as citizens, those counted as bastards in Athens, *voittoi*, had no recourse to the protection of the courts; if murdered, their family had no right of vengeance. Many fled or were exiled. Confiscation of property and often loss of life followed even those allowed to remain. Those who sued for their citizenship rights and lost their suit were executed. Similarly in Judah, perhaps in a presumption of guilt, those who refused to appear in Jerusalem and submit to a scrutiny of their marriage status had their property confiscated and were banished from the community (Ezra 10:8).

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8. Daniel Ogden, *Greek Bastardy in the Classical and Hellenistic Periods* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 36–9, 42; Cynthia Patterson, *The Family in Greek History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), 89–90.

9. Susan Lape, "Solon and the Institution of the 'Democratic' Family Form," *CJ* 98 (2002–2003): 122.

וכל אשר לא-יבוא לשלשת הימים כעצת השרים והזקנים יחרם כל-רכושו  
והוא יבדל מקהל הגולה:

Any who did not come in three days, by order of the officials and the elders, all their property will be confiscated, and he will be banned from the community of the exiles.

The laws in Athens were allowed to lapse during the Peloponnesian Wars, but in 403 B.C.E., they were reinforced and strengthened. Another census and mass exile ensued. These periodic “scrutinies” have been characterized as “reigns of terror.”<sup>10</sup> Davies notes the constant status anxieties that are reflected in contemporary Athenian tragedies.<sup>11</sup>

Laws elaborating on the prohibition of intermarriage between Athenians and foreigners followed upon Pericles’s citizenship law. Two laws in particular, are noteworthy, both quoted from Demosthenes:

If a foreign man lives as husband with an Athenian woman in any way or manner whatsoever, he may be prosecuted before the courts by any Athenian wishing and entitled to do so. If he is found guilty, both he and his property shall be sold and one-third of the money shall be given to the prosecutor. The same rule applies to a foreign woman who lives with an Athenian as his wife, and the Athenian convicted of living as husband with a foreign woman shall be fined a thousand drachmas. (Demosthenes, *Against Neaira* 59.16)<sup>12</sup>

Women did not give themselves in marriage, but there were repercussions if a man gave a foreign woman to an Athenian man.

If any Athenian gives a foreign woman in marriage to an Athenian citizen, falsely claiming that she is Athenian, he shall lose his civic rights and his property shall be confiscated and one-third shall belong to the successful prosecutor. (Demosthenes, *Against Neaira* 59.52)<sup>13</sup>

We may suppose that similar laws were passed in Judah as well. A mandatory divorce took place in the fifth century B.C.E. among all marriages

10. Philip Brook Manville, *The Origins of Citizenship in Ancient Athens* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), 184.

11. Davies, “Athenian Citizenship,” 105–21.

12. Ilias Arnautoglou, *Ancient Greek Laws: A Sourcebook* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 18.

13. Ibid.

between an Athenian and non-Athenian, and apparently between a Judean and non-Judean whether the foreigner was male or female (Ezra 10). According to the laws quoted in Demosthenes, the foreigner living as a spouse with an Athenian and falsely claiming to be Athenian would be sold into slavery, and his or her property confiscated (with one-third given to the man who brought the suit). Anyone giving a foreign woman to an Athenian in marriage was subject to sanctions. This was then the situation in Athens in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E., and perhaps in Judah as well.

The laws in Athens succeeded in sharply reducing foreign marriages. While common before, they are unknown after Pericles' law of 450.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, charges of "impure birth" and "treachery" were the most common allegations scrawled on potsherds used to ostracize politicians from the Athenian polis. This seems to have been true in Judah as well. The charge of having "mingled the pure/holy seed with the peoples of the land" (9:1; והתערבו זרע הקדש בעמי הארצות) as well as cries of "treachery" (בגד) and "faithlessness" (מעל, Ezra 9:4; 10:6) seem to have been common in Judah.

Although Athens was a democracy and Judah was not, being part of the Achaemenid Empire, it seems fruitful to assume that the installation of the same laws at the same time was the application of the same solution to the same problem. What exactly that problem was is not understood however. Scholars who study Pericles's Citizenship Law are as at a loss to find the reasons behind it, as are those who study the mass divorce described in Ezra 10. Various explanations have been offered for both mass divorces, but there does not appear to be conversation between the groups of scholars; those who study Pericles's Citizenship Law do not know the work of biblical scholars, and vice versa. The goal of this paper is to examine the explanations for Pericles's Citizenship Law offered by classical scholars in an attempt to determine if the explanations proposed for Athens fits the situation in fifth and fourth century Judah as well. It is my belief that for an explanation to be adequate it must fit the context of both places.

It is possible, of course, that the mass divorce described in Ezra is not historical and is simply a late Hellenistic attempt to mimic the events that

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14. Osborne, "Law and the Representation of Women," 3–33.

took place in Athens. I proceed on the assumption that the mass divorce as described in Ezra is historical, however.

#### PROPOSED REASONS BEHIND THE LAW

##### Too Many People

One reason proposed for Pericles's marriage ban is that offered by Pseudo-Aristotle in his *Athenian Constitution*, namely, that there were too many people. Aristotle had previously explained in his *Politics* (1278a.26–34) that cities define citizenship generously when short of men and strictly when numbers are buoyant, so that the explanation offered in the *Athenian Constitution* for Pericles's Law may only be an application of that Aristotelian rule, without being based on any real historical knowledge. Scholars assume, however, that in fifth-century B.C.E. Athens a large number of foreigners were passing themselves off as citizens, causing serious problems in regard to jury duty or other public offices.<sup>15</sup> It is difficult to see how the citizenship law would prevent this, however, since it does not attempt to exclude foreigners from Athens. Archaeological evidence suggests a large increase in the foreign population of Athens's city center and in the port city of Piraeus after the Persian wars, and a large number of these may have been given citizenship in appreciation of their military service on behalf of Athens.<sup>16</sup> Even after the wars however, *metics*, foreigners, continued to make invaluable contributions to Athenian society not only because of the poll tax they paid, but also because of their continued military service in maintaining the increasingly powerful Athenian Empire. Thousands served as hoplites and thousands more rowed the triremes. Since hoplites had to provide their own swords and armor, these foreigners must have achieved some modicum of wealth in Athens. Perhaps this caused jealousy, anxiety, and hostility in the local population, and this may have been behind the law. Other scholars deny that the increase in the foreign population was the reason for the law, however, since the foreign population did

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15. Cynthia B. Patterson, *Pericles' Citizenship Law of 451/50 B.C.* (PhD Diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1978), 103.

16. Kurt A. Raafaub, "The Transformation of Athens in the Fifth Century," in *Democracy, Empire, and the Arts in Fifth-Century Athens* (ed. D. Boedeker and K. A. Raafaub; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), 28.



not decrease as a result.<sup>17</sup> The law did not prevent foreigners from living and working in Athens, and was not intended to. It was only intended to prevent the foreigners' daughters from marrying Athenian sons. In any case, the large influx in the foreign population after the Persian wars and their prominent role in Athenian civic life suggests that prior to Pericles's Law intermarriage would naturally have occurred between them and the local population.<sup>18</sup>

### Myth of Autochthony

Some scholars point to the myth of autochthony as providing both the ideological foundation and the impetus for Pericles's Citizenship Law, for it was only then, just prior to the time of Pericles's Law, that the Athenians developed a myth of their autochthonous heritage from the land.<sup>19</sup> Well-articulated in Pericles's funeral oration (Thucydides 2.36.1) and well-depicted on vases and jars is the myth that the Athenians had lived on the same piece of land continuously in an unbroken line of descent from the original inhabitants, especially from that first autochthonous inhabitant, Erecthius, born out of the earth of the Athenian Acropolis itself.<sup>20</sup> Some see in this myth a reaction to the Spartans, whom the Athenians regarded as a "mongrel people," and with whom the Athenians had been at war for the ten years just prior to the Law's acceptance.<sup>21</sup>

This ideology of autochthony present in Athens has its parallel in mid-fifth century Judah. We read in Ezra and Chronicles that genealogical records were kept in Judah at least from the time these two biblical books were written. Ezra refers to the genealogical records of the priests ("They looked for their entries in the genealogical records [מִתְּחִילָה], but they

17. Patterson, *Pericles' Citizenship Law of 451/50 B.C.*, 102.

18. Raaflaub, "Transformation of Athens," 35–6.

19. J. H. Blok, "Pericles' Citizenship Law: A New Perspective," *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 58, no. 2 (2009), 152; Susan Lape, *Race and Citizen Identity in the Classical Athenian Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

20. Vincent J. Rosivach, "Autochthony and the Athenians," *CQ* 37 (1987): 294–306; Christopher Pelling, "Bringing Autochthony Up-to-Date: Herodotus and Thucydides," *CW* 102 (2009): 471–83; H. Alan Shapiro, "Autochthony and the Visual Arts in Fifth-Century Athens," *Democracy, Empire, and the Arts in Fifth-Century Athens* (ed. D. Boedeker and K. A. Raaflaub; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), 127–51.

21. Rosivach, "Autochthony and the Athenians"; Pelling, "Bringing Autochthony Up-to-Date"; Blok, "Pericles' Citizenship Law," 150–54.

were not found there, and so they were excluded from the priesthood as impure," Ezra 2:62), but priests were not the only ones whose genealogies were registered. Every male seems to have had his genealogy recorded. Chronicles refers to the genealogical records of the tribes of Simeon (1 Chr 4:33), Reuben (1 Chr 5:1, 7), Gad (1 Chr 5:17), Issachar (1 Chr 7:5), Benjamin (1 Chr 7:7), Asher (1 Chr 7:40), and so on (all Israel: 1 Chr 9:1). Such records seem to be late. The word for genealogical record, **כתב המתיחסים**, and its root, **יחש**, occur only in Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, nowhere else. The citizen lists in both these books imply that each male was enrolled by tribe and within tribe by "father's house," **בית אב**, these corresponding perhaps to the *deme* and the *phratry* of Athens.

The purpose of the genealogical records reproduced *ad nauseum* in Ezra and Chronicles would have been the same as those at Athens—to demonstrate an unadulterated genealogical link of the present population to the original inhabitants of Israel, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to the first parents, to Adam, and most importantly, to the land.<sup>22</sup> The continuous link to the land is especially clear in Chronicles, which in its history tells no story of a sojourn to Egypt or of an Exodus.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, there is not even a story of Adam and Eve in Eden, or of God's command to Abraham to leave his father's house and travel to a new land. Indeed, upon reading Chronicles one may be excused for thinking that Adam (the "earthling") was created out of the very earth of the land of Israel, not somewhere between the Tigris and Euphrates, and that the people Israel, the descendants of Jacob, had lived in the land continuously, from the time of Adam's creation until their exile to Babylon. According to the Chronicler, the recorded and registered descent from an Adam, created, as it seems, from the very substance of the earth of the land of Israel, implies the autochthonous origin of her people in the land and their continuous residence in it.

Although this shared ideology of autochthony in Judah and Athens is consistent with the shared intermarriage ban, I do not see in Judah an analogy to the Athenian war with Sparta which may have occasioned it. Although Judeans may have viewed the Samaritans as a "mongrel people," there was no war in Judah except between the Persians and the Greeks, and,

22. Marshall D. Johnson, *The Purpose of the Biblical Genealogies* (2nd ed.; Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 2002), 42.

23. Sara Japhet, "Conquest and Settlement in Chronicles," *From the Rivers of Babylon to the Highlands of Judah: Collected Studies on the Restoration Period* (ed. Eadem; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 38–52.

although Judah would have been called to contribute soldiers on behalf of Persia, it is difficult to see how this would have affected her ideology. While the shared myth of autochthony may have provided the ideological foundation for the laws, it is not likely to have motivated either of them.

### Prerogatives of Citizenship

Rather than the myth of autochthony, or the notion of “too many people,” a more fruitful investigation may be the prerogatives of citizenship which existed in both Athens and Judah at the time. These must have been worth safeguarding from outsiders in order to take such a drastic step. It has been asserted that “citizenship was not only a descent group, but also an interest group, disposing of privileges which were worth defending.”<sup>24</sup> After Solon, citizenship in Athens conferred, among other things, protection against torture and against enslavement by other Athenians.<sup>25</sup> Although we cannot date them, the laws of Leviticus provide the same safeguards for Judeans. The Judean may acquire slaves only from foreigners or resident aliens, not from fellow Israelites:

As for the male and female slaves whom you may have, it is from the nations around you that you may acquire male and female slaves. You may also acquire them from among the aliens residing with you, and from their families that are with you, who have been born in your land; and they may be your property.... These you may treat as slaves, but as for your fellow Israelites, no one shall rule over the other with harshness. (Lev 25:44–46)

The Athenian citizen had the right to have his murder avenged by members of his phratry. Similarly in Judah, a Judean had the right to have his murder avenged by his next of kin:

ואם־בכלי ברזל הכהו וימת רצח הוא מות יומת הרצח: גאל הדם הוא ימית את־הרצח בפגוע־בו הוא ימיתנו:

But anyone who strikes another with an iron object, and death ensues, is a murderer; the murderer shall be put to death. The blood-avenger is the

24. Davies, “Athenian Citizenship,” 106.

25. Alan L. Boegehold, “Perikles’ Citizenship Law of 451/0 B.C.,” *Athenian Identity and Civic Ideology* (ed. A. L. Boegehold and A. C. Scafuro; Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 57–66.

one who shall put the murderer to death; when they meet, the avenger of blood shall execute the sentence. (Num 35:16, 19)

The so-called “blood-avenger,” the “redeemer,” is the next of kin:

גֹּאֲלָה תִהְיֶה־לּוֹ אֶחָד מֵאֲחִיו יִגְאֹלֵנוּ: אֹרְדָדוֹ אוֹ בֶן־דָּדוֹ יִגְאֹלֵנוּ אוֹ־מִשְׁאֵר  
בְּשָׂרוֹ מִמִּשְׁפַּחְתּוֹ יִגְאֹלֵנוּ

He has the right of vengeance. One of his brothers shall avenge him or his uncle or his uncle's son will avenge him, or from the rest of his flesh from his own family, he will avenge him. (Lev 25:48–49)

In all these respects the duties and rights of citizenship were similar in Athens and in Judah. These prerogatives existed in Athens before Pericles's Citizenship Law and presumably in Judah before the events described in Ezra. Thus they cannot explain the need for further restrictions on citizenship. There were other prerogatives of citizenship, however, which may indicate a reason for these laws.

#### To Hold Public Office and Control Public Funds

Unlike Judeans, Athenian citizens could hold office or sit on juries and receive pay for doing so.<sup>26</sup> In fact, according to Aristotle, a person was a citizen only if he “had the power to take part in the deliberative or judicial administration of the state” (*Politics* 1275b.19–21). In Athens, this included priestly as well as political offices. Although anyone could participate in a cult festival, citizenship was required to hold the priesthood, and even before Pericles's Law, descent from two citizens was necessary. After the passage of the Law, every citizen was now a son of two citizen parents, so that when a new god was introduced into the polis, the priesthood became available to anyone and was chosen by lot from the rolls of every family.<sup>27</sup>

This availability to every citizen in Athens was also true of public offices, including the archon, the secular leader of the polis. Prior to Pericles's Law this office was restricted to citizens of the higher level property classes. After Pericles's law, it was opened to every citizen, and property restrictions were loosened.<sup>28</sup> Holding public office in Athens was thus democra-

26. Patterson, “Perikles' Citizenship Law of 451/0 B.C.,” 93–94.

27. Blok, “Perikles' Citizenship Law,” 141–70.

28. Ibid.

tized, no male was considered above any other, and all public offices were available to all by lot. Some scholars suppose that Pericles instituted his law for just this purpose—to democratize the offices of priest and archon, as well as of juror and of every other public office.<sup>29</sup> He may have hoped that by having every citizen participate in all these offices, they would identify more fully with the Athenian polis and defend it more forcefully in war.

The public offices of priest and archon were not simply honorary, however; they were in charge of temple and public funds respectively.<sup>30</sup> Rather than trying to motivate the Athenians in times of war, I suspect that the real purpose of Pericles's Citizenship Law was to keep public and temple funds in the hands of the full citizens of Athens, and to keep them from falling into the hand of those who may have had allegiances to other states from their foreign marriages.

This explanation of Pericles's law may apply to the situation in Judah in the mid-fifth or early fourth centuries and explain the marriage ban there as well. As in Athens, even before the marriage ban, sons of the high priestly families, that is, the sons of Aaron, were restricted in those whom they could marry. According to Leviticus, they had to marry a virgin of their own kin:

אלמנה וגרושה וחללה זנה את־אלה לא יקח כי אם־בתולה מעמיו יקח  
אשה:

A widow, or a divorced woman, or a woman who has been defiled, a prostitute, these he [the priest] shall not marry. He shall marry a virgin of his own kin. (Lev 21:14)

A woman of one's own kin did not imply a woman of the high priestly family, however, but simply another Judean.<sup>31</sup> Ezekiel clarifies this:

ואלמנה וגרושה לא־יקחו להם לנשים כי אם־בתולת מזרע בית ישראל  
והאלמנה אשר תהיה אלמנה מכהן יקחו:

They shall not marry a widow, or a divorced woman, but only a virgin of the stock of the house of Israel, or a widow who is the widow of a priest. (Ezek 44:22)

29. Ibid.

30. W. R. Connor, "'Sacred' and 'Secular': Ἱερὰ καὶ ὁσια and the Classical Athenian Concept of the State," *Ancient Society* 19 (1988): 161–88.

31. Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22* (AB 3.2; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 1819–20.

As in Athens, the new marriage ban under Ezra and Nehemiah did not alter the law for members of Judean high-priestly families.

What about the Judeans' ability to hold office?

### To Choose Temple Officials

If citizenship meant the ability to hold office or to control public funds, as Aristotle demanded, the actual citizens of Judah were not Judeans, but the Persians. Unlike in democratic Athens, temple officials were not appointed by lot from a list of appropriate males, nor were they elected by the Judeans themselves. They were appointed by the Persian governor (Neh 13:13) and were responsible not to the people of Judah, but to him:

ואוצרה על-אוצרות שלמיה הכהן וצדוק הסופר ופדיה מן-הלויים ועל-ידם  
חנן בן-זכור בן-מתניה

And I [Nehemiah, the Persian governor of Judah] appointed as treasurers over the [Temple] storehouses the priest Shelemiah, the scribe Zadok, and Pedaiah of the Levites, and as their assistant Hanan son of Zaccur son of Mattaniah. (Neh 13:13)

In fact, all that took place in the temple was under the control, not of the priestly family, not even of the high priest himself, but of whatever Persian governor was sent from Susa. Indeed, we see evidence of a power struggle in the memoirs of Nehemiah, the governor of Judah under Artaxerxes I.<sup>32</sup> The high priest took back control of the temple while Nehemiah was in Susa reporting to the king, but Nehemiah regained control of it again when he returned:

Now before this, the priest Eliashib, who was in charge of the chambers of the house of our God, and who was related to Tobiah [the Persian governor of Amman], prepared for Tobiah a large room where they had previously put the grain offering, the frankincense, the vessels, and the tithes of grain, wine, and oil, which were given by commandment to the Levites, singers, and gatekeepers, and the contributions for the priests. [When I] returned to Jerusalem, I discovered the wrong that Eliashib had done on behalf of Tobiah, preparing a room for him in the courts of the house of God. And I was very angry, and I threw all the house-

32. Lisbeth S. Fried, "The Political Struggle of Fifth Century Judah," *Transeu* 24 (2002): 9–21.

hold furniture of Tobiah out of the room. Then I gave orders and they cleansed the chambers, and I brought back the vessels of the house of God, with the grain offering and the frankincense. (Neh 13:4–9)

As governor, Nehemiah had complete authority over temple life; he, not the high priest, could decide who had the right to live in the temple chambers. This was not unique to Judah. Akkadian and Egyptian documents reveal the power that the Persian Empire wielded over the most minute of temple affairs.<sup>33</sup> More importantly, the Persian governor was the one to decide who served as priests in local temples. In Jerusalem, this meant determining who was permitted to share in the food served to the god:

וַיֹּאמֶר הַתִּרְשָׁתָא לָהֶם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יֹאכְלוּ מִקֹּדֶשׁ הַקִּדְּשִׁים:

The governor told them that they were not to partake of the most holy food. (Ezra 2:63)

Egyptian papyri reveal the ability of Persian governors to appoint people to priestly positions, and emphasize the bribes these governors demanded to approve a candidate (P. Berlin 13582).<sup>34</sup> Persian control over the appointment of priests in local temples is especially clear from a set of papyri detailing appointment of the High Priest himself of the Temple of Khnum in Elephantine (P. Berlin 13536, 13539–13540).<sup>35</sup> In contrast to second-order priests who needed the approval of the governor, the candidate for the High Priesthood had to be approved by the satrap himself. In one particular case revealed in the Berlin papyri (P. Berlin 13536, 13539–40), the Satrap rejected the first two candidates that the temple wanted.

### To Control Public Funds

In contrast to Athens where the locally elected priest managed temple funds and the locally elected archon managed public accounts, and where they were ultimately responsible to no one but the people of Athens, in Judah, as elsewhere in the Achaemenid Empire, both public and temple funds were controlled by Persian officials. Persian control of temple funds

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33. Lisbeth S. Fried, *The Priest and the Great King: Temple-Palace Relations in the Persian Empire* (BJSUC 10; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2004).

34. Ibid., 85.

35. Ibid., 80–86, and references cited there.



is clear from Egyptian papyri. In the following letter (P. Berlin 13536), the so-called *Lesonis* priest, the high priest of the Temple of Khnum, is ordered to bring the temple's account books to the Persian appointed treasurer of Egypt for auditing. The letter exhibits the *Lesonis* priest's resistance to foreign imperial control:

Inside:

Khnemibre greets the priests of Khnum of Elephantine (Yeb), the *Lesonis* priest, (and) the temple scribes: Oh may Neith make your life long! I have earlier written to you that they wrote in my name, namely in the name of the *hry-ib-tpy*: Let them bring the priests of Khnum, the *Lesonis* Priest, and the temple scribe, to the house where I am, on a day within about ten days, about the sixteenth of Mechir of the twenty-fourth year [of Darius I]. Until today you have not arrived in the house where I am, where the *hry-ib-tpy* is. When this letter reaches you, come to the house where I am, so that the temple audit is written in your hand, [namely] three books and the invoice of the wealth of the temple of Khnum from the years 22, 23, and 24. And go to the house in which the *hry-ib-tpy* is. Let the date not go by, about which they have written to me, to the *hry-ib-tpy*. Petubastis has written in the twenty-fourth year, on the sixth of Phamenoth.

Outside:

Khnemibre greets the priest of Khnum of Elephantine, the *Lesonis*-Priest and the temple scribe of Elephantine.<sup>36</sup>

The title *hry-ib-tpy* has received much discussion.<sup>37</sup> Originating in the Twenty-Seventh dynasty, the first Persian period, it is equivalent to another late Egyptian title, *sentī*, and to the Greek title, διοικητής. In the Ptolemaic period, this official was second only to the Ptolemaic ruler; he administered the wealth of Egypt, both divine and private, for the king's benefit. He audited the books and estimated the taxes from both temple and from private estates. His role is apparent in this letter as well. The

36. K.T. Zauzich, *Papyri von der Insel Elephantine* (Demotische Papyri aus den Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin 3; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1978–1993). My English translation of his German.

37. M. Chauveau, "La Chronologie de la Correspondance Dite 'de Phérendatès,'" *REg* 50 (1999): 269–71; M. J. Yoyotte, "Le Nom Égyptien Du 'Ministre de l'Économie'—De Saïs À Méroé," *CRAI* 133 (1989): 73–90; J. Quaegebeur, "*Phritob* comme Titre d'un Haut Fonctionnaire Ptolémaïque," *Ancient Society* 20 (1989): 159–68.

Lesonis priest was required to present to the satrapal official, to the *ḥry-ib-ṭpy*, the temple's account books for the previous three years. The purpose would only have been to audit the books to determine the exact amount of money the temple owed the king, and to prevent the priest from concealing any of the temple's capital. Instead of funds and support allocated by the king to the temples as had been the case under the Pharaohs, now moneys went the other way. The temples had to pay the king. That this title *ḥry-ib-ṭpy* originated in the Twenty-Seventh dynasty, under the first Achaemenid rulers, indicates the tremendous change brought about by Persian domination. It illustrates that in Egypt, and throughout the Empire, temples had become the private property of the king, not of the god, whose books could be audited and whose capital taxed. That the Lesonis did not respond to the requests of the previous two years suggests an attempt to resist imperial domination.

Tribute from the subject populations was collected throughout the Empire by Persian satrapal officials and after being converted to silver ingots, sent on to Susa.<sup>38</sup> Tribute submitted in kind was retained for the use of the Persian governors, viceroys, and satraps, and to pay the many foreign soldiers garrisoned in the provinces.<sup>39</sup> In Judah, the temple in Jerusalem or perhaps the Persian estate at near-by Ramat Raḥel were likely the major collection points of both types of funds, that is, funds intended for the use by foreign soldiers and imperial officials, and the tithe, the funds intended for the operation of the temple and to pay the Levites and the priests.<sup>40</sup> The same committee, the same men, under the direction of the governor, controlled both sets of funds, suggesting in fact that these funds were mingled.<sup>41</sup> Unlike in democratic Athens, where the Athenians controlled public and temple accounts, under the Achaemenids, it was not local Judeans, but Persian officials who controlled these funds. Indeed, this is what it means to be under foreign imperial control.

The proposal that Athenians restricted citizenship to those of Athenian descent and blood in order to keep cultic and public funds from falling into the hands of those with foreign ties cannot be applied to the Judeans, since

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38. Joachim Schaper, "The Jerusalem Temple as an Instrument of the Achaemenid Fiscal Administration," *VT* 45 (1995): 529–39.

39. Fried, *The Priest and the Great King*.

40. Schaper, "Jerusalem Temple"; Schaper, "The Temple Treasury Committee in the Times of Nehemiah and Ezra," *VT* 47 (1997): 200–206.

41. Schaper, "Temple Treasury Committee."

they did not control either temple or public funds. It can be applied to the Persians, however, since they and they alone controlled those accounts. The Persian officials, Ezra and Nehemiah, may have instituted a ban on foreign marriages simply in order to ensure that control of these funds would continue to be restricted to Persian officials and not fall into the hands of the Judeans. More likely they were following orders from the king.

### The Threat of the Intermarriages

Who were involved in the intermarriages in Judah? The men who approached Ezra upon his arrival in Jerusalem to complain about the many intermarriages state that “the commanders and prefects were in this treachery the first” (השרים והסגנים הייתה במעל הזה ראשונה; Ezra 9.2). Who were these “commanders” and “prefects”? The word for “commanders,” שרים, has a clear military connotation. Levine states that “one is called שר because he commands a band of fighters or an organized labor force [which requires soldiers to accompany it].”<sup>42</sup> This is substantiated by Neh 3:9, which refers to שר חצי פלך ירושלם, “commander of half the work-force of the district of Jerusalem.” He would have necessarily been a Persian military officer, appointed by Nehemiah, the Persian governor, and in charge of the garrison stationed in the district. The word translated as “prefects,” סגנים, is Aramaic and occurs numerous times among the Persian period Aramaic papyri from Elephantine. In these texts it refers to Persian satrapal officials who operate just above the level of the Persian provincial governor in the administrative hierarchy of the satrapy (cf. Dan 3:2, 3, etc.).<sup>43</sup> According to their report to Ezra, local Judean families had been intermarrying with Persian military commanders and Persian satrapal officials, presumably contrary to imperial orders. Indeed, these sorts of intermarriages had been going on since the time of Nehemiah, and the orders seem to have come from him only after his visit to the king (Neh 13:23–25). Prior to his trip to Susa, Nehemiah noted without opprobrium that children of Tobiah, the Persian governor of Amman, had intermarried into families of Judean nobles (Neh 6:18). It was only when Nehemiah returns from the king that these marriages provoke his anger, so he may

42. Baruch A. Levine, *Numbers 21–36* (AB 4A; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 96.

43. André Lemaire, “Administration in Fourth-Century B.C.E. Judah in Light of Epigraphy and Numismatics,” *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B. C. E.* (ed. O. Lipschits et al; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 53–74.

have received new instructions from the king during his visit. After his return from his trip to Susa, Nehemiah complains of the marriage of the daughter of Sanballat, the Persian governor of Samaria, to the grandson of the local Judean high priest (Neh 13:28). Thus, both the families of Tobiah, the Persian governor of Amman, and Sanballat, the Persian governor of Samaria, had married into local Judean families (Neh 6:18; 13:4). The officials who approached Ezra upon his arrival to complain about these intermarriages were correct when they said that commanders and prefects were the first in this treachery.

### NO KING IN JUDAH?

The intermarriage ban put in place in Judah on order of the Persian officials, Ezra, and Nehemiah would have had the same purpose as the intermarriage ban put in place in Athens by Pericles—to prevent control over public and temple funds from falling into the wrong hands through intermarriage. By preventing Persian satrapal and provincial officials from fraternizing with and marrying into families of the local indigenous populations, the control of monetary resources—temple and public funds—was assured of remaining under the control of the Persians.

The rights and duties of citizenship in Athens, as elucidated above, were defined by Aristotle as the ability to serve in public office, to serve as juror or judge in a court of law, and in these offices, to manage temple and public funds under the ultimate control of the Athenians themselves. Under the Achaemenids, according to this definition, Judeans were not citizens of Judah, only inhabitants. Except of course for Persians of Judean ancestry whom the Great King sent as his emissaries throughout the empire, they could not serve as public officials, they could not control public funds, they could not serve as judges (and there were no juries). By Aristotle's definition of citizenship it is clear that the only citizens of the Achaemenid Empire were the Persian officials and members of the Persian elites. It was they, represented by Ezra and Nehemiah, who put into effect the marriage ban. There was indeed a king over Judah, but he was Persian and lived in Susa.

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REFERENCES TO ZOROASTRIAN BELIEFS  
AND PRINCIPLES OR AN IMAGE OF THE  
ACHAEMENID COURT IN NEHEMIAH 2:1–10?\*

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The text of Ezra-Nehemiah is one of our main narrative sources for reconstructing the position of the Judeans under the Achaemenids and also for understanding the Judean view of the Achaemenid dominance in the province of Yehud. First of all, I would like to express my view on Ezra-Nehemiah's structure. I consider these to have resulted from the separation of a single unit in the recent authoritative editions of the Hebrew Bible, or at least to have been created at the same period, one which represents a unified reflection of Achaemenid kings. It seems that there was a primary united text in which later editors and commentators added new narrations or omitted information. This opinion is strongly rejected by scholars like Lester Grabbe, who believe in the different and independent traditions of Ezra and Nehemiah which were only related to each other by a later editor or editors. In other words, he considers their proposed unity to be a "secondary one."<sup>1</sup> However, concerning this question, there is still a long-standing and seemingly endless discussion among biblical scholars which is beyond the scope of this paper.<sup>2</sup> I think it is worthwhile to present first the relevant section of Nehemiah for those non-specialized readers who are not so familiar with the biblical texts. It contains a conversation between Nehemiah and Artaxerxes I (r.465–424 B.C.E.) in which

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\* I dedicate this paper to my parents and H.S for their infinite generosity, kindness, and support. I would like to thank Dr. Daniel Sheffield and Jamshid Qahremani, my comrade in arms, who made this article readable.

1. See his *Ezra-Nehemiah* (London: Routledge, 1998), 100.

2. For a brief history of this debate see Tamara C. Eskenazi, "The Structure of Ezra-Nehemiah and the Integrity of the Book," *JBL* 107 (1988): 641–56.

Nehemiah requests the king to allow him to return to Jerusalem in order to rebuild the city and its walls:<sup>3</sup>

In the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was served him, I carried the wine and gave it to the king. Now, I had never been sad in his presence before. So the king said to me, "Why is your face sad, since you are not sick? This can only be sadness of the heart." Then I was very much afraid. I said to the king, "May the king live forever! Why should my face not be sad, when the city, the place of my ancestors' graves, lies waste, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?" Then the king said to me, "What do you request?" So I prayed to the God of heaven. Then I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor with you, I ask that you send me to Judah, to the city of my ancestors' graves, so that I may rebuild it." The king said to me (the queen also was sitting beside him), "How long will you be gone, and when will you return?" So it pleased the king to send me, and I set him a date. Then I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, let letters be given me to the governors of the province Beyond the River, that they may grant me passage until I arrive in Judah; and a letter to Asaph, the keeper of the king's forest, directing him to give me timber to make beams for the gates of the temple fortress, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall occupy." And the king granted me what I asked, for the gracious hand of my God was upon me. Then I came to the governors of the province Beyond the River, and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent officers of the army and cavalry with me. When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard this, it displeased them greatly that someone had come to seek the welfare of the people of Israel. (Neh 2:1–10)

Maybe the favorite and most investigated book of the Bible among scholars of Zoroastrianism is Esther, in which some have proposed several Zoroastrian images and elements, such as references to the Fravardīgān ceremony or to the Ameša Spəntas.<sup>4</sup> A parallel attempt has been made regarding the Ezra-Nehemiah text in general and Neh 2:1–10 in particular by scholars

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3. I have used the NRSV translation in all quotations of the Hebrew Bible.

4. See, respectively, Almut Hintze, "The Greek and Hebrew Versions of the Book of Esther and its Iranian Background," in *Irano-Judaica III* (ed. S. Shaked and A. Netzer; Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi, 1994), 34–39, and James R. Russell, "Zoroastrian Elements in the Book of Esther," in *Irano-Judaica II* (ed. S. Shaked and A. Netzer; Jerusalem, Ben-Zvi, 1990), 33–40.

like Mary Boyce, in her second volume of *A History of Zoroastrianism*,<sup>5</sup> and very recently, following her, by Joseph Fleishman.<sup>6</sup> As a result of these discoveries in the Ezra-Nehemiah text, they think one should at least accept the prevalence of some (perhaps late) Zoroastrian festivals and ideas in the Achaemenid court.

In Boyce's opinion, the expansion of the function of purity laws in Judaism, from matters only related to the temple to observances that were obligatory for every individual in his or her daily life, happened in the Achaemenid period and under the influence of Zoroastrian purity laws.<sup>7</sup> She supposed that this process was mediated by people like Nehemiah, who had to serve as the king's cupbearer in the Zoroastrian Achaemenid court.<sup>8</sup> Since he must have had to know and follow some Zoroastrian purity laws, he probably must have brought some trace of them to Judah when he went there for his mission. It is obvious how much this argument is based on preliminary assumptions. On the one hand, we know only a small amount about purity laws among the Achaemenids, primarily from classical sources.<sup>9</sup> On the other, there is no clear sign of any decisive contact between the Iranian (or Zoroastrian) purity regulations and the Jewish ones, or the influence of the former on the latter in Achaemenid time. However, this does not mean that one can deny outright any relationship between these regulations. What I suggest is that one should be cautious on this matter in the period under discussion, and this is partly due to the limited evidence relating to this type of Achaemenid Zoroastrianism. Moreover, Boyce was just trying to write a history of Zoroastrianism, so she treated all foreign and native information regarding the religious matters of the great kings and their subordinates from the perspective of a scholar of Zoroastrianism. In the case of the Ezra-Nehemiah

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5. *A History of Zoroastrianism: Under the Achaemenians* (HO 8.1.2.2a.2; Leiden: Brill, 1982), 188–90.

6. See his articles "Nehemiah's Request on Behalf of Jerusalem," in *New Perspectives on Ezra-Nehemiah: History and Historiography, Text, Literature, and Interpretation* (ed. Isaac Kalimi; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2012), 241–66, and also "The Rebuilding of the Wall of Jerusalem: Neh 2:1–9 and the Use of Zoroastrian principles," *JNSL* 34 (2008): 59–82.

7. Boyce, *History of Zoroastrianism*, 190.

8. *Ibid.*, 189–90.

9. For the classical references to Achaemenid's purity laws see Albert de Jong, *Traditions of the Magi: Zoroastrianism in Greek and Latin literature* (Religions in the Greco-Roman World 133; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 414–24.

texts, her treatment seemingly disregards the Judean context or that of the Achaemenids, which were not necessarily Zoroastrian matters.

Recently, Joseph Fleishman has also argued for what he believes to be references to Zoroastrian beliefs and festivals in the second chapter of the story of Nehemiah. Fleishman attempts to trace the assumed Zoroastrian influences on some aspects of Judaism in this text and to discover some images and factual reports of Iranian religion in it. He considers the Achaemenids to be true and pious Zoroastrians, probably with the anachronistic presupposition that we know all the features and characteristics of this religion in this period. He believes that Nehemiah, as a wise and opportunistic person and with a thorough knowledge of the Zoroastrian religion, expressed his request to the king Artaxerxes I when and where it was the best to do so (at Nowruz and at a royal banquet). In his opinion, Nehemiah used, with much anxiety and fear, techniques related to deep-rooted Zoroastrian beliefs to get permission to rebuild Jerusalem from the king, who previously had ordered the reconstruction of the temple and the city to stop in Ezra 4:17–22.<sup>10</sup> Among these supposedly Zoroastrian techniques used by Nehemiah, one can point to the reference to Jerusalem as “the city of my ancestors’ graves,” (Neh 2:5) which corresponds to the Zoroastrian respect for the deceased souls or the duties and rituals that a living Zoroastrian ought to do for pleasing his or her ancestors’ souls.<sup>11</sup> The other way to prevail upon the king’s Zoroastrian faith can be found in Nehemiah’s reference to the city being destroyed by fire (Neh 2:3). The point that Fleishman wants to stress in this case is that the fire was used for destruction and desolation, which contradicts Zoroastrian respect for fire, so he could make the king angry with the people who committed such an act. Following on, Fleishman notes the various sacred characters of the fire among Zoroastrians, which all belong to the late form of the religion.<sup>12</sup>

Even if we accept Fleishman’s views on Achaemenid religion and the clear presence of Zoroastrian elements in the text, Nehemiah’s latter argument does not seem very convincing because the Achaemenids themselves likely used fire as a tool to destroy things. The obvious example can be seen in the narrations of Greek authors in which it is mentioned that Xerxes’s

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10. For the identification of Artaxerxes in Neh 2:1–10 with Artaxerxes in Ezra 4 see Fleishman, “Nehemiah’s Request on Behalf of Jerusalem,” 442.

11. Fleishman, “Nehemiah’s Request on Behalf of Jerusalem,” 254–57.

12. *Ibid.*, 257–58.

forces plundered and set fire to the Athenian acropolis.<sup>13</sup> However, it may seem logical in its own right to imagine that respect for deceased souls could soften up Artaxerxes, but there is no real sign in the text itself that it leads to this kind of result. It seems, at any rate, that Fleishman, just like Boyce, was trying to find images and factual reports pertaining to Zoroastrianism in the Ezra-Nehemiah texts. He pursues this idea to the extent that he suggests that one cannot understand the second chapter of Nehemiah without knowledge of Zoroastrian rituals and beliefs. The picture which he draws of the Achaemenid king is of a naively devout man who is manipulated by Nehemiah's slightest religious provocations, a man who has no political prudence. Although the assumed techniques relate to Zoroastrian principles, such an interpretation of a Hebrew text through a Zoroastrian lens, might have some serious consequences for future research in this area. For this reason, I would like to raise two points which are usually neglected by historians of the Zoroastrian and Jewish religions, especially for those who work on comparative studies of biblical texts related to the Achaemenid period and Iranian religions.

The first problem is related to the long-disputed and unsolved discussion of the Achaemenid religion and its characteristics. A general consensus on this matter would not only be helpful to make a significant part of the history of Iranian religions more clear but would also make aspects of the ancient history of Iran in particular and the ancient Middle East in general more accessible. Fortunately, nowadays we can at least speak of a general consensus among scholars that the Achaemenids were Zoroastrian in the broadest sense of the term.<sup>14</sup> Discussion now should focus more on its quality, explaining its specific type, and its probable interactions with other Iranian and non-Iranian traditions. Thanks to the efforts of archeologists, we know now that Elamite traditions did not just have a substantial impact on the political ideology and building of the Persian Empire, but also on the religious-royal gestures of the kings and some religious rituals

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13. See the story of siege and burning of the acropolis and its temple in Herodotus, *Histories* 8.53.

14. For the consensus on the presence of Zoroastrianism in Achaemenid period, see Albert de Jong, *Traditions of the Magi*, 39, especially n. 1, and Philip Kreyenbroek, "Zoroastrianism under the Achaemenians: A Non-Essentialist Approach," in *The World of Achaemenid Persia: History, Art and Society in Iran and the Ancient Near East* (ed. J. Curtis and S. Simpson; London: Tauris, 2010), 103–9.

too.<sup>15</sup> One can find these so-called “Elamite influences” in the borrowing of certain rituals by Persians, such as the *lan* ceremony in the Persepolis Fortification Tablets, or in general similarities between certain royal Achaemenid reliefs, for example of Darius I (r. 522–486 B.C.E.) at Naqš-e Rostam, with Neo-Elamite religious ones (e.g., the Kol-e Farah reliefs at Izeh).<sup>16</sup> Moreover, it is not sheer imagination that some Mesopotamian<sup>17</sup> and Western Iranian religious elements<sup>18</sup> may have had influences on at least the royal Zoroastrian circles in this period. In general, there is a lopsided trend among experts of Zoroastrian studies, who usually only look for Zoroastrian influences on other traditions, while the other side of the relationship and its role has unfortunately remained unexamined. In effect, such scholars do not acknowledge Zoroastrianism to be as dynamic as other religions, experiencing both variation and continuity in different times and places. However, with regard to the Achaemenids, one faces a particular kind of Zoroastrianism about which we lack direct knowledge except for some brief reports by Greek authors, a few vague hints in the

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15. For the assumed Elamite roots of Cyrus the Great and Elamite cultural and political legacy in Iranian empires, see Daniel L. Potts, “Cyrus the Great and the Kingdom of Anshan,” in *The Idea of Iran: Birth of the Persian Empire* (ed. V. S. Curtis and S. Stewart; London: Tauris, 2005), 7–28; and for the continuity of some Elamite religious rituals in Achaemenid Persia, especially the *lan* ceremony, see Shahrokh Razmjou, “The *Lan* Ceremony and other Ritual Ceremonies in the Achaemenid Period: The Persepolis Fortification Tablets,” *Iran* 42 (2004): 103–17, and also Wouter F. M. Henkelman, *The Other Gods Who Are: Studies in Elamite-Iranian Acculturation Based on the Persepolis Fortification Texts* (Achaemenid History 14; Leiden: NINO, 2008), 181–304. Such ideas about Iranian-Elamite religious interactions have also recently had influences on Iranists like Kreyenbroek, “Zoroastrianism under the Achaemenians,” 105.

16. For pictures of these Elamite reliefs, see Daniel L. Potts, *The Archeology of Elam: Formation and Transformation of an Ancient Iranian State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 254–56.

17. One can find traces of Babylonian influence on Zoroastrianism for example in divisions of time and ideas related to astronomy. For these, see Albert de Jong, “Contribution of the Magi,” in *The Idea of Iran: Birth of the Persian Empire* (ed. V. S. Curtis and S. Stewart; London: Tauris, 2005), 94–95, and also for Mesopotamian influence on Iranian culture in Achaemenid period in general see Antonio Panaino, “The Mesopotamian Heritage of Achaemenian Kingship,” in *The Heirs of Assyria* (ed. S. Aro and R. M. Whiting; Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2000), 35–50.

18. For the presence of such elements, which are called by Kreyenbroek the “Magian Tradition,” in the Achaemenid period, see Kreyenbroek, “Zoroastrianism under the Achaemenians,” 105.



royal inscriptions, and other isolated, and ambiguous documents from their heartland and eastern territories.<sup>19</sup> The danger of the approaches adopted by Boyce or Fleishman is their complete reliance on Avestan and Pahlavi traditions to explain the foreign and native evidence on religious or even non-religious references to the Achaemenids. In other words, they force the evidence into an Avestan or Pahlavi mould rather than letting it speak for itself. With this traditional or even orthodox view of the Achaemenid religion, in the sense that we know all its features, they approach foreign texts like Nehemiah or Esther and manage to find some images or factual reports of the king's Zoroastrianism in them. For instance, they perceive a reference to the Nowruz feast in Neh 2:1 (assuming that this is a Zoroastrian or even a specifically Iranian tradition) while there is no definite evidence of this celebration in the Achaemenid period and even in later times.<sup>20</sup> The result is finding references to Zoroastrian elements in the texts which are potentially anachronistic or non-Zoroastrian.

The second problem is related to the neglect of these scholars of the context of the Old Testament. It is difficult, if not impossible, to find facts relating to the Zoroastrian religion in stories such as Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and Daniel. They are so specific to the Judean community that even if they have really borrowed some elements from other religions, or pretend to describe a foreign faith, this cannot be separated from the context in which the texts were composed. While in classical works there are direct references to Zoroaster and his religion and one can distinguish with relative accuracy between reports on the actual religion of the Persians and its Greek interpretations,<sup>21</sup> in biblical texts it seems that the composers have no purpose except emphasizing the unique power of

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19. Skjaervø has tried to show that the Achaemenid inscriptions reveal knowledge of the Avesta and Zoroastrianism, see, e.g., Prods Oktor Skjaervø, "The Achaemenids and the Avesta," in *The Idea of Iran: Birth of the Persian Empire* (ed. V. S. Curtis and S. Stewart; London: Tauris, 2005), 52–84. On the presence of some Zoroastrian rituals, like offerings to A(h)uramazdā and the priests named "Magus" see R.T. Hall-ock, *Persepolis Fortification Tablets* (OIP 92; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969), 223–30. About fourth century Bactrian documents which attest to a kind of Zoroastrian calendar and include the name of some Zoroastrian divinities see, Shaul Shaked and Joseph Naveh, *Ancient Aramaic Documents from Bactria (Fourth Century B.C.E.)* (London: The Khalili Family Trust, 2006), 178–79, 194–95.

20. See de Jong, *Traditions of the Magi*, 384–86.

21. For a thorough discussion on the validity of Greco-Roman historical references to the Iranian religion see de Jong, *Traditions of the Magi*, especially its first chapter.

Yahweh and narrating the fate of Jewish peoples. They do not even claim or pretend to offer works by Greek authors on Iranian religions or other faiths. This lack of explicit information should itself constrain scholars from seeking factual information on Zoroastrianism in these texts. Doing a similar work for biblical literature such as that which Albert de Jong has done on Zoroastrianism in classical texts would be impossible. Therefore, the presence of Zoroastrian ideas about fire, souls, and the celebration of Nowruz in Nehemiah's second chapter are nothing more than the modern researcher's guess. However, I should emphasize that this does not mean that one cannot investigate religious influences from the Iranian side on Judaism or vice versa in areas such as theology, eschatology, et cetera.

In the foregoing, I have tried to argue that the text itself is not intended to give any information on the king's religion, but this does not mean that there are no other historical implications. If one should find any information on Achaemenid history and civilization in this particular dialogue it would be about the empire's court, its rituals, and affairs related to the state. Nehemiah's behavior in not stating his complaint until the king asks him to speak, corresponds with contemporary traditions at the Persian court, according to which courtiers did not have the right to start a conversation with the king; otherwise they would have committed an offence deserving punishment.<sup>22</sup> Nehemiah addresses the king indirectly with the phrase "if it pleases the king" (Neh 2:5), which may be a sign of respect and esteem towards him. This restriction to speak with the king was despite Nehemiah's probable daily relationship with him as his cupbearer (Neh 1:11), one of the highest ranks in the royal court. Nehemiah's request from Artaxerxes to give him the letters addressed to governors in order to let him pass through the province of Beyond the River and to provide for his needs (Neh 2:7–9) shows convincing evidence of the composer's or editor's knowledge of royal correspondence practices. This is confirmed by evidence which we have from other royal travelers in reliable sources. One can find similar cases in the Persepolis Fortification Tablets, which have been named by Hallock as "travel rations" documents,<sup>23</sup> or the letter given by Aršama, Egypt's satrap

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22. For rituals and rules of the Achaemenid court in general and restrictions on communication with the kings in particular see Maria Brosius, "New Out of Old: Court and Court Ceremony in Achaemenid Persia," in *Court and Court Society in Ancient Monarchies* (ed. A. J. S. Spawforth; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 17–57, especially 39–40.

23. See his *Persepolis Fortification Tablets*, 40–45 and 365–440.

in the reign of Darius II (r. 423–405 B.C.E.) to the stewards of his territories settled along the road between Babylon and Egypt in order to provide for the needs of one of his envoys.<sup>24</sup> Familiarity with some royal and court protocol is not revealed only in this particular part of Nehemiah's narration but also in other chapters of the text. For example, in Neh 5:14–19 the protagonist refuses to use an official right, which is named the "food allowance," in order to reduce the heavy burden of several taxes on Judeans. After this generosity, the text enumerates supplies including oxen, sheep, wine, and poultry which were prepared by Nehemiah himself to offer to his guests, including Judeans, officials, and foreign envoys. These accounts bear remarkable similarity to the ration documents of Persepolis workers and travelers.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, we know that satraps and local rulers in the Achaemenid period always tried to imitate the glorious court of their overlords in Susa on a smaller scale, and one example of this was to bring local officials and notables to their tables.<sup>26</sup> This act was in fact a show of control over their servants and guaranteed their loyalty.

These show just the historical facts which one may extract from the conversation, but does this text reflect any specific view on the Achaemenid kings, which is also evidenced throughout the Ezra-Nehemiah story? If yes, what is this picture?

The Old Testament's unprecedented positive image of Achaemenid kings has long been a common opinion among biblical scholars.<sup>27</sup> The weakness of such a theory is that its followers do not pay much attention to opposing views in the texts themselves. Several negative references have also been found.<sup>28</sup> We should not pull these negative images out of

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24. For the letter of Aršama to his stewards see J. M. Lindenberg, *Ancient Aramaic and Hebrew Letters* (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1994), 80–81, and also H. G. M. Williamson, "Ezra and Nehemiah in the Light of the Texts from Persepolis," *BBR* 1 (1991): 58.

25. Williamson, "Ezra and Nehemiah in the Light of the Texts from Persepolis," 50–61.

26. See Brosius, "New Out of Old," 44.

27. For a recent version of this view see Manfred Oeming, "See, We Are Serving Today (Nehemiah 9:36): Nehemiah 9 as a Theological Interpretation of the Persian Period," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (ed. O. Lipschits and M. Oeming; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 571–88, who has argued for a kind of Persian propaganda in Neh 9: 36–37.

28. For example, see Peter R. Ackroyd, "The Biblical Portrayal of Achaemenid Rulers," in *The Roots of the European Tradition* (ed. H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg and J. W.

their individual contexts and try to explain them separately. The immediate impact of such an approach is that a biblical text like Ezra-Nehemiah will have completely different reflections regarding the Achaemenid kings. What seems more important here in our focused reading is the overall picture of the great kings in the whole narration and especially in the chapter we are discussing. The main question here is whether there is any systematic and coherent image, either positive or negative, of the kings and the Achaemenid period? In our dialogue, Nehemiah's fear of his lord is expressed when he brings wine for the king, and the latter perceives a deep sadness in Nehemiah's face. Nehemiah fears the unpredictable reaction of the king to his unusual behavior. His doubt about Artaxerxes fulfilling his request is also confirmed when the king asks Nehemiah for his request. He, as a pious Yahwist, prays to Yahweh to soften the king's heart. When the king orders that his request should be fulfilled, Nehemiah knows that God is the real doer of this grace and prays to him. Therefore, in this dialogue, we find a foreign king whose reactions should inspire fear. The text suggests one should be cautious in dealing with him and also that every positive action done by him comes from God's will, not the king himself. Such an image of the Achaemenid kings can be found in other chapters of Ezra-Nehemiah. There are other descriptions of them, which are in conformity with the above-mentioned characteristics. In the following, one can find or at least interpret such similar references to them and their rule in other parts of the narrative:

(1) Some of the Achaemenid kings like Artaxerxes in the book of Ezra (we are not sure if he is the same king as in Neh 2) prevent the process of the reconstruction of the temple and city, while modern scholars usually praise them for ordering in favor of the Judeans.<sup>29</sup> Their favor and kindness is not constant. In Ezra 4 one can find such an order by Artaxerxes:

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Drijvers; Achaemenid History 5; Leiden: NINO, 1990), 1–16, who focuses more on the image of the Achaemenid kings in the Bible as foreign rulers and believes that they should be compared with the information on other foreign rulers in the Bible such as Assyrians, Babylonians, and Egyptians. See also the illustrative article of Erich Gruen, "Persia through the Jewish Looking-Glass," in *Jewish Perspectives on Hellenistic Rulers* (ed. T. Rajak et al.; Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 53–75, especially 56–62 and 70, and also Rainer Albertz, *Religionsgeschichte Israels in Alttestamentlicher Zeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 457, who deals mostly with the negative portrait of the kings in Neh 9:36–37.

29. For the same argument see E. Gruen, "Persia through the Jewish Looking-Glass," 61.

To Rehum the royal deputy and Shimshai the scribe and the rest of their associates who live in Samaria and in the rest of the province Beyond the River, greeting. And now the letter that you sent to us has been read in translation before me. So I made a decree, and someone searched and discovered that this city has risen against kings from long ago, and that rebellion and sedition have been made in it. Jerusalem has had mighty kings who ruled over the whole province Beyond the River, to whom tribute, custom, and toll were paid. Therefore issue an order that these people be made to cease, and that this city not be rebuilt, until I make a decree. Moreover, take care not to be slack in this matter; why should damage grow to the hurt of the king? (Ezra 4:17–22)

(2) In some cases, Cyrus and Darius are called Babylonian and Assyrian kings respectively,<sup>30</sup> and this shows that for the Judeans they were sometimes regarded as generic foreign rulers, not specific and divine kings of Persia. Furthermore, in the case of Darius, the author says that it was the Lord and not the king's will that made the restoration of the temple possible. This point is repeated again and again whenever the author is referring to Achamenids' involvement in reconstructing the temple.

(3) In Ezra 8:22, the main reason that prevents Ezra from requesting that the king send cavalry and army with him, originates in his fear and doubt that his request will be fulfilled. These emotions were also common for Nehemiah in our dialogue. In addition to these reasons, Ezra had claimed before the king that Yahweh would support him and his group through the journey and might have not wanted to behave contrary to his claim. In fact, he had sought the support of God instead of asking help from the king.

(4) Ezra, while praying and invoking God to forgive the Judeans because of their intermarriages and breaking his laws, says:

From the days of our ancestors to this day we have been deep in guilt, and for our iniquities we, our kings, and our priests have been handed over to the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, to plundering, and to utter shame, as is now the case. But now for a brief moment favor has been shown by the LORD our God, who has left us a remnant, and given us a stake in his holy place, in order that he may brighten our eyes and grant us a little sustenance in our slavery. For we are slaves; yet our God has not forsaken us in our slavery, but has extended to us his

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30. For these titles, see Ezra 5:13 and Ezra 6:22.

steadfast love before the kings of Persia, to give us new life to set up the house of our God, to repair its ruins, and to give us a wall in Judea and Jerusalem. (Ezra 9:7–9)

The text in general thanks God for his permanent grace to the Judeans, despite their ungrateful acts. It is true that the Achaemenid kings help indirectly to repair the city just like the agents of Yahweh, but as the text makes clear, the Judeans still feel themselves captives under the Persian kings. Being under the dominance of the foreign rulers, whether good or bad ones, was not the ideal situation even if these kings benefit Yahweh and his followers.

(5) In another case from Nehemiah's narrative, where Ezra is enumerating the Jewish peoples' historical sins, the word *captive* is again used to describe the current situation of Judeans:

Here we are, slaves to this day—slaves in the land that you gave to our ancestors to enjoy its fruit and its good gifts. Its rich yield goes to the kings whom you have set over us because of our sins; they have power also over our bodies and over our livestock at their pleasure, and we are in great distress. (Neh 9:36–37)

Based on the context, it is not sheer imagination to assume that this period of distress was during the Achaemenid period. In other words, the author or later editors considered this time, despite some relief, a period of foreign sovereignty over their holy land.

(6) As the last example of a different image of the kings in Ezra-Nehe-miah, I would like to focus on one aspect of the kings' role in the story, which is their appearance as tools in God's hands to benefit its people. Most of the proponents of the good and kind images of the Achaemenids consider this role as another positive point which confirms their other assumed examples of such images. In all the orders that the Achaemenid kings issue to resume the various phases of rebuilding the city and its walls, the name of the Judean god appears immediately afterwards as the only stimulating element for such benevolent acts.<sup>31</sup> In fact, these sorts of references bring to mind that in the composer's or composers' opinion the return to the glorious past of the temple and city, as had been current

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31. For example in Ezra 1:1; 6:22; 7:27–28; Neh 2:8.

during the First Temple period, was ordained only by God and not by the initiative of the kings.

Therefore, it seems that in Neh 2 one can find a part of the picture of the Achaemenids and a literary reaction to their dominance over Judah that is found throughout Ezra-Nehemiah, which will be systematically complemented by other similar descriptions in the whole story. The memory of their hegemony in this text is usually expressed like this: the foreign kings whom Judeans should not often count on for support and whom they must sometimes even be afraid of. Sometimes their decisions are in favor of the Judean people and sometimes against them, and when the Achaemenid kings behave according to Judeans' interest, it is not the king's initiative but God's will. Yahweh's followers in the Achaemenid period, despite their much more bearable current condition in comparison with the Babylonian captivity, still know themselves to be slaves. Their distant ambition is to return to the glorious days of David and Solomon. In the end, this reflection of Achaemenid rule in Neh 2 serves rather as a tiny model through which to understand the political memory which the Judeans, or at least the author or later editors of the Ezra-Nehemiah text had regarding the dominance of Achaemenid kings over their land, than a historical reference to Zoroastrian beliefs of kings.

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# FROM REMEMBERING TO EXPECTING THE “MESSIAH”: ACHAEMENID KINGSHIP AS (RE)FORMULATING APOCALYPTIC EXPECTATIONS OF DAVID

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## INTRODUCTION

The thesis in this paper is very simple: that two related aspects of Achaemenid royal theology aided the reformulation of the Judaeans memory of Davidic kingship from one of mere dynastic expectation of native rule to one of eschatological expectation, or, in other words, that it was the experience of Persian kingship that changed David from a messiah with a little “m” to Messiah with a capital “M.” This is premised on three theses that I have partially explored elsewhere and will briefly mention here. First, I argue that one aspect of Achaemenid ideology, at least from Darius I, was the idea of the king as *saošiiant*, or eschatological hero. Second, I argue that there is neither eschatology nor a Messiah in a strict definition of those terms in pre-Persian Yehud. Third, I argue that eschatology is a hermeneutical concept. With these three theses in mind, I will then give an overview of some aspects of Davidic kingship, an overview of some aspects of Persian kingship, and finally explore some ways in which Judaeans kingship was impacted by the experience of Persian kingship. To link Davidic and Maccabean kingship I will contextualize it within the Jerusalem priesthood. On these bases, then, I will argue that the experience of Persian kingship changed some of the ways kingship was conceptualized—and thus Davidic promises “remembered”—within Second Temple Judaism. Or, in other words, when various apocalyptic Judaeans traditions remembered the Davidic dynasty as a model for their eschatological expectations, they were in several respects remembering the Achaemenid dynasty’s vision of kingship.

## THE FIRST SUBTHESIS: THE GREAT KING AS ESCHATOLOGICAL "SAVIOR"

The eschatological dimension of Achaemenid kingship follows the work of several scholars, particularly Hintze, Skjærvø, and Lincoln, and continues an argument I started elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> Darius combined Iranian traditions of epic heroes with a religious tradition of lay worshippers who through their combined efforts enable Ahura Mazda's final victory at the end of time. This is a very important element to Persian kingship, and I discuss it in more detail below. Aspects of the idea that the Great King is a key player in Ahura Mazda's eschatological design to end evil once and for all appear sporadically throughout the royal inscriptions and in a more limited form in the Persian propaganda used during the Greco-Persian wars. In short, the idea involves the king as both a precursor now and a future king as ultimate military and religious savior of the world.

Another important aspect is that while the king was a representative of Ahura Mazda and a prime worshipper, the king was not a priest. Priesthood and kingship were separate offices, in practice and in theory. This is related to the eschatological issue as is also discussed more below.

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1. In particular, Almut Hintze, "The Rise of the Saviour in the Avesta," in *Iran und Turfan: Beiträge Berliner Wissenschaftler, Werner Sundermann zum 60. Geburtstag gewidmet* (ed. C. Reck and P. Zieme; *Iranica* 2; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1995), 77–97; Almut Hintze, "The Saviour and the Dragon in Iranian and Jewish/Christian Eschatology," in *Irano-Judaica IV* (ed. S. Shaked and A. Netzer; Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 1999), 72–90; Prods Oktor Skjærvø, "Avestan Quotations in Old Persian? Literary Sources of the Old Persian Inscriptions," in *Irano-Judaica IV* (ed. S. Shaked and A. Netzer; Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 1999), 1–64; Prods Oktor Skjærvø, "The Achaemenids and the Avesta," in *Birth of the Persian Empire: the Idea of Iran I* (ed. V. S. Curtis and S. Stewart; London: I. B. Tauris, 2005), 52–84; Bruce Lincoln, *Religion, Empire and Torture: the Case of Achaemenian Persia with a Postscript on Abu Ghraib* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Bruce Lincoln, *'Happiness for Mankind': Achaemenian Religion and the Imperial Project* (AcIr 53; Leuven: Peeters, 2012); Jason M. Silverman, "Was There an Achaemenid 'Theology' of Kingship?," in *Religion in the Persian Period: Emerging Judaisms and Other Trends* (ed. D. V. Edelman et al.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, forthcoming).

THE SECOND SUBTHESIS: NO SUCH THING AS  
ESCHATOLOGY OR MESSIANISM WITHIN PRE-PERSIAN JUDAISM

The terms “eschatology” and “messianism” are very contested, and I mean them for present purposes in a strict usage of both, as otherwise they are more obfuscating than useful. Thus “eschatology” refers only to understandings of the ultimate end of the world or individuals and the reasons thereof, and messianism refers to a divinely sent figure participating in redemptive acts associated with a particular eschatology.<sup>2</sup> Understood as such, although controversial, I believe there is no evidence for eschatology or messianism (which depends on eschatology) in Judaeen traditions before at least the Persian period.<sup>3</sup> Most of the passages which biblical scholarship has read as eschatological and/or messianic are either read thus due to the long Christian tradition of reading them in that manner, or through loose use of the terms “eschatology” and “messianism.” This effect is compounded by the clear evidence of later readers’ understanding of such texts as eschatological. Nevertheless, when the typical language of mythology and kingship found throughout the Levant is taken into account, it is clear that what is mistakenly read as eschatological is just typical, hyperbolic, and mythological language.<sup>4</sup> Neither the uses of the terms “on that day” nor “messiah” are in themselves sufficient. Whatever semi-divine pretensions the Davidic dynasty held, they were not eschatologically oriented, as such a concept did not yet exist.

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2. Jason M. Silverman, *Persepolis and Jerusalem: Iranian Influence on the Apocalyptic Hermeneutic* (LHBOTS 558; London: T&T Clark, 2012), 10–12, 217–19, 222–25, 237; cf. Sigmund Mowinckel, *He That Cometh* (trans. G. W. Anderson; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2005), 1; Magne Saebø, “Messianism in Chronicles? Some Remarks to the Old Testament Background of the New Testament Christology,” *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 2 (1980): 87, 91; James H. Charlesworth, “From Messianology to Christology: Problems and Prospects,” in *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity* (ed. J. H. Charlesworth; Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 1992): 3–4; John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and other Ancient Literature* (London: Doubleday, 1995), 11–12; Adela Yarbro Collins and John J. Collins, *King and Messiah as Son of God: Divine, Human, and Angelic Messianic Figures in Biblical and Related Literature* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2008), 1–2.

3. Also argued by Norman Cohn, *Cosmos, Chaos and the World to Come: The Ancient Roots of Apocalyptic Faith* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995).

4. Cf. Jason M. Silverman, “Yes We Can (Hyperbolize)! Ideals, Rhetoric, and Tradition Transmission,” *Journal of the Bible and its Reception* 1 (2014): 263–84.

### THE THIRD SUBTHESIS: THE INTRODUCTION OF ESCHATOLOGY CHANGES STRUCTURES AND EXPECTATIONS

The concept of eschatology is inherently an interpretive one, especially when it is combined with teleology, which is how it is found in both Iranian and Jewish versions. It claims to interpret *history as such*.<sup>5</sup> It provides a scheme by which particular events in the past, the present, and expected in the future can be shaped into a coherent narrative in line with a posited (divine) purpose. It is hard to overemphasize the import of this. It is a hermeneutic which creates a system, and thus will affect everything it touches, by giving it a new significance as part of a greater system. I am convinced that biblical scholars are desensitized to the radicality of this concept due to sheer familiarity from Christian heritage. It represents a major intellectual shift, which has implications for both historiography and theology (e.g., free will/determinism). In the book of Jeremiah the fall of Jerusalem is a work of YHWH; in Daniel it is merely one step in the progression of YHWH's plan for the earth. In Proverbs, righteousness will ensure long life; in the *Parables of Enoch* it will ensure eternity with YHWH. The teleological concerns have expanded. There is a massive leap between the claim that YHWH is at work behind the present moment (and that one knows what this is) and the claim that he is behind the sweep of history (and that one knows what that is).

### JUDAEAN KINGSHIP BEFORE THE PERSIANS

The argument begins with a brief overview of Judaeon kingship, before approaching Persian kingship and how the Persians impacted Judaeon memories and expectations for David.

The focus here is on kingship in Judah, as that is where the Hebrew Bible's primary interest lies, though historically the kingdom of Israel was probably significantly more important.<sup>6</sup> Throughout its existence as a state, Judah was ruled by a dynasty which claimed descent from David. Whether or not David existed as an individual, his name is attested as the ancestral name of the dynasty in several well-known inscriptions.<sup>7</sup> A

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5. Silverman, *Persepolis and Jerusalem*, 222–23, 237–28.

6. E.g., Israel Finkelstein, *The Forgotten Kingdom: The Archaeology and History of Northern Israel* (ANEM 5; Atlanta, Ga.: SBL, 2013), 1.

7. The Mesha Stele and the Tell Dan inscription, though both of these have been



conspicuous aspect of the Judahite kingdom is the length and durability of its dynasty—mythologically at least from c. 1000–587 B.C.E., with only one break in the male Davidic succession under Queen Athaliah. This 500-year succession is quite a contrast to the frequent dynastic changes in the kingdom of Israel during the same period, or indeed in the Neo-Babylonian Empire. Whatever the reason for their longevity, the Davidic dynasts are a significant part of Pre-Persian Judaeen kingship. Though there are traditions of early kingship around the areas of Hebron and Gibeon, Judahite kingship is closely connected with Jerusalem as its capital. Some very old Canaanite traditions around kingship, as known, for example, from Ugarit, were used by the Davidic dynasty in relation to its self-understanding and theology. The psalms in particular transmit some of these traditions, including ones where the king is likened to or called a god.<sup>8</sup> This included the *Chaoskampf* tradition and the importance of royal ancestors. The Rephaim, who sporadically appear throughout the Hebrew text, are the remnants of these semi-divinized royal ancestors. For the former, we have Ps 89;<sup>9</sup> for the latter there was a valley nearby Jerusalem probably connected with this royal and heroic ancestor worship (2 Sam 5 || 1 Chr 14; cf. Josh 18:16; Isa 17:4).

The Davidic kingship was very similar to other Ancient Near Eastern traditions of kingship. The idea of the king as temple-builder was primarily promoted through stories of Solomon. The king was the chief priest and worshipped and patronized YHWH as dynastic and civic deity. The Davidic kings, like other Ancient Near Eastern kings, functioned as priests.<sup>10</sup> This can be seen practically in narrative, as when King Ahaz

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hotly disputed. For the Mesha Stele, John C. L. Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions 1* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), 76, 80 (n. 12) accepts a mention of David and translates it thus; but Smelik in COS 2.23:137 translates it as “his uncle.” For the Tell Dan inscription, see Millard’s translation in COS 2.39:161–62. For discussion which treats דוד as a deity, cf. Philip R Davies, “BYTDWD and SWKT DWYD: A Comparison,” *JSOT* 19 [64] (1994): 23–24.

8. E.g., John Day, “The Canaanite Inheritance of the Israelite Monarchy,” in *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar* (ed. J. Day; JSOTSup 270; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 82, 84; Collins and Collins, *King and Messiah*, 2.

9. Which calls David YHWH’s servant, chosen, anointed, and promises him protection and a dynasty, in the context of the fight against Rahab and the Sea.

10. Cf. Deborah W. Rooke, “Kingship as Priesthood: The Relationship between the High Priesthood and the Monarchy,” in *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient*

installs a new (Assyrian-style) altar and offers the first sacrifices on it, only subsequently instructing and delegating the sacrifices to the priest Uriah (2 Kgs 16). It can be seen in the Jerusalemite mythological complex in Melchizedek, the king and priest of the Most High (Gen 14; Ps 110).

The king was also a (holy) warrior, expected to defend and expand the territories ruled by YHWH. As already noted, there are hints of the use of *Chaoskampf* within this Davidic theology. The so-called “Day of YHWH” with which this was often associated had the divine warrior fighting on behalf of the king, judging those who were the king’s—and thus YHWH’s—enemies. David and his descendants were divinely chosen representatives, though there were also traditions which understood this chosenness as more or less contingent. The original use of the term “messiah”—with a lowercase m—refers to this concept of chosenness and sacrality.<sup>11</sup>

As an example of this conception of the Davidic dynasty, take the famous oracle in Isa 11.

1 A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. 2 The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. 3 His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; 4 but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. 5 Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins. 6 The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and

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*Near East: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar* (ed. J. Day; JSOTSup 270; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), esp. 195–96.

11. The motifs of king as holy warrior, YHWH as divine warrior, and the *Chaoskampf* are separate though related traditions, though they are often conflated in scholarship. For some relevant studies, see Gerhard von Rad, “The Origin of the Concept of the Day of Yahweh,” *JSS* 4 (1959): 97–108; Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), 91–111; Adela Yarbro Collins, *The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation* (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 2001); Nicolas Wyatt, “*There’s Such Divinity Doth Hedge a King*”: *Selected Essays of Nicolas Wyatt on Royal Ideology in Ugarit and Old Testament Literature* (SOTS Monograph Series; Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005); Andrew R. Angel, *Chaos and the Son of Man: The Hebrew Chaoskampf Tradition in the Period 515 BCE to 200 CE* (LSTS 60; London: T & T Clark, 2006).

a little child shall lead them. 7 The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. 8 The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. 9 They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. (NRSV)

This represents a typical hyperbolic or idealistic vision of the rule of a Davidic dynast, with peace, fecundity, and justice.

Although a “Davidic empire” was recorded in Judaeon memory, in reality for much of its history Judah was a small vassal state: first a vassal of the much larger Israelite kingdom, then one of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, then one of a briefly imperial Egypt, and finally one of Babylon. Some scholars have pointed to this ideal Davidic empire as being roughly the same as the Achaemenid sub-satrapy of Abar-Nahara, but that is not quite accurate. Though the exact borders of the sub-satrapy are unclear so far as I am aware, Abar-Nahara was considerably larger than even the ideal Davidic empire, since Abar-Nahara likely included Cyprus and Phoenicia.<sup>12</sup> Thus, the ideal of a Davidic empire is older than the Persian satrapy, even if it was redacted in the Persian period.

#### PERSIAN KINGSHIP

It is generally understood that Cyrus II inherited the imperial conquests of the Neo-Babylonian Empire when he entered Babylon in 539 B.C.E. In title this is likely true, though in practice Yehud may not have been directly controlled until Cambyses's campaign to add Egypt to the empire. In either case, for present purposes it should be noted that there were two forms of

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12. Bruno Jacobs, “The Achaemenid Satrapies,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica* Online (2011): §4, especially 4.2.2. For some discussion of the difficulties involved in delimiting the satrapies, see Christopher Tuplin, “The Administration of the Achaemenid Empire,” in *Coinage and Administration in the Athenian and Persian Empires: The ninth Oxford Symposium on Coinage and Monetary History [held at St. Hilda's College in April 1986]* (ed. I. Carradice; *BAR International Series* 343; Oxford: BAR, 1987), 113–27; Kai Ruffing, “Die Satrapienliste des Dareios: Herodotisches Konstrukt oder Realität?,” *AMI* 41 (2009): 323–48; Vokislav Sarakinski, “The Fallacy of the European Satrapy,” *Živa Antika* 60 (2010): 77–108; Christopher Tuplin, “Managing the World: Herodotus on Achaemenid Imperial Organization,” in *Herodot und das Persische Weltreich* (ed. R. Rollinger, et al.; *CLLeO* 3; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011), 53.

Persian kingship, or at least dynasties—the Teispid line, which ended with Bardiya in 522 B.C.E., and the Achaemenid, which began with Darius I in the same year. Very little concrete evidence survives for Teispid ideology, or in other words, that of Cyrus and Cambyses. Nevertheless, it was likely rather Elamite or Elamite-influenced.<sup>13</sup> The biggest indication of this is the use by Cyrus of the title “King of Anshan” and his inauguration of the paradise system, potentially on an Elamite model.<sup>14</sup> The second dynasty, the Achaemenid, is more “Iranian” in character, though the explicit imperial propaganda derives mostly from the reign of Darius I, and to a lesser extent that of his heir, Xerxes I. This dynasty was particularly successful, something quite striking when compared to the difficulties in Neo-Babylonian kingship previously. Despite assassinations and contests between heirs, the kingship remained within the Achaemenid dynasty from Darius I until Alexander, roughly two hundred years.

Persian kingship continued several common Ancient Near Eastern kingship themes, though they are selected and arranged with differing emphases. The image of the king as warrior continued, though typically with an accent on prowess and skill over against brute violence and terror. Darius boasts of being a skilled archer and horseman, but not of systematically terrorizing the surrounding populations.<sup>15</sup> The king remained the ultimate human protector of justice, both in terms of claims and legal procedures. The Iranian term *Arta* or *Aša*, “truth” or “order,” was key in this respect and prominent in the most common royal throne name, that is, Artaxerxes (Artaxšaça-). A particular element was the king as gardener, something emphasized materially through the imperial-wide paradises, or walled orchards, complete with pavilions, water features, and animals.

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13. E.g., Margaret Cool Root, “The Lioness of Elam: Politics and Dynastic Fecundity at Persepolis,” in *A Persian Perspective: Essays in Memory of Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg* (eds. W. F. M. Henkelman and A. Kuhrt; Achaemenid History 13; Leiden: NINO, 2003), 9–32; Matt Waters, “Cyrus and the Achaemenids,” *Iran* 42 (2004): 91–102; Wouter F. M. Henkelman, *The Other Gods Who Are: Studies in Elamite-Iranian Acculturation Based on the Persepolis Fortification Texts* (Achaemenid History 14; Leiden: NINO, 2008); Javier Álvarez-Mon and Mark B. Garrison, eds., *Elam and Persia* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2011).

14. Henkelman, *Other Gods Who Are*, 441–52.

15. DNb §8 (Roland Grubb Kent, *Old Persian: Grammar, Texts, Lexicon* [New Haven, Conn.: American Oriental Society, 1961], 140; Amélie Kuhrt, *The Persian Empire: A Corpus of Sources from the Achaemenid Period* [single vol. ed.; London: Routledge, 2009], 503–5).

This element was expanded far beyond Neo-Assyrian usage of monumental gardens.<sup>16</sup>

The religious elements of Achaemenid kingship have been highly contentious, and I will confine my comments to a few key issues.<sup>17</sup> Most imme-

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16. Muhammad A. Dandamaev, "Royal Paradeisoi in Babylonia," in *Orientalia J. Duchesne-Guillemin Emerito Oblata* (AcIr 23; Leiden: Brill, 1984), 113–17; David Stronach, "The Garden as a Political Statement: Some Case Studies from the Near East in the First Millennium B.C.," *BAI NS* 4 (1990): 171–82; Christopher Tuplin, *Achaemenid Studies* (Historia 99; Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1996), 90–131; Henkelman, *Other Gods Who Are*, 247–441; Dafna Langgut, et al., "Fossil Pollen Reveals the Secrets of Royal Persian Garden at Ramat Rahel (Jerusalem)," *Palynology* 37 (2013): 1–15; Florian S. Knauf, et al., "Karačamirli: Ein persisches Paradies," *ARTA* 2013.004 (2013); Silverman, "Was There an Achaemenid 'Theology' of Kingship?," §B.

17. For some of the more recent literature, see Gregor Ahn, *Religiöse Herrscherlegitimation im achämenidischen Iran: Die Voraussetzungen und die Struktur ihrer Argumentation* (AcIr 31; Leiden: Brill, 1992); Elspeth R. M. Dusinger, "King or God? Imperial Iconography and the 'Tiarate Head' Coins of Achaemenid Anatolia," in *Across the Anatolian Plateau: Readings in the Archaeology of Ancient Turkey* (ed. D. C. Hopkins; Annual of ASOR 57; Boston: ASOR, 2002), 157–71; Bruno Jacobs, "Die Religion der Achämeniden," in *Pracht und Prunk der Grosskönige: Das persische Weltreich* (ed. A. Koch and E. Rehm; Speyer: Historisches Museum, 2006); Mark B. Garrison, "Visual Representation of the Divine and the Numinous in Early Achaemenid Iran: Old Problems, New Directions," in *Iconography of Deities and Demons in the Ancient Near East*, <http://www.etana.org/node/11307>; Albert de Jong, "Ahura Mazda the Creator," in *The World of Achaemenid Persia: History, Art and Society in Iran and the Ancient Near East* (eds. J. Curtis and S. J. Simpson; London: Tauris, 2010), 85–90; Albert de Jong, "Religion at the Achaemenid Court," in *Der Achämenidenhof/ The Achaemenid Court* (ed. B. Jacobs and R. Rollinger; CLeO 2; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010), 533–58; Erica Ehrenberg, "Dieu et Mon Droit: Kingship in Late Babylonian and Early Persian Times," in *Religion and Power: Divine Kingship in the Ancient World and Beyond* (ed. N. Brisch; OIS 4; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 103–32; Bruce Lincoln, "The Role of Religion in Achaemenian Imperialism," in *Religion and Power: Divine Kingship in the Ancient World and Beyond* (ed. N. Brisch; OIS 4; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); Bruce Lincoln, "Happiness for Mankind": *Achaemenian Religion and the Imperial Project* (AcIr 53; Leuven: Peeters, 2012), 221–42; Margaret Cool Root, "Defining the Divine in Achaemenid Persian Kingship: The View from Bisitun," in *Every Inch a King: Comparative Studies on Kings and Kingship in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds* (ed. L. Mitchell and C. Melville; Rulers and Elites 2; Leiden: Brill, 2013), 23–66; Prods Oktor Skjærvø, "Avesta and Zoroastrianism under the Achaemenids and Early Sasanians," in *Oxford Handbook of Ancient Iran* (ed. D. T. Potts; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 547–65; Prods Oktor Skjærvø, "Achaemenid Religion," *Religion Compass* 8 (2014): 175–87.

diate is the overwhelming presence of Ahura Mazda (written *Auramazdā*) as a creator god and as a royal patron in the royal inscriptions. His visibility is a bit more muted on the ground, though we cannot deal with that here.<sup>18</sup> An important distinction to note is that unlike Marduk, Assur, or YHWH, Ahura Mazda was *not* a warrior god, nor even a younger deity who had usurped his father's role at the top of the pantheon. Little stress has been placed on this aspect of the Persian high god, though it is likely significant. The Persians did indeed have martial deities, but Ahura Mazda was not one of them.<sup>19</sup>

As noted above, I believe one aspect of Achaemenid self-understanding from Darius I onwards was as an eschatological "savior." "Eschatological savior" here means the concept called *saošiiant* in Zoroastrian texts, variously translated as "savior" or "overcomer." This follows Hintze's description of the development of the idea of *saošiiant*.<sup>20</sup> In her analysis of the development from the Old to Young Avesta, the term originally denotes the masses of Ahura Mazda's worshippers, who function as his spiritual army. It is through their good efforts that Ahura Mazda's final victory at the *eschaton* will be achieved. In the younger texts, one of the *saošiiants* gains the status of most victorious (*Yast* 19:89), and he is expected to usher in the final age (*Yasna* 59.27–28; 26:10).<sup>21</sup> This individual was then combined with the oral heroic tradition, and was related to the Indo-Iranian dragon-slaying motif.<sup>22</sup> A later development then sees the *saošiiant* turned into a series of three, but that is post-Achaemenid.

This concept is one that requires a vision of an *eschaton* to make sense. It relates the present activities of the faithful to an expected final victory which fundamentally alters the nature of the universe. In the system as known from the Zoroastrian texts (and transmitted by Plutarch), creation

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18. E.g., Henkelman, *Other Gods Who Are*, 181–304.

19. Both the well-known Mithra and Anāhitā appear to have had martial aspects, to only mention the most prominent.

20. Almut Hintze, "The Rise of the Saviour in the Avesta," in *Iran und Turfan: Beiträge Berliner Wissenschaftler, Werner Sundermann zum 60. Geburtstag gewidmet* (ed. C. Reck and P. Zieme; Iranica 2; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1995), 77–97.

21. Hintze, "Rise of the Saviour," 92.

22. Hintze, "Rise of the Saviour," 93–94; Almut Hintze, "The Saviour and the Dragon in Iranian and Jewish/Christian Eschatology," in *Irano-Judaica IV* (ed. S. Shaked and A. Netzer; Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 1999), 77–78.



and *eschaton* are interrelated, and both the original meaning and its developed meanings make good sense within that system.<sup>23</sup>

There are reasons to see this Iranian tradition as relevant to Persian kingship, and not just a later Zoroastrian elaboration. Skjærvø has seen in the use of *fraša-* in DNb a self-depiction of Darius as the ideal worshipper of Ahura Mazda, matching the god's work both at creation and the eschaton.<sup>24</sup> Two inscriptions describe the work of Ahura Mazda as *fraša-* and four use the same word for the constructions at Susa.<sup>25</sup> Herrenschildt has further related this usage of *fraša-* to the similarly eschatologically nuanced *šiyati*, "happiness," which is a key word in the Achaemenid inscriptions.<sup>26</sup> Though Lincoln pushes the implications of *fraša-* too far,<sup>27</sup> it is a key term that ties the works of Ahura Mazda with those of the Great King. As Lincoln has argued at length, however, the use of *šiyati* and the use of *ahūm. biš*, "healer of existence," are highly illuminating of the Achaemenid theology.<sup>28</sup> Whatever the semantic developments of these terms, the use for

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23. James W. Boyd and Donald A. Crosby, "Is Zoroastrianism Dualistic or Monotheistic?," *JAAR* 47 (1979): 557–88; Mary Boyce, "On the Antiquity of the Zoroastrian Apocalyptic," *BSOAS* 47 (1984): 57–75; cf. Mary Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism: The Early Period* (vol. 1; HO 8.1.2.2A.1; Leiden: Brill, 1975); Mary Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism: Under the Achaemenians* (vol. 2; HO 8.1.2.2A.2; Leiden: Brill, 1982); Albert de Jong, *Traditions of the Magi: Zoroastrianism in Greek and Latin Literature* (Religions in the Greco-Roman World 133; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 39–75; Albert de Jong, "The Contribution of the Magi," in *Birth of the Persian Empire: the Idea of Iran I* (ed. V. S. Curtis and S. Stewart; London: Tauris, 2005), 85–99; Jong, "Ahura Mazda the Creator"; Silverman, *Persepolis and Jerusalem*, 39–75; Almut Hintze, "Monotheism the Zoroastrian Way," *JRAS* 24 (2014): 225–49.

24. Prods Oktor Skjærvø, "Avestan Quotations in Old Persian? Literary Sources of the Old Persian Inscriptions," in *Irano-Judaica IV* (ed. S. Shaked and A. Netzer; Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 1999), 57. Hintze understands this word to mean "evil-free" in the Gathas, Almut Hintze, "Avestan Literature," in *The Literature of Pre-Islamic Iran* (ed. R. E. Emmerick and M. Macuch; London: Tauris, 2009), 12, n. 33.

25. Ahuramazda's work: DNb 2, DSs 1; Darius's palace, DSa 5, DSf 56, DSj 6, DSo 4.

26. Clarisse Herrenschildt, "Vieux-Perse *Šiyāti*," in *La religion iranienne à l'époque achéménide* (ed. J. Kellens; Iranica Antiqua Supp 5; Ghent: Iranica Antiqua, 1991), 20–21.

27. Lincoln, "Happiness for Mankind," 54–58.

28. Bruce Lincoln, *Religion, Empire and Torture: The Case of Achaemenian Persia with a Postscript on Abu Ghraib* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), though instead of "eschatology" he uses the terms election, dualism, and soteriological mission (95); Lincoln, "Happiness for Mankind," 11, 16.



both the works of Ahura Mazda and Darius are a significant linkage.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, Skjærvø sees Darius depicting himself as the *saošiiant* in DSf 15–18, through parallels to *Yasna* 48:12.<sup>30</sup> Thus, it is Skjærvø's opinion that the Achaemenid kings from Darius onwards saw themselves as *saošiiants*.<sup>31</sup> This suggestion must be related to the greater context in which these terms are utilized: the creation prologues in the OP inscriptions. The unprecedented role of creation theology in Achaemenid inscriptions combined with the intimate tie between creation and *eschaton* in the Iranian traditions bolsters the eschatological coloring of these terms.<sup>32</sup>

Kingsley has argued that several fragments in the Greek authors attest to the use by Xerxes of propaganda depicting his war against Greece as eschatological and himself as *saošiiant*.<sup>33</sup> If true, this strengthens the readings of such a subtext in the royal inscriptions, and it shows that the idea was more widely disseminated and used within the empire. It is most likely that the fall of the Achaemenid Empire led to increased eschatological speculations and expectations in this regard among Persian communities, and that a reflex of this sort of reaction can be seen in the very late redactions of it in the well-known *Zand-i Wahman Yašn*.<sup>34</sup>

Related to this understanding of the king as *saošiiant* is a distinction which the Achaemenids made between kingship and priesthood, something different from other Ancient Near Eastern conceptions of kingship. There are four bases for this understanding at present: (1) the myth in the *Vīdēvdād* 2 of the primal king Yima rejecting priesthood and accepting

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29. Discussed in H. W. Bailey, *Zoroastrian Problems in the Ninth-Century Books* (Ratanbai Katrak Lectures; Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), viii–xiii; Almut Hintze, “Frašō. kərəti,” *Encyclopædia Iranica* 10(2000): 190–92; Lincoln, “Happiness for Mankind”, 50–51, 192–93, 200.

30. Skjærvø, “Avestan Quotations,” 58.

31. Prods Oktor Skjærvø, “The Achaemenids and the Avesta,” in *Birth of the Persian Empire: the Idea of Iran I* (ed. V. S. Curtis and S. Stewart; London: Tauris, 2005), 80. Cf. Skjærvø, “Avesta and Zoroastrianism under the Achaemenids and Early Sasanians,” 554–56.

32. Cf. Almut Hintze, “Monotheismus zoroastrischer Art,” In *Echnaton und Zarathustra: Zur Genese und Dynamik des Monotheismus* (ed. J. Assmann and H. Strohmann; Lindauer Symposien für Religionsforschung 3; Munich: Fink, 2012), 63–92. I am expanding on OP creation elsewhere.

33. Peter Kingsley, “Meetings with Magi: Iranian Themes among the Greeks, from Xanthus of Lydia to Plato's Academy,” *JRAS* 5 (1995): 173–209.

34. Silverman, *Persepolis and Jerusalem*, 149–70.

kingship as a way to serve Ahura Mazda.<sup>35</sup> This myth gives a very clear aetiology for a non-priestly way to serve the creator, and this is by universal kingship. That Yima was known in Fars under Darius is known from the onomastics of the Persepolis Fortification Tablets. (2) The distinction between the king and priests in Achaemenid art. By this I mean that while a number of seals and other depictions show priests praying before a fire with the *barəsman* (ritual bundle of twigs), the depictions of the Great King rather always show him with a hand raised in deference, blessing, or greeting, rather than worship or prayer.<sup>36</sup> Surely this is deliberate. Similarly, though an argument from silence, none of the OP inscriptions claim a priestly role. They insist on being king and being a worshipper of Ahura Mazda, but there are no priestly prerogatives, as seen, for example, in Neo-Assyria or in Davidic Judah. (3) Darius's depiction of Gaumata as a priest, and thus unfit to rule, on his *apologia* at Bisitun. Even with the debated veracity of this account, depicting the unsuitable liar king as a *priest* is significant.<sup>37</sup> (4) An anecdote in Plutarch, perhaps deriving from Achaemenid ideology, depicts the Great King being awoken daily to fulfill his role for Ahura Mazda.<sup>38</sup> This non-priestly service to god relates to the status as *saošiiant*, since this was a role that could be fulfilled by all Mazda-worshippers, laity included. These four together indicate that this was an important distinction for the Achaemenid kings. This distinction is, in my opinion, quite a radical difference from the general Ancient Near Eastern system where the king, in theory, was the gods' chief priest.<sup>39</sup> Thus while the king still exercised control over temples and especially temple building, he fulfilled a separate office to serve Ahura Mazda.

35. Silverman, “Was There an Achaemenid ‘Theology’ of Kingship?” §A.

36. Mark B. Garrison, “By the Favor of Ahuramazdā: Kingship and the Divine in the Early Achaemenid Period,” in *More than Men, Less Than Gods: Studies on Royal Cult and Imperial Worship* (ed. P. P. Iossif, et al.; Studia Hellenistica 51; Leuven: Peeters, 2011): 35, 39–40. The basic study on iconography remains Margaret Cool Root, *The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art: Essays on the Creation of an Iconography of Empire* (AcIr 19; Leiden: Brill, 1979), for discussion of the hand gesture as greeting or blessing, see 174–6.

37. Lincoln, “*Happiness for Mankind*,” 33 n. 55, even takes the unsuitability of priests for granted.

38. Plutarch, *To an Uneducated Ruler*, 780C–D.

39. Though perhaps a similar understanding had already been held in the Neo-Babylonian Empire.

## JUDAEAN KINGSHIP AFTER THE PERSIANS

At the outset it must be stated that the Persians never restored the Davidic dynasty to their throne, not even in a vassal status. The province of Yehud remained under a Persian governor and satrap for the duration of the empire. This is true even if individual governors, such as Zerubbabel, were in fact descendants of King Jehoiachin. A few key regions were allowed to maintain vassal status at least for a while, but Yehud was never important enough for that. There is also no evidence that the high priests of the temple in Jerusalem usurped the place of the Davidic dynasty, even though Jerusalem itself begins to take on an importance beyond just being the location of the temple. There was simply a Persian king, and his local representative in the form of a governor.<sup>40</sup> There is no reason to speak of a “diarchy.”

I submit that the Achaemenids were accepted by the Yehud elites as rightful kings, or “messiahs” with a little “m,” over Yehud. Not only is Cyrus given this title in Second Isaiah, but the treatment of Darius in Haggai and Zechariah and of the kings in general in Ezra-Nehemiah suggests the same as well. The few despairing notes in Ezra-Nehemiah are no more negative than some of the critiques of monarchy in the Deuteronomistic History. The Persians thus *were* Judaeen kingship in a sense for two hundred years.

Indeed, within the later strands of the Hebrew Bible itself one can observe the Judaeen monarchy being remembered as an Achaemenid monarch, in this case in connection with Solomon. The two Hellenistic Hebrew Bible books that are Solomonic pseudepigraphs (Qoheleth/Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon/Song of Songs) both portray kingship through the institution of the *paradise*. The implications of this typically go unnoticed by biblical commentators beyond noting narrow etymological origins.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, Murphy has even argued that the depiction in Song

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40. Contra such scholars as David M. Goodblatt, *The Monarchic Principle: Studies in Jewish Self-Government in Antiquity* (Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum 38; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994); Sylvie Honigman, “King and Temple in 2 Maccabees: The Case for Continuity,” in *Judah between East and West: The Transition from Persian to Greek Rule (ca. 400–200 BCE)* (ed. L. L. Grabbe and O. Lipschits; LSTS 75; London: T&T Clark, 2011), 91–130.

41. E.g., Qohelet: Arian J. C. Verheij, “Paradise Retried: On Qohelet 2:4–6,” *JSOT* 50 (1991): 80; Thomas Krüger, *Qoheleth* (trans. O. C. Dean Jr.; Hermeneia; Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 2004), 65–66; Ludger Schwienhorst-Schönberger, *Kohelet* (HThKAT; Freiburg: Herder, 2004), 210–11; Song of Solomon: Roland E. Murphy,

of Solomon is utopian, since “no garden in the ancient Near East would have nourished such a wide variety of plants and trees,”<sup>42</sup> apparently without awareness of the importance of variety for the Achaemenid institution. In Qoheleth one can note that the establishment of the *paradise*—פֶּרֶדֶס, both using the loanword and described accurately as a walled garden with a variety of trees and water (Qoh 2:4–6)—is part of the exercise of Qoheleth’s literary kingship. Scholars have noted that this depiction echoes Genesis’s Garden of Eden,<sup>43</sup> and this is no doubt correct, in part. Similarly, in the Song of Solomon, the pleasures the king finds in his lover are described as a luxuriant *paradise*, with water, a wide array of plants and scents (Song 4:12–16)—the latter being a particularly Iranian detail.<sup>44</sup>

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*The Song of Songs* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 1990), 157, 161; Duane Garret and Paul R. House, *Song of Songs/Lamentations* (WBC 23B; Nashville, Tenn.: Nelson, 2004), 195, 197; Yair Zakovitch, *Das Hohelied* (HThKAT; Freiburg: Herder, 2004), 199, 202. Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, “Will the Prophetic Texts from the Hellenistic Period Stand Up, Please!” in *Judah between East and West: The Transition from Persian to Greek Rule (ca. 400–200 BCE)* (ed. L. L. Grabbe and O. Lipschits; LSTS 75; London: T&T Clark, 2011), 258 has even doubted that פֶּרֶדֶס is a Persian loanword. The Achaemenid connection has been noticed by Lincoln, “*Happiness for Mankind*,” 63–65, though without discussing any implications on the Judaeon side. Jan N. Bremmer, *Greek Religion and Culture, the Bible, and the Ancient Near East* (JSRC 8; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 35–56 discusses the concept of *paradise* with reference to the Achaemenids and Hellenistic rulers, but he does not really note how it functioned within Achaemenid royal ideology. The system has also been discussed by John P. Brown, *Israel and Hellas III: The Legacy of Iranian Imperialism and the Individual* (BZAW 299; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2001), 122–50.

42. Murphy, *Song of Songs*, 161.

43. E.g., Verheij, “Paradise Retried: On Qohelet 2:4–6,” 113–15; Krüger, *Qoheleth*, 65–66; Schwienhorst-Schönberger, *Kohelet*, 210–11.

44. Contra Murphy, *The Song of Songs*, 157. On the importance of smell, both negative and positive, Saul Shaked, *Dualism in Transformation: Varieties of Religion in Sasanian Iran* (Jordan Lectures 1991; London: SOAS, 1994), 13. For the Achaemenid ideology, one can note that one word Darius, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes II used for “evil” from which they seek to be protected more literally means “stink” (*gasta*; DNā §5 [=XPh §5], A<sup>2</sup>Sa 5, A<sup>2</sup>Sd, A<sup>2</sup>Ha). Already noted by V. V. Strouve, “Religion of the Achaemenides and Zoroastrianism,” *Cahiers d’Histoire Mondiale* 5 (1959–1960): 541, though in the context of an otherwise unsound argument; Prods Oktor Skjærvø, “Avestan Quotations in Old Persian? Literary Sources of the Old Persian Inscriptions,” in *Irano-Judaica IV* (ed. S. Shaked and A. Netzer; Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 1999): 40; Lincoln, *Religion, Empire and Torture*, 93. Cf. Christian Bartholomae, *Altiranisches*

Four points in relation to these two uses of *paradise* are pertinent for the memory of Judaeen kingship. First, פֶּרֶדִּס is a loanword for a specifically Achaemenid practice that was directly related to Achaemenid self-presentation. Second, these two Hellenistic texts use the loanword with accurate depictions of the ideal type of *paradise*—a wide variety of plants and water, a wall, and scents is not “utopian” but a reflection of its real praxis, some evidence of which has been found at Ramat Raḥel.<sup>45</sup> Third, the other Hebrew occurrence of the loanword (Neh 2:8) is in the context of the actual administration of the Achaemenid Empire. Nehemiah and Ramat Raḥel show that the institution was part of Persian rule within the province and was not available to the Judaeans merely as a Greek impression of the Persians. Fourth, the texts’ echo of Eden is in a similar timeframe as the LXX’s translation of the typical Hebrew “garden” (גַּן) as *paradeisos*, indicating that even Eden was understood at this time as something which resembled the Achaemenid institution more than a general horticultural antecedent. Moreover, both of these texts chose to use the specialized Hebrew loan and not just the “garden variety” term. Therefore, Qoheleth and Song of Solomon are evidence that within the Hellenistic period, the memory of Solomon was at least in one aspect the memory of an Achaemenid style ruler.<sup>46</sup>

Yet the memory of this period of kingship within Yehud remained afterwards. If the Davidic dynasty never regained power in Judah, how can we speak of Judaeen kingship after the Persians? There are three relevant issues, though I will only discuss two of them. One is the so-called *Reš Galuta* or *Nasi’*, found in the Babylonian Talmud, a figure claiming Davidic descent and recognized by the Sassanian Emperors as a Jewish representative.<sup>47</sup> Second is the first independent dynasty after Zedekiah, namely the Maccabaeen priest-kings in the Seleucid era. Third is the devel-

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Wörterbuch (Strassburg: Trübner, 1904), 517, who gives “eklig” for *gasta*-in Avestan, but with meaning of “übelriechend, stinkend” for the form *dužgāntay* (757).

45. Contra Murphy, *Song of Songs*, 161; Garret and House, *Song of Songs/Lamentations*, 195. On the evidence at Ramat Raḥel, see Langgut, et al., “Fossil Pollen,” 1–15.

46. Perhaps in this respect it is worth noting that some actual, physical paradises likely remained behind in former imperial territories, perhaps used by Hellenistic rulers.

47. Geoffrey Herman, *A Prince without a Kingdom: The Exilarch in the Sasanian Era* (Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum 150; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012).

opment within Judaism of messianism. The last two are related issues, and only these latter two are discussed here.

Judah regained at least nominal independence and a crown under the Hasmonean priest-kings, after their revolt against the Seleucids in the second century B.C.E. The Hasmoneans were a priestly family, and following their victories against the Seleucids became the new dynastic high priests. We cannot go into the problems around priestly authority in the late Persian and Ptolemaic periods here.<sup>48</sup> Suffice it to say that the majority of Judaeans appear to have accepted the Hasmoneans as legitimate high priests. Even the sectarian Teacher of Righteousness known from the Dead Sea Scrolls seems to have accepted their priestly legitimacy at first.<sup>49</sup> However, Rooke has made a strong and convincing case that Jewish resistance to the Hasmoneans was created when they claimed the title of kings—or, in other words, by the inappropriate seizing of kingship by priests, and non-Davidic ones at that.<sup>50</sup> (This formal taking of the title king was done either by Aristobulos I or Alexander Jannaeus c. 103 B.C.E.).<sup>51</sup> This is significant even if resistance was not particularly wide-spread, because this highlights the changes through which the Judaeans understanding of kingship had gone since it had last had its own native kings. First, there appears to be discontent over reigning priests, as opposed to priestly kings. A strong divide between the two offices has appeared, one which did not exist under the Davidic kings or the Omride/Israelite kings. Some of this change is no doubt related to the development of purity concerns for the priesthood and the Zadokite theology developed upon their return to Yehud after the Babylonian exile. It is likely, however, that part of this change is due to the Persian concept of two separate and legitimate func-

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48. For some recent work, see Lester L. Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in Second Temple Judaism* 2 (LSTS 68; London: T&T Clark, 2008); Lester L. Grabbe and Oded Lipschits, eds., *Judah between East and West: The Transition from Persian to Greek Rule (ca. 400–200 BCE)* (LSTS 75; London: T&T Clark, 2011); for a recent study of Hasmoneans, see Eyal Regev, *The Hasmoneans: Ideology, Archaeology and Identity* (JASup 10; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013).

49. Especially in the attitudes towards the Council of Absalom and Man of Lies in the *Pešer Habukkuk*.

50. Rooke, “Kingship as Priesthood,” 207; cf. Deborah W. Rooke, *Zadok’s Heirs: The Role and Development of the High Priesthood in Ancient Israel* (Oxford Theological Monographs; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 274–302.

51. Collins, *Scepter and the Star*, 52; Regev, *The Hasmoneans*, 154, 165–66. He strongly rejects opposition to the Hasmoneans, 147–50.

tions, one which has then altered Judaeon understandings of the respective roles of kings and priests. Related to this is, perhaps, the issue of the Davidic dynasty, the longevity of which is paralleled by the Achaemenids' ruling longevity (though the latter's subsequent memory, at least in Iran, was less successful). In this relation are the texts reacting negatively to the fall of the Achaemenid kings, as found in Daniel 2.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, the appearance of messianism within Judaism is largely co-incident with the Antiochean crisis and the rise to power of the Maccabees.<sup>53</sup> It is during these political struggles that speculations and expectations relating to a return of a Davidic king who ushers in the end of time start to appear.<sup>54</sup> It is noteworthy in this regard that the Hasmoneans themselves seem to have allowed for an eschatological David, relieving themselves to some extent of such an ideological burden.<sup>55</sup>

It is within messianism that changes in the understanding of kingship become quite apparent, especially as no native kings had been known until the Hasmoneans. The expected messiahs were almost always Davidic, non-priest kings, who are nonetheless righteous and pious, and who function

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52. Silverman, *Persepolis and Jerusalem*, 149–70; cf. H. H. Rowley, *Darius the Mede and the Four World Empires in the Book of Daniel* (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 2006); J. W. Swain, "The Theory of the Four Monarchies," *Classical Philology* 35 (1940): 1–21; David Flusser, "The Four Empires in the Fourth Sibyl and in the Book of Daniel," *IOS* 2 (1972): 148–75; John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Vision of the Book of Daniel* (HSM 16; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1977), 36–45; Helge S. Kvanvig, *Roots of Apocalyptic: The Mesopotamian Background of the Enoch Figure and the Son of Man* (Wissenschaftliche Monographien Zum Alten und Neuen Testament 61; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1988), 484–502; David Bryan, *Cosmos, Chaos and the Kosher Mentality* (JSPSup 12; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 52–61; Ida Fröhlich, "Time and Times and Half a Time": *Historical Consciousness in the Jewish Literature of the Persian and Hellenistic Periods* (JSPSup 19; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 30–33; John Makujina, "Dismemberment in Dan 2:5 and 3:29 as an Old Persian Idiom, 'To be Made into Parts,'" *JAOS* 119 (1999): 309–12; Josef Wiesehöfer, "The Medes and the Idea of the Succession of Empires in Antiquity," in *Continuity of Empire (?): Assyria, Media, Persia* (ed. G. B. Lanfranchi, et al.; Padova: S.a.r.g.o.n. Editrice e Libreria, 2003), 391–96; Klaus Koch, *Daniel 1. Teilband Dan 1–4* (BKAT 22.1; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2005), 87–243.

53. Collins, *Scepter and the Star*, 31–38; Collins and Collins, *King and Messiah*, 46.

54. Regev, *The Hasmoneans*, 148–49, 163–64, thinks *PsSol* shows that this was only a late Hasmonean reaction. Even if this text is late Hasmonean, it is evidence of a changing paradigm in the understanding of appropriate kingship.

55. E.g., 1 Macc. 2:57. Cf. Regev, *The Hasmoneans*, 130, 170.



usually as warriors and judges. The pre-Persian emphasis on temple-building is lost, even after the temple was again destroyed in 70 C.E. The messiah's relationship to YHWH is instead paramount. There is little to no expectation that this king will come before the final decisive judgment by YHWH, and it is always tied to YHWH's defeat of Israel's enemies.

An example of the differences within the new expectations can be seen in the *Parables of Enoch*, especially 48:1–49:4. Alluding to the Isa 11 passage that we already mentioned, this text expects a figure called the Son of Man, the Anointed One, and the Chosen One, who has been hidden since the Creation of the world and will come to judge all the wicked and usher in the *eschaton*.<sup>56</sup>

As noted above, an element within Darius's kingship program was the king as eschatological savior. In essence, he combined ideas of epic warrior heroes with the theology of the average pious worshipper within an eschatological context to make the king an indispensable part of the system. The new messianic forms of kingship within Judaism are strikingly similar—the king is a pious but not priestly YHWH-worshipper, who becomes indispensable in the end-time scenario of some apocalyptic writers. It is also interesting that temple-building is not important *per se* in this context as well. The fact that for some the Hasmoneans were not suitable dynasts despite being suitable priests appears to have played the part of a partial catalyst for messianic expectations in this regard. This may have only been exacerbated by the rather Hellenized way they enacted their kingship.<sup>57</sup> In fact, as Collins has noted, it is rather difficult to find any proper Messianic expectations prior to the Hasmoneans.

There is, of course, a long gap between the fall of the Persian Empire and the rise of the Hasmoneans. This gap is likely bridged, however, by the Jerusalem priesthood. The above change in conceptions of kingship can be partially ascribed to the priesthood's absorbing a new understanding of

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56. The instance of the “White Bull” at the end of the *Animal Apocalypse* (1 Enoch 90:37–38) is more difficult.

57. Cf. E. S. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1998), Benedikt Eckhardt, *Ethnos und Herrschaft: Politische Figuren jüdischer Identität von Antiochus III. bis Herodes I.* (Studia Judaica 72; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013), is more concerned to show internal debates and changes concerning such matters in a Hellenistic and Roman context. However, Regev, *The Hasmoneans*, 128, 141, 251 argues that their kingship was not on a Hellenistic model.

their roles and their roles vis-à-vis a king. Whereas before the king was the priest *par excellence* who delegated his cultic roles in large part to a priesthood, king and priest were now separate functions serving the divine in different ways. This meant the priesthood gained increased cultic importance and autonomy. This was not a theocracy or diarchy at all, but simply a system with new roles. Even when independence enabled the Maccabean priests to become *de facto* rulers of Judaea, this inherited understanding changed the enactment of their kingship, as Rooke has noted.

#### CONCLUSIONS: IMPACT OF PERSIAN KINGSHIP

In summary, besides the direct political subordination of Yehud by the Persians and their Hellenistic heirs with all of the repercussions thereof, how did Persian kingship impact Judaeian kingship? As we saw, this seems to fall primarily into three aspects: (1) A clearer divide between the roles of the king and the roles of the priests than had been the case under the Davidic kings; the Davidic Messiah is removed from his cultic roles;<sup>58</sup> (2) a strong eschatological expectation for a future king, one which was more than just a political hope for a native dynasty; and (3) a profile of this new king as a pious warrior and judge which drew on and altered the significance of these elements of previous kingly ideologies. No longer was this king simply meant to exercise justice and defend against enemies, but was expected to be part of YHWH's grand, eschatological plans to effect eternal justice and the final defeat of His enemies. Indeed, when the Messiah appears, he appears as a *replacement* for YHWH's pre-exilic martial role. Like the Achaemenid king fighting on behalf of the non-martial Ahura Mazda, the Davidic Messiah has relieved YHWH of such duties. YHWH is free to merely guarantee the victory through his saints and Messiah, rather than in the form of a theophany. Moreover, this is typically understood almost universally, as an empire coterminous with the world, not just a powerful local dynasty as in the old kingdoms. These are significant changes.

It is this context into which the idea of the Messiah in certain apocalypses and the Jesus movement must be set. There was significant debate over expected messianic figures around the turn of the era, but the expec-

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58. To such an extent that the author of Hebrews must once again argue for Jesus's priestly standing.

tations were not simply ones of a returned Davidic heir to an independent throne: the system of expectations was much higher. It is in the universality of the rule and the eschatological underpinning which makes the Messiah look less like the old Canaanite mythology and more like the Achaemenid one. No longer semi-divine quite like previously, nevertheless the Messiah is expected like YHWH's theophany when he comes. To use other phrasing, one could say they expected the Davidic king to be more like an Achaemenid king.

The above brief sketch of the impact of Persian kingship ideas on the Judeans does not imply the elimination or eradication of previous traditions about the Davidic kings, either in the form of texts or oral traditions. Rather, it is a hermeneutical one, in which the paradigms for understanding what a proper king ought to be and do were reformed and reshaped. This is a process in which older traditions received new meanings and emphases. And it must be emphasized it was one on which not all Judeans would have agreed, most spectacularly, no doubt, the supporters of the Hasmoneans or of King Herod. Nevertheless, this same principle of the paradigm-shaping effect of political memory no doubt bears relevance for other, more mundane or day-to-day issues, ones perhaps not so linked with perspectives on the Hasmoneans or kingship. The exploration of the impact of this more broadly within Judaism still deserves consideration.

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## COMING TO TERMS WITH THE PERSIAN EMPIRE: SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS AND RESPONSES

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### INTRODUCTION

The Persian Empire was one of the greatest empires in history, and as such it had a deep impact on history. It encompassed a vast territory reaching from modern Turkey and Egypt in the west to Afghanistan in the east and held the greater part of this area during two full centuries, 539 to 331 B.C.E. In some respects, the empire was a continuation of earlier empires of the Near East, viz. the Neo-Assyrian and the Neo-Babylonian Empires, which had their centers in northern and southern Mesopotamia, respectively, and also encompassed a great part of the Near East. The Persians borrowed much from their predecessors in terms of administration, art, architecture, and the use of royal inscriptions. They borrowed from the diverse civilizations under their sway. Aramaic was to become the major administrative language, and Elamite, Babylonian, and Egyptian (see ch. 9 by Melanie Wasmuth) were regarded as the main languages next to their own Old Persian language, for which a new cuneiform script was developed. It is interesting to see that Greek did not acquire that status, although I assume that a version of the Bisotūn inscription was available in Greek, which Herodotus could have read or have heard about.

In many respects the empire also constituted a break. For the first time, a Near Eastern Empire ruling Mesopotamia had its center outside Mesopotamia, namely in Iran. It did not impose its religion as the royal religion, Akkadian stopped being the language of the empire (a process that had started already under the Assyrians and Babylonians to the benefit of Aramaic), and the resources of empire no longer were arrogated to Mesopotamia, but to Iran. A new god was introduced as an imperial or, in

any case, a royal deity, and the teaching of Zarathuŝtra somehow entered the scene.

This had an impact on all facets of daily life of the Near East and beyond (the Greco-Roman world), during their rule and after. The Greek view of the Persians influenced how the East is seen to this day. Major developments in the religious concepts of the Judeans took place in the Persian period, which in turn shaped religious beliefs and practices in the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic religions, such as views on kingship, the all-powerful notion of God, and eschatological ideas, to name a few. It was also one of the first (not the first, admittedly) big, multi-cultural empires which could be studied in some depth.

The interplay of the impact of empire and its reception can, in my view, best be summarized as “coming to terms with the Achaemenid Empire.” What we have learnt in this volume is that there was no single way to understand or interpret foreign rule, and its imprint on society even after the demise of the empire. This is not surprising. When Germany developed into a huge power in Europe in the 1930s and 1940s, people reacted in diverse ways. Some hailed the Germans as providers of a new and stronger society in a rotten world, others resisted as much as they could, but most people tried to continue their lives in a “normal” way. Let us take some examples from the Netherlands, which was occupied from May 14, 1940 to May 5, 1945. Some people joined the openly pro-German NSB (Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging), others joined commando groups and committed assaults against the German occupation. Some people betrayed Jews to the German authorities; others hid them to avoid their deportation; many people looked the other way. Some people did their “duty” so that the trains left on time, even if it was in the direction of a concentration camp. The “Joodsche Raad” (Jewish Council) was an institution of the German government to organize and rule the Jewish community. It carried out German policies such as the deportation of Jews, which it tried to mitigate at the same time as giving it a sort of legal flavor. The leaders of the “Joodsche Raad” were Abraham Asscher and David Cohen (professor of Ancient History at the University of Amsterdam from 1926 until February 1941, when he was fired because of his Jewish background). In September 1943, the members of the Jewish Council were themselves deported, and the Council was dissolved. Asscher and Cohen survived. Some mayors cooperated with the Germans (NSB party members), others resigned out of principle, and many stayed in office hoping to do damage control. The expression “wartime mayor” has become a standard expression in modern

Dutch to indicate the intricate position of taking responsibility between collaboration and resistance. The “Nederlandsche Unie,” founded on 24 July 1940 by Louis Einthoven, Johannes Linthorst Homan, and Jan de Quay, tried to choose a position in the middle. It was their objective to build up Dutch society in recognition of the new political reality and in collaboration with the German and Dutch authorities. They did not like the German occupation *per se* (although Homan thought that Germany was a welcome buffer against the Soviet Union), but they argued that it should be accepted. The Unie accepted that an “arrangement” for Jewish refugees was necessary, but they rejected measures against Dutch Jews. Jews were members of the Unie, and the Unie never accepted rejection of Jewish membership. Despite this, De Quay opened negotiations with the pro-German “Black Front” of Arnold Meijer and declared a dislike of democracy and the free market. Nonetheless, the Nederlandsche Unie was finally banned by the German authorities when it did not support the German attack on the Soviet Union, and the three founders were placed in an internment camp for prominent Dutch members of society in Sint Michielsgestel in North-Brabant. Despite their dubious attitude during the German occupation, all three had a successful career in Dutch politics after the war. Jan de Quay was minister in the first post-war cabinet, and even prime minister from 1959 to 1963. Einthoven became head of the BVD (National Security Service) until his retirement in 1961, and Homan was active on behalf of the Netherlands in several European organizations which were forerunners of the European Union. It shows how ambivalent Dutch society was towards the “political memory” of Nazi Germany. Many people continued to hate Germany and avoided going there on vacation; many admired the *Wirtschaftswunder* of Germany. German was and remained an obligatory language in Dutch secondary schools (next to English and French). Soccer matches between Germany and Holland were excessively agitated because of the memory of the war, although for later soccer fans the Dutch defeat in the world cup final of 1974 was perhaps a greater trauma than WWII.

Comparable stories can be told for other European countries. I would like to add one example from modern Iran about coming to terms with the major world power of the modern era, the United States of America. Some Iranians are strict Muslims who hate the decadent infidel empire; others long for an American way of life. But even people who yell during demonstrations in the streets of Teheran that the United States is the Great Satan and must be eradicated use a pre-Islamic concept coined in the

Achaemenid Empire (Satan), shout in English, wear American jeans, and use American cellphones. The relationship with the Achaemenid Empire itself is equally ambivalent. The Shah of Persia considered himself to be a direct successor to the Achaemenid Empire, and the *Cyrus Cylinder* as an almost holy object, of which a copy was offered to the United Nations in 1971 as “the first declaration of human rights,” although the regime itself could hardly be regarded as a defender of human rights. For Iranian exiles the cylinder is still a major symbol. In the present Islamic Republic, the situation has changed somewhat, but not completely. For strict Muslims, the Achaemenid Empire is not very important, because it dates from the time of “ignorance” and the Achaemenids prayed to wrong gods. Nevertheless, President Ahmadinejad considered the *Cyrus Cylinder* to be a national monument that should “return” to Iran (although the cylinder was found in present day Iraq), and he personally opened an exhibition in Teheran in 2010 where it was exhibited. Coming to terms with one’s past is a complicated matter indeed.

These short histories of the Netherlands and Iran demonstrate that it is impossible to depict “the attitude” of “the Dutch” towards the Third Reich, or the opinion of “the Iranians” of America or the Achaemenid Empire. It seems to me that a “collective memory” is often difficult to identify. We have to face the same problems when we study the political memory of the Persian Empire in Babylonia, Egypt, Judaea, Lydia, and elsewhere. We have testimonies, but we should not fall into the trap of the “positivist fallacy” (or, better, the “empiricist fallacy”) that the sources (in this case; opinions) we have at our disposal are a sufficient and representative rendering of ancient thought.

When we have studied the present volume, we see that the situation then was as complicated as it is today. In older discussions the situation has often been simplified too much. For too long we learnt that “the” Babylonians detested their last king Nabonidus and hailed the new conqueror Cyrus, and that Jews were pro-Persian because they were allowed to return from exile. Nevertheless, Alexander was welcomed in Egypt and Babylonia, because he freed these countries from Persian occupation. Others argued that the indigenous population resisted the new Greek rulers in the Hellenistic period.<sup>1</sup> And so forth. But the truth is that there

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1. Samuel K. Eddy, *The King Is Dead: Studies in Near Eastern Resistance to Hellenism, 334–31 B.C.* (Lincoln, Nebr.: University of Nebraska Press, 1961).



is no single Babylonian, Judaeen, Egyptian, or Greek opinion of the Achae-menids, during its existence or after its fall. We shall discuss this for the various regions.

### BABYLONIA

As we pointed out in the introduction, the Persian conquest inaugurated an important new episode in the history of Babylonia. It is impossible for us to know how the average Babylonian felt about this event. Many will have expected business as usual, but the practices of their own imperial past (deportation of conquered people and imposition of heavy tributes) did not set a comfortable precedent. What we can do is study a number of scholarly texts and observe the political situation. It is clear that many people were prepared to resist. If we believe the *Nabonidus Chronicle* from Babylon (but see the discussion by Caroline Waerzeggers in ch. 5 and below n. 9), the Babylonian army tried to resist the invasion in the battle of Opis in October 539 B.C.E., but was defeated. It was only after this defeat that the cities of Sippar and Babylon could be taken without battle on 10 and 12 October and that Cyrus, on 9 November, could enter in person. The fact that there was no battle for these cities does not mean that the people welcomed the conqueror. After the defeat they had no choice. According to Herodotus (1.190–191), the Babylonians feared Cyrus very much and prepared for siege.<sup>2</sup> Cyrus took the city by a stratagem (diverting the Euphrates) rather than through fighting. Herodotus adds the well-known detail that the people in the center did not notice its capture, due to the size of the city and the fact that a festival was going on, a detail that we find again in Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 7.5, and in Dan 5. The chronicle declares that Cyrus ordered peace and the continuation of the cult, but it was of course an imposed peace, a *pax Cyriaca*. That at least not all Babylonians were happy about Persian rule is further demonstrated by many revolts, two in the first years of Darius I, two in 484 B.C.E. under Xerxes, the latter with horrible effects for the local clergy, as was demonstrated by Waerzeggers.<sup>3</sup>

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2. In spring, which is at odds with a battle and capture of the city in October. See also below at nn. 6 and 7.

3. Caroline Waerzeggers, "The Babylonian Revolts against Xerxes and the 'End of Archives,'" *AfO* 50 (2003/2004): 150–73.

Apart from resistance there were certainly all kinds of cooperation or acceptance. A hotly debated question is whether or not the clergy of Babylon was fed up with Nabonidus, because he would have promoted the moon god Sîn (to what extent is also debated) and neglected the New Year's festival for ten years, and so welcomed Cyrus as a restorer of order. The main issue in this is how we have to value our main sources: the *Cyrus Cylinder*, the *Verse Account*, and the *Nabonidus Chronicle*, all this in combination with Greek and Biblical evidence.

Let us first of all get rid of a concept of "the" Babylonian clergy. We have no evidence that the Babylonian temple officials were uniformly opposed to or in favor of anyone. It may well be that certain parts of the clergy were indeed critical of Nabonidus. His neglect of the Akītu (New Year) festival was apparently a point of discussion at least, as is also demonstrated by many other chronicles that pay attention to this festival (see below). The *Verse Account* is another exemplum of criticism.<sup>4</sup> It is much too easy to dispose of this document as a piece of propaganda ordained by the new king. It is a satirical literary document that involves in-depth knowledge of cuneiform documents like the royal inscriptions of Nabonidus, the Enūma Anu Enlil texts, and other literary texts.<sup>5</sup> This cannot have been conceived by any Persian official; it must have come from learned circles. The former temple officials from the time of Nabonidus were not dismissed at the accession of Cyrus. We know that the high officials Zēria (*šatammu*, "chief temple administrator") and Rēmūt (*zazakku*, "chief secretary") stayed in office and hailed Cyrus, if we follow Waerzeggers's reconstruction of this part of the *Verse Account* (5.8–28).<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, we have no reason to assume that Zēria and Rēmūt had not been loyal to Nabonidus. In any case, they surrendered and somehow came to terms with the new regime.

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4. Cf. Amélie Kuhrt, "Nabonidus and the Babylonian Priesthood," in *Pagan Priests: Religion and Power in the Ancient World* (ed. M. Beard and J. North; London: Duckworth, 1990), 119–55.

5. Text: Hanspeter Schaudig, *Die Inschriften Nabonids von Babylon und Kyros' des Großen samt den in ihrem Umfeld entstandenen Tendenzschriften. Textausgabe und Grammatik* (AOAT 256; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2001), P1 "Strophengedicht," 563–78. Interpretation: Peter Machinist and Hayim Tadmor, "Heavenly Wisdom," in *The Tablet and the Scroll: Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William W. Hallo* (eds. M. E. Cohen, D. C. Snell, and D. B. Weisberg; Bethesda, Md.: CDL, 1993), 146–51.

6. Caroline Waerzeggers, "Very Cordially Hated in Babylonia? Zēria and Rēmūt in the *Verse Account*," *AoF* 39 (2012): 316–20. Cf. Kristin Kleber, "Zēria, *šatammu* von Esangila und die Entstehungszeit des 'Strophengedichts,'" *NABU* 2007/52.

The same holds true for the *Cyrus Cylinder*.<sup>7</sup> This document is more likely to have been produced at Persian instigation as can be surmised from the openly propagandistic tone, specific expressions as “King of Anšan” and the genealogy of Cyrus. But also this document cannot have been written without the help of Babylonian scholars and scribes (although the scribe of this document seems to have been second rank in view of his many errors and mediocre Akkadian). These scholars, as Waerzeggers elsewhere observes, expressed their hopes that Cyrus would take his duties as king of Babylon and protector of the temple cult more seriously than his predecessor. These hopes, however, were soon destroyed. Cyrus (or his son Cambyses) only once took part in the New Year festival (if at all) and Babylonia became one of the many provinces of the Persian Empire.<sup>8</sup>

The *Nabonidus Chronicle* (ABC 7)<sup>9</sup> is a different story. It has long been accepted (by me, among others) that this chronicle dates to the years immediately after the Persian conquest. Most scholars treat this as an example of the Babylonian chronicle genre, which is characterized by a detached treatment of historical facts, which I do too. Others consider it to be a part of pro-Cyrus propaganda, a point of view I reject. Caroline Waerzeggers (ch. 5 herein) gives a lengthy *status quaestionis*. She now offers a very intriguing new view of the chronicle: it is neither contemporary, nor a typical chronicle, nor a piece of propaganda. It is rather a document from the Hellenistic period (probably the period of Berossus), in which

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7. For a discussion and a translation of the *Cyrus Cylinder* see: R. J. van der Spek, “Cyrus the Great, Exiles, and Foreign Gods: A Comparison of Assyrian and Persian Policies on Subject Nations,” in *Extraction and Control. Studies in Honor of Matthew W. Stolper* (ed. M. Kozuh et al.; SAOC 68; Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2014), 233–64 (with a translation 261–63); for an edition see Schaudig, *Inscripfen*, 550–56.

8. *Nabonidus Chronicle*: see n. 9. Caroline Waerzeggers, “Babylonian Kingship in the Persian Period: Performance and Reception,” in *Exile and Return: The Babylonian Context* (ed. J. Stökl and C. Waerzeggers; BZAW 478; Berlin: De Gruyter, forthcoming). The participation in the New Year rituals can only be derived from a damaged part of the *Nabonidus Chronicle* (see below), where we may read that Cyrus (or Cambyses) made offerings (?) “before Bēl and the son of B[ēl (=Nabû) ...]” (ABC 7:3.28 and the following lacuna).

9. A. Kirk Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (TCS 5; Locust Valley, N.Y.: J. J. Augustin, 1975), no. 7 (ABC 7); Jean-Jacques Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles* (SBLWAW 19; Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), no. 26. Cf. also web edition [http://www.livius.org/cg-cm/chronicles/abc7/abc7\\_nabonidus1.html](http://www.livius.org/cg-cm/chronicles/abc7/abc7_nabonidus1.html), based on Grayson’s edition but with additions and corrections.

the scribe comes to terms with the Achaemenid Empire, and in particular the founder of that empire, as a response to Greek views on Cyrus. It is written in “an intertextual web” in “dialogue” with other Babylonian and Greek writers. It emerged in the circle of scholars who wrote astronomical diaries and chronicles (see *BCHP*), and were acquainted, like Berossus, with Greek historiographers such as Herodotus, Xenophon, and Ctesias. Although the document is not dated, the script points to the Hellenistic period, as do the circumstances of the recovery of the tablet as part of the late Achaemenid / early Hellenistic Esagil archive. The Esagil archive contained many copied / reworked / composed epics and chronicles of the past when Babylonian kings such as Nebuchadnezzar I and Nabopolassar successfully fought against foreign kings (cf. also ch. 4 by De Breucker). Hence, the *Nabonidus Chronicle* is not a reliable recording of facts from the recent past, nor is it a propaganda text, but a historiographical view on the Persian conquest of Babylon for a Hellenistic readership. All this is certainly a startling new approach. Waerzeggers rightly observes that the script and some of the points discussed suggest composition or redaction in the early Hellenistic period. The points discussed, such as the death of queens, point to a Hellenistic rather than early Persian interest. The *Nabonidus Chronicle* may have interacted with Herodotus’s account of the death of Cyrus’s wife Cassandane (2.1). The sequence of Cyrus’ conquests from Media, via Lydia to Babylonia, which it shares with Herodotus, may be intentional as a response to Herodotus (cf. Waerzeggers, n. 79), although it may also be accidental as it simply was the order of the campaigns.

Nevertheless, I have a somewhat different view as regards the nature of this text. Even if I accept that the document was written in the Hellenistic period (of which I am not certain: the queens do get attention in chronicles, as Waerzeggers admits, the particular mention of Nabonidus’s mother is not strange in view of her prominent place in history and in inscriptions of Nabonidus, while other parallels are simply due to the fact that they reflect historical reality), I do not accept that it is a completely new composition of this period. Waerzeggers assumes that the author’s sources were the *Cyrus Cylinder*, the royal inscriptions of Nabonidus, the “*Royal Chronicle*” (which is not a chronicle, but a pro-Nabonidus propaganda text),<sup>10</sup> and perhaps

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10. Editions: Wilfred G. Lambert, “A New Source for the Reign of Nabonidus,” *AfO* 22 (1968/1969): 1–8; Schaudig, *Inscripfen*, 590–95. According to Lambert in Seleucid-Parthian script. Probably part of the Esagila archive (see Waerzeggers, ch. 5, at n. 57).

the *Verse Account*, all of which were available to these scholars. This may be true, but that does not account for the numerous specific dates for events, which do not exist in these texts for his entire reign. So I believe that it is a necessary assumption that there was some “proto-Nabonidus Chronicle.” In addition, though the script may be Hellenistic or at least Late Babylonian, as may be assumed from the way the plural sign MEŠ is written, certain signs are certainly *not* Hellenistic such as the use of ša instead of šá in ABC 7: 2.2 and 21 in the expression DINGIR.MEŠ ša GN, “the gods of GN,” which we also encounter in the *Babylonian Chronicle* ABC 1: 3.1, 2 and 29, dated to the reign of Darius (I). This chronicle ends with the accession year of king Šamaš-šuma-ukīn (669 B.C.E.). It was written in the twenty-second year of Darius, and it expressly said that it was “the first section,” suggesting that it was followed by a second section, and perhaps even third section, that may have continued into the early Persian period, as Waerzeggers admits. It also explains why Cyrus could be described as “king of Parsu.”

In my discussion of the chronicles with the help of a “ladder” of characteristics classifying historiographical texts in the widest sense, I have argued that chronicles deviate from true historiography in the fullest sense as they are “not narrative; there is no story, no plot, no introduction or conclusion, nor is there any attempt to explain, to find causes and effects, to see relations between recorded events.”<sup>11</sup> According to Waerzeggers “none of this applies to the *Nabonidus Chronicle*. It narrates, it values, it compares, it explains and it argues. Its format may be that of a chronicle, but it breaks free of the limitations of the genre.” This I can hardly follow. It may be a matter of taste, but I still find this a dull enumeration of facts, year-by-year; to call this “narrative” implies a very wide definition of storytelling. I agree, of course, that objectivity does not exist: the selection of the recorded facts is the choice of the author who shapes the information, and the concerns of the Hellenistic period will have shaped the choices, and I agree that omission of facts colors the information. I still maintain that the text gives no value judgments, nor arguments, nor explanations. We do not find any judgments such as “the king brought evil to the land,” nor is any cause given: there are no words such as “because” or “consequently.” Commentators of chronicles

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11. R. J. van der Spek, “Berossus as a Babylonian Chronicler and Greek Historian,” in *Studies in Ancient Near Eastern World View and Society Presented to Marten Stol on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday* (ed. R. J. van der Spek; Bethesda, Md.: CDL, 2007), 280, quoted by Waerzeggers.

often mistakenly assume that sentences are meaningfully connected, but usually this is not the case. Every new sentence may be regarded as new information with no relation to the preceding sentence. Explicit mention of the anger of a god or king, as frequently used in royal inscriptions, is missing. Though I admit that the chronicle has an interest in comparing Nabonidus with Cyrus, I see no value judgments. Thus the text, even if Hellenistic in final redaction, sticks to the genre of the chronicle by abstaining from value judgments. The reader may make his or her own judgment. It is true that it is reported that the Akītu festival did not take place, but this derived easily from the fact that the king was in Tayma. No value judgment is given that the king was in Tayma. A king on campaign can also be positively evaluated, especially as he had organized the government well in Babylon and had the *šešgallu* (high priest) oversee the ritual “properly” (*kī šalmu*<sup>12</sup>) as far as was possible in absence of the king. When Nabonidus returned, the Akītu festival in its entirety was conducted “properly,” that is, according to the rules (*kī šalmu*, 3.).

The repetitious recording of the absence of the Akītu festival indeed demonstrates the interest of chroniclers, as this topic is recorded in many other chronicles, such as the *Akītu Chronicle* (ABC 16), the *Esarhaddon Chronicle* (ABC 14), the *Šamaš-šuma-ukīn Chronicle* (ABC 15) and the *Religious Chronicle* (ABC 17). ABC 7 thus stands in a firm chronicle tradition. Our author may have seen the *Ehulhul Cylinder* of Nabonidus, but he probably did not use this source for naming Cyrus king of Anšan (KUR *An-ša-an*, 2.1 and 4), as it was written KUR *An-za-an* (I 27) there. The chronicler may have seen a copy of the *Cyrus Cylinder*, but he did *not* take his information from that document concerning Nabonidus’s removal of the gods of Marad, Kish, and Hursagkalamma, with the note that the gods of Borsippa, Cuthah and Sippar were not deported (3.8–12). Cyrus reports that he brought back the statues of the gods of Aššur, Susa, Akkad, Eshnunna, Zamban, Me-Turnu, Der, and Gutium (30–32) and refers to the gods that were removed by Nabonidus only as “the gods of Sumer and Akkad,” with a value judgment indeed (“to the anger of the gods,” 33), an addition that is conspicuously missing in the *Nabonidus Chronicle*. There is no reason to assume that the chronicler valued the removal of the gods to Babylon as bad. As was observed by Beaulieu and myself, the removal may

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12. Grayson’s translation: “*as in normal times*” (emphasis original) is unwarranted. Glassner follows this translation (without italics).

be regarded a pious deed, as it defends the statues against the attacks of the enemy, and in so doing the king hoped to acquire the support of these gods.<sup>13</sup> If the chronicler used the *Cyrus Cylinder* and the *Verse Account* and wanted to depict Nabonidus in dark colors, he would certainly mention the latter's preference for Šin, which is not the case.<sup>14</sup>

Another point of interest is the report on the death of two important women, the death of the mother of Nabonidus (2.13–15) and the wife of Cyrus (3.22–24). The fact that these women get so much attention may indeed be due to Hellenistic influence, as Waerzeggers observes. We see this interest in many Greek inscriptions and in the Ezida inscription of Antiochus I, mentioning his wife Stratonice. On the other hand, as Waerzeggers admits, deaths of queens were mentioned earlier in chronicles, and especially the death of the mother of Nabonidus, who even had set up a stela in her own name<sup>15</sup>, must have had impact. So indeed, Hellenistic zeitgeist may well be present, but again difficult to prove. And again I can detect no value judgement. Both queens are appropriately mourned. One might even argue that Cyrus imitates Nabonidus in this. Everything still fits in with the interest of chronicle composers, which lies in the interpretation of omens. Thus the issues of the chronicles concur with the issues of the omens: accessions and deaths of kings (and queens), battles, plagues, and some cultic events as the Akītu festival. All this we have in the *Nabonidus Chronicle*. The method is that of the authors of the astronomical diaries (possibly the same persons) who recorded the “events” in the sky. They also made their choices what to record and what not, but what they recorded, be it lunar eclipses or movements of planets in the sky, is reliable. This also explains the use of archaic geographical terms in chronicles, such as Elam, Umman-manda, Hanī, Hatti, Subartu, Amurru. It is used because of their occurrence in omens, and it makes these designations timeless. That it is not negative is exemplified by the fact that, e.g., the Umman-manda come to the aid of Nabopolassar (*ABC* 3:59 and 65) and Ugbaru is the governor of Gutium and the Gutians protect the temple (*ABC* 7:16–18). Even though it is *not* historiography in the fullest sense, the related facts

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13. Paul-Alain Beaulieu, “An Episode in the Fall of Babylon to the Persians,” *JNES* 52 (1993): 241–61; van der Spek, “Cyrus the Great,” 254.

14. Note that chronicle BCHP 5 reports that Antiochus, the crown prince, visited two temples of the moon god Sin, Egišnugal and Enitenna, and performed regular offerings, also without value judgment.

15. Two Adad-Guppi Stelas from Harran, Schaudig, *Inscripfen*, 500–13.



are reliable.<sup>16</sup> Thus, it is very difficult to glean opinions about the Persian Empire from this chronicle. About Cyrus and Nabonidus both negative and positive notations are made. Cyrus proclaims peace to the Babylonians (3.18–20) and the rituals in the temple are not disturbed (3.16–18), but before he had slaughtered the people of Akkad (3.13), and later he made his son, dressed in Elamite robes, king of Babylon, which may have disturbed the chronicler, although he does not say so. The “proto-chronicler” may have cherished the same hopes as the author of the *Cyrus Cylinder* and the *Verse Account*, that Cyrus would respect Babylon’s traditions. The same will have been the attitude of early Hellenistic Babylonian scholars. Babylonians in the Persian period were soon disappointed. Alexander made similar promises as Cyrus (and much earlier, Sargon II),<sup>17</sup> but here again the Babylonians were probably not satisfied, though they could see more promising measures. Alexander intended Babylon as his new capital (the Persians never did that) and at least tried to rebuild the temple tower. He had the army level the ground at the tower complex at his return in 323 B.C.E. Antiochus I again made an effort (*BCHP* 6) and he apparently ordered restorations of Ezida and Esagil and in 268 B.C.E. buried the last known royal cylinder in the foundations of Ezida to commemorate this.<sup>18</sup> Alexander, however, did not provide the necessary resources; private donations of Babylonians had to finance it.<sup>19</sup> Babylonia was for a time the core of the Seleucid Empire, but Babylon suffered much from the war for the hegemony over Asia between Seleucus and Antigonus in the years 311 to 308 B.C.E. (*Diadochi Chronicle*, *BCHP* 3) and the city finally was degraded to a second rank position after the founding of Seleucia. This was still in

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16. More about this in van der Spek, “Berossus,” 277–87.

17. For a comparison of the ceremonial entries of Sargon II, Cyrus, and Alexander in Babylon see: Amélie Kuhrt, “Alexander and Babylon,” in *Achaemenid History 5: The Roots of the European Tradition* (ed. H. W. A. M. Sancisi-Weerdenburg and J. W. Drijvers; Leiden: NINO, 1990), 121–30.

18. Photographs, transliterations, translations and commentary by Marten Stol and Bert van der Spek online at [http://www.livius.org/cg-cm/chronicles/antiochus\\_cylinder/antiochus\\_cylinder1.html](http://www.livius.org/cg-cm/chronicles/antiochus_cylinder/antiochus_cylinder1.html).

19. R. J. van der Spek, “The Size and Significance of the Babylonian Temples under the Successors,” in *La Transition entre l’empire achéménide et les royaumes hellénistiques (vers 350–300 av. J.-C.): Actes du colloque organisé au Collège de France par la « Chaire d’histoire et civilisation du monde achéménide et de l’empire d’Alexandre » et le « Réseau international d’études et de recherches achéménides »* (GDR 2538 CNRS), 22–23 novembre 2004, (eds. P. Briant and F. Joannès; Paris: De Boccard, 2006), 269–72.

Babylonia, and it marked Babylonia as a more important province than Persis, the former center of empire, but it was not good for the prominence of the old city. In addition, Syria, with Antioch on the Orontes, gradually turned into the main center of the empire.

What remains is the interesting and important observation that the chronicle might have been produced, or rather adapted, in a later period than is usually assumed, just as the book of Jeremiah was once adapted (Jer 36:32). The same is true, for instance, for the Akitu ritual text.<sup>20</sup> The first editor, Thureau-Dangin,<sup>21</sup> postulated that the document probably dates to the Hellenistic period, and Zimmern<sup>22</sup> argued already in 1922 that this document might well be a free conceptualization of the New year festival ritual for the priesthood of the Esagil temple in Babylon in the Seleucid-Parthian period, a point of view all too often ignored in later studies of the Babylonian Akitu ritual. It is interesting to note the important role of the *šešgallu* in this ritual, which is also at issue in the Nabonidus chronicle (see above).

Another point that may point to a late date for the Nabonidus chronicle is the number of details in the description of some entries, as the chronicles of the Hellenistic period become increasingly more detailed. The same is true for the historical sections of the *Astronomical Diaries*. This may reflect a growing interest in history *per se*. The interactions with Herodotus, the *Dynastic Prophecy*, and Berossus are certainly worth considering, but we must at the same time be wary of reading too much of our own concerns into these texts. Actually, texts like the *Dynastic Prophecy* are more suitable for learning about views on Persian kingship. In this document Nabonidus is valued negatively (2.16: "He will plot evil against Akkad"), while Cyrus is valued positively (2.24: "During his reign Akkad [will live] in security"<sup>23</sup>). How the author thought of the Macedonians is

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20. Marc J. H. Linssen, *The Cults of Uruk and Babylon: The Temple Ritual Texts as Evidence for Hellenistic Cult Practises*, (Cuneiform Monographs 25; Leiden: Brill-Styx, 2004), 215–37; for the date: *ibid.*, 11.

21. François Thureau-Dangin, *Rituels Accadiens* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1921), 127–54.

22. Heinrich Zimmern, "Über Alter und Herkunftsort des babylonischen Neujahrsfestrituals," *ZA* 34 (1922): 192.

23. For my reading of this line as a positive judgment of Cyrus cf. R. J. van der Spek, "Darius III, Alexander the Great and Babylonian Scholarship," in *A Persian Perspective: Essays in Memory of Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg* (ed. W. F. M. Henkelman and A. Kuhrt; Achaemenid History 13; Leiden: NINO, 2003), 319–20; van der Spek,

more difficult to establish due to serious lacunae in the tablet. The least one can say is that it is an exhortation to the new rulers to respect old rights of tax exemptions (*zakûtu*) for ancient religious centers in Babylonia, a time honored theme indeed.

As has been pointed out by Waerzeggers,<sup>24</sup> the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus inaugurated a period in which Babylon would never again be a leading city and central to the empire. The people, especially Babylonian scholars and scribes, had to deal with this. They had a few things to go on. In whatever kind of foreign rule, the best thing one could hope for (apart from recovering independence) is recognition of privileged status, including tax exemption, respect for Marduk as supreme god (at least for Babylonia, but possibly more), respect for religious practices, especially the New Year Festival, and at least some special status as preferential center of power and interest. Waerzeggers also demonstrated that not much came of this and that disappointment was the result.

In their scholarly literature, scribes tried to find comfort in the past, just as Greek intellectuals did in the Roman Empire.<sup>25</sup> They liked to write chronicles about kings who defeated foreign enemies. They stressed the importance of the god Marduk and collected and commented upon documents that promoted his status as supreme god, especially since the days of Nebuchadnezzar I (cf. ch. 3 by Nielsen). The importance of the god is also indicated by the fact that Marduk may use foreign countries to punish Babylonia temporarily. Marduk is depicted as the god who called upon Elam to punish Babylon and who even willingly left Babylon, finally to be returned by Nebuchadnezzar I. It is part of the motif of "divine abandonment," described at length by Morton Cogan,<sup>26</sup> and also well-known from the Hebrew Bible, where God uses Assyrian and Babylonian kings to punish Israel and Judah and even allows Jerusalem and its temple to be destroyed and the treasures to be taken to Babylon. Such a motif we find back in the *Cyrus Cylinder* and the *Verse Account*, where the foreign king Cyrus reinstalls Marduk as supreme deity. The startling reality of 539

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"Cyrus the Great," 251, n. 147. Cf. the, in my view, mistaken interpretation of this line as evidence of a negative view on Cyrus by Wilson, ch. 13, p. 274 at n. 5.

24. Waerzeggers, "Babylonian Kingship in the Persian Period."

25. For this, see ch. 12 by Alesandr Makhelaiuk, at n. 19.

26. Morton Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion: Assyria, Judah and Israel in the Eighth and Seventh Centuries b.c.e.* (SBLMS 19; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1974), 9–21.

B.C.E. is that now a king of Elam is chosen by Marduk as restorer of the godly order. Though Cyrus is not called king of Elam in so many words, it does not alter this fact. He is called King of Anšan, which had been a major city of Elam for millennia. Cyrus might well be of Elamite extraction, as his name is probably Elamite.<sup>27</sup> So, in 539 B.C.E., he was actually the king of Elam. As in Nebuchadnezzar I's days, Elam was an instrument in the hands of Marduk, but different: "the relationship with Persian rule could be expressed as a positive or a negative depending how the tradition was utilized," as Nielsen (ch. 3 herein) rightly observed. As pointed out above, a geographical name like "Elam" need not in itself have negative connotations, though readers might read it in them.

Another point is kingship. The above interpretation of Cyrus is a new coming-to-terms with Achaemenid kingship. It was a way of accepting the new situation. Although Cyrus was a foreign king, he was also accepted as king of Babylon. Many kings are called "king of Babylon" in their official royal titles, and the Persian kings figure in the king lists, just as do their Macedonian successors (see ch. 4 herein by De Breucker). At the same time we see that kingship in itself lost importance in the Babylonian literature. Religious offices and scribal tradition gradually became more important next to and perhaps even instead of kingship. This can be derived from the list of sages and kings, where sages became as important as kings in the early Seleucid period.<sup>28</sup> We see it also in the more important role of the priesthood, or at least the *šešgallu* (or: *ahu rabû*, "high priest," lit. "big brother" = "highest colleague"). In the *Nabonidus Chronicle* (ABC 7 ii 8) as well as in the *Religious Chronicle* (ABC 17 ii 5) it is this officer who takes care that the ritual goes on *kî šalmu*, "properly."

We also see that the *šatammu*, the head of the temple administration, gradually becomes the most important local official, a situation most clearly apparent in the Seleucid period when Babylon was governed by the *šatammu* and the *kiništu* ("temple council," related to Hebrew *knesseth*) of Babylon, a situation not much different from the rule of Jerusalem by the high priest and the Sanhedrin.<sup>29</sup> In addition, there was a governor (*pāhatu*

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27. Wouter F. M. Henkelman, *The Other Gods Who Are: Studies in Elamite-Iranian Acculturation Based on the Persepolis Fortification Texts* (Achaemenid History 14; Leiden: NINO, 2008), 55–57. See also ch. 17 by Jason Silverman, n. 13.

28. Alan Lenzi, "The Uruk List of Kings and Sages and Late Mesopotamian Scholarship," *JANER* 8 (2008): 137–69.

29. Cf. R. J. van der Spek, "The Babylonian City," in *Hellenism in the East: The*

or *šaknu*), just as there was a governor (*pehāh*) in Jerusalem. From the time of Antiochus IV, this person was the head of the Greek community in Babylon. The supremacy of Babylon in Babylonia ended, so that in Uruk Anu could rise to the position of major deity with a new temple (in this book discussed by De Breucker, ch. 4). The new political situation had a deep impact on political and religious thought in Babylonia, but it led to very diverse reactions.

## JUDAH

In Judah similar developments took place. Judaeen kingship in the line of David came to an end with the Babylonian captivity (587/6 B.C.E.). Some people will have longed for a return of the dynasty. Some will have put their expectations in the deposed king Jehoiachin, who was promoted at the court of Babylon during the reign of Amēl-Marduk (Evil-Merodach),<sup>30</sup> but nothing came of it. After the fall of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, some put their hopes in Cyrus. The author of Deutero-Isaiah is the most prominent of them. He even calls Cyrus the “messiah,” the anointed for Judaeen kingship, just as David once was anointed (Isa 45:1). Cyrus is called a “shepherd” (Isa 44:28), a notion that is found twice in the Cyrus Cylinder.<sup>31</sup> In the strong language Isaiah uses (esp. 45:11–13), one may learn

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*Interaction of Greek and Non-Greek Civilizations from Syria to Central Asia after Alexander* (ed. A. Kuhrt and S. Sherwin-White; London: Duckworth, 1987), 57–74; van der Spek, “The Theatre of Babylon in Cuneiform,” in *Veenhof Anniversary Volume: Studies Presented to Klaas R. Veenhof on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (ed. W. H. van Soldt et al.; Leiden: NINO, 2001), 445–56; van der Spek, “Ethnic Segregation in Hellenistic Babylon,” in *Ethnicity in Ancient Mesopotamia: Papers Read at the 48th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Leiden, 1–4 July 2002* (ed. W. H. van Soldt; Leiden: NINO, 2005), 393–408.

30. 2 Kgs 25:27–30 and Jer 28:4. Cf. Irving L. Finkel, “The Lament of Nabû-šumakūn,” in *Babylon: Focus mesopotamischer Geschichte, Wiege früher Gelehrsamkeit, Mythos in der Moderne* (ed. J. Renger; CDOG 2; Saarbrücken: SDV, 1999), 323–42.

31. See Cyrus Cylinder, lines 14 and 25 (in the translation by van der Spek, “Cyrus the Great,” 261–64. In line 25 Irving Finkel translates *āš-te-’-e* as “I sought (the safety),” from *še’û*, “to seek”; see Irving Finkel, *The Cyrus Cylinder: The King of Persia’s proclamation from Ancient Babylon* (London: Tauris, 2013), 4–7, but I prefer to take it from *re’û*, “to shepherd”) following CAD R, s.v. *re’û*, 3b 2’, 302 [contra CAD Š III, s.v. *šalimtu* 1b, 245], because “the safety” (*šalimtu*) is not the object of the verb (the text has *ina šalimti*, “in safety” or “in wellbeing”), and also in view of the many parallels CAD R s.v. *re’û* adduces.

that his point of view met with resistance (see ch. 13 herein by Wilson). Others may have hoped that surviving scions from the house of David; Sheshbazzar, possibly son of Jehoiachin, the “prince” (*nasi*) of Juda (Ezra 1:8) and Zerubbabel, son of Sealthiel, son of Jehoiachin, who was the appointed governor of Judah (Hag 1:1), would restore the line of David. Note that even these people (perhaps due to court life with Jehoiachin) bear Babylonian names: Zēr-Bābili, “Seed of Babylon,” and Šamaš-abaušur, “Shamash, protect the father.” The expectations were especially cherished by the prophets Haggai (2:20–3) and Zechariah (6:9–15). The promised “Branch” in Zech 6:12 may refer to a branch from the tree of David, who would rule “with royal honors” together with the high priest. But it all did not happen and the prophets and scribes realized that it would not happen. Zerubbabel is warned not to trust in his own power (Zech 4:6) and some interpreters see the one who was killed (Zech 12:10) as a reference to an elimination of Zerubbabel, possibly at Persian instigation. Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel disappear from the scene. If there was a revolt, its memory is successfully suppressed.

Thus the people in Judah had to accept the new reality, or rather the continuing reality, that the house of David would not be reinstated. This had several consequences. First, the Persian kings seem to have been recognized as legitimate kings in Judah (see herein chs. 13 by Wilson, 14 by Mitchell, and 17 by Silverman). Wilson describes Cyrus as a kind of Davidide. Ezra and Nehemiah are obedient servants of the Persian king. Even so, it should be noted that obedience is first of all dictated by acceptance of the omnipotence of the king, rather than by genuine sympathy (see ch. 16 herein by Foroutan), we also read an ambiguity of loyalty and fear in the Ahiqar story from the Jewish colony in Elephantine (see ch. 10 herein by Bledsoe).<sup>32</sup> It goes too far, to my mind, to state that “Cyrus’s otherness is consistently blurred” (Wilson, ch. 13 herein, quoting with endorsement

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32. This entails criticism on the power and whims of the king, as we observe in so many stories (e.g. Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel) and in Eccl 10:20. Mitchell (ch. 14, p. 310) rightly notes that the king in the Ahiqar story (Sennacherib) is not a good judge who hears both parties. Ideally the king does so, as is claimed by Darius I in his “Testament” (DNa: 21–24) and he will not listen to secret gossip: “Let not what is spoken to you in secret (lit. in your ears) seem best; hear also what is spoken openly” (DNa 52–55). Nearly the same characteristic of a righteous (Davidic) king we read in Isa 11:3 “He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear,” quoted by Silverman, ch. 17, 359.

Ehud Ben Zvi at n. 65). Isaiah wants to stress this otherness by noting that Cyrus does not know YHWH (Isa 45:4). Christine Mitchell thus rightly concludes that the Persian kings are only acceptable as kings of Judah where Achaemenid and Judean ideologies overlap.

Second, it is accepted that a governor will rule the province of Judah in the name of this king (Nehemiah). Ezra, the scribe was sent by the Persian king to introduce and impose local law.<sup>33</sup> Third, a much more prominent role is assigned to the high priest, and the priesthood in general. Even if there were to be a new king, he should rule alongside the high priest (see above). That the relationship between high priest and governor was not always cordial is exemplified by many passages in Zechariah, Ezra, and Nehemiah. The high priest was increasingly seen as the head of the Judean community and this remained so until the destruction of the Jerusalem temple (and its cult) in 70 C.E. There was very often competition with worldly powers, such as the Tobiad family and Roman governors. The Hasmonean Kingdom witnessed the exceptional situation that the king was also the high priest, a situation resented by some (cf. Silverman, ch. 17, n. 51 herein). The high priest was served by a council, variously indicated as *gerousia* or *sanhedrin*, well-known from Josephus and the New Testament. As we have seen above, there is a marked parallel with the situation in Babylon.

Fourth, the view on kingship in general changed because of all the foregoing. The memory of the Israelite and Judean kingship of former days was cherished, but with important reservations. Kingship was an institution that was permitted by God, but actually resented, as is clear from 1 Sam 8 and Deut 17:14–20. Ideally, the king has to obey the priesthood and the law and he may not behave like a true king with royal paraphernalia (more on this in ch. 13 herein by Wilson). The description of the kings who did rule was far from positive. All kings of the kingdom of Israel and most kings of Judah were condemned as disobedient to God's commands and the law. Only few, such as David, Hezekiah and Josiah, could stand such scrutiny. Finally, Israel and Judah had to succumb to the superpowers of the day, due to the disobedience of kings. Kingship might better be deferred to the coming of an eschatological Messiah and the written law became, as it were, the new ruler of Israel (ch. 17 herein by Silverman).

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33. Karel van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007), 248–51.



Finally, the political memory of the Persian world empire also had impact on Israel's view on God. Now, the Judaeen king was replaced by a "king of the world", Israel's god became the god of the world, and Israel's law would become universal. Isaiah summarizes this eloquently:

Foreigners will follow me. They will love me and worship in my name; they will respect the Sabbath and keep our agreement. I will bring them to my holy mountain, where they will celebrate in my house of worship. Their sacrifices and offerings will always be welcome on my altar. Then my house will be known as a house of worship for all nations.<sup>34</sup>

If indeed the authors of the book of Chronicles knew texts like the Bīsotūn inscription (see chs. 14 by Mitchell and 16 by Foroutan herein), they might have learnt how the god of the king was a universal god, a god of the world. And, just as all the foreign nations bowed to the king, they will bow finally to the god of Israel.<sup>35</sup> This development paved the way for Christianity. So, in a sense, it was not only the Roman Empire that provided for a *praeparatio evangelica*, but the Persian Empire as well.

But, as is usually the case, this is not the only voice. The books of Ezra (Ezra 10) and Nehemiah (Neh 13:23–29) greatly advocate ethnic purity for the people of Israel. Marriages with non-Jews were expressly prohibited and even dissolved. Lisbeth Fried (ch. 15 herein) discovers a remarkable and really intriguing parallel in a law of Pericles (451/0 B.C.E.) that stipulated that Athenian citizens should have both an Athenian father and mother. I think that in both cases it was inspired by the prerogatives of the community: of citizenship (Athens) or membership of the Jewish community, where the voice of the returnees from exile now dominated, rather than fiscal policy, as Fried assumes.<sup>36</sup> In this a remarkable parallel from

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34. Isa 56:6–7 (CEV); see also Isa 49:1, 6, 7, 22–23; 51:4–5; 55:4–5 (deliberate conflation David-Cyrus?); 56:3.

35. All this did not come out of the blue. Mario Liverani sees a connection between the rise of monotheism and the Assyrian Empire in the time of Josiah: Mario Liverani, *Israel's History and the History of Israel* (Translated by C. Pieri and P. R. Davies; London: Equinox, 2005), 204–8.

36. I do not see how Ezra and Nehemiah are in any sense "Persian citizens," as the concept of Persian citizen did not exist in Persia. I also fail to see how the exclusion of non-Jews would help to prevent local rulers from taking possession of royal property, as if Jews were not capable of this. Finally the measure seems to be particularly Jewish, as it is not attested in other parts of the empire. Thus it is not imperial policy.

Dutch history of the mainly Protestant revolt against the Catholic Spanish Empire comes to mind. This revolt, that started c. 1567, led to the exile of many Protestant inhabitants from Holland to Britain and Germany. When it was safe to return, the returnees behaved as if they were the truly “reformed” persons and tried to impose more strict rules for membership of the Reformed Church and for marriage, as is exemplified in a study of the city of Edam in North-Holland.<sup>37</sup>

The strict rule of the law isolated the people of Judah from the world around, an isolation that was later regretted by Hellenizing Jews in the Hellenistic period (1 Macc 1:11). It is an irony of history that, in 445 B.C.E., Pericles could not marry Aspasia, who came from Miletus. Ethnic purity was not the only strategy that was advanced in the Persian period. The author of the book of Ruth expressed serious doubts: was not the Moabite woman Ruth an ancestor of David? All this exemplifies the complexity of coming to terms with a large empire. It is the same controversy we see in modern times as a reaction to globalization. Some embrace international cooperation or welcome the blessings of the European Union; others fear losing their identity and incline to nationalism. We even see adherents of European unification at the same time stressing provincial background as more important than national bonds. There is no single answer to the challenges of a changing and globalizing society.

## EGYPT

Egypt shared the vicissitudes of conquest by the Persian Empire with Babylonia, Judah, and other parts of the Near East. There are differences though. Egypt had had a long history as a strong and wealthy country (in this it differed from Judah), and it was situated at the fringe of the empire (in this it differed from Babylonia). Assyria was the first empire able to conquer it, but it experienced great difficulties in really subduing it. The Persians were more successful, but they had to face many problems as well. After Cambyses had conquered it in 525 B.C.E., there were several insurrections and, for a long time, Egypt was independent again (404–343 B.C.E.), while the last phase of Achaemenid rule before the conquest by Alexander (343–334 B.C.E.) again witnessed political turmoil. Kaper (ch.

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37. Elizabeth Geudeke, *De Classis Edam, 1572–1650. Opbouw van een nieuwe kerk in een verdeelde samenleving*. Dissertation VU University Amsterdam 2008 (Amsterdam: Vereniging voor Nederlandse Kerkgeschiedenis, 2010), 118–20.

6 herein) counts five revolts, and they were sometimes more successful than the sources allow us to know. Kaper demonstrates that the memory of some of these revolts was obliterated deliberately, viz. those by Psamtek III (the Psammenitos of Herodotus 3.10–15) under Cambyzes and Petoubastis IV under Darius I. It was archaeology that helped to extract more information on these political disturbances. This warns us against arguing from silence. As discussed above, it may well be that the role of Zerubabel in Judah may also have been more important than the more or less pro-Persian sources of Nehemiah, Ezra, Haggai, and Zechariah allow us to know.

Udjahorresnet is an example of the other attitude we experience in the sources. He was an Egyptian official who co-operated with the Persian overlords under Cambyzes and Darius. His position may attest to a more liberal policy of the Persians, as is advocated by K. Smoláriková (ch. 7 herein), but he may well be an example of Egyptian co-operation in the sense of the Dutch wartime mayors, or the members of the *Nederlandsche Unie*, while other Egyptians detested the Persians and dreamt of revolt.

That the conquerors may have a high opinion of the conquered is another thing to be reckoned with. This is attested in many imperial states. We know that Assyrian kings respected Babylonian traditions, that Macedonian kings emulated the Greeks, and that Roman boys learned Greek at school. King Darius might indeed have considered Egypt a premium and respected prize of war. He had already acknowledged several languages as more or less official languages, as we know from the Bīsotūn inscription. Elamite and Persian can be viewed as the local languages at the center of the Empire, both of which shaped the Persian identity,<sup>38</sup> but Babylonian was added as well, and Egyptian seems also to be recognized as one of these major languages. Aramaic, not Persian, was chosen as the administrative language for the empire, while Greek probably served as such in Asia Minor, though it seems that it did not receive the same status as Egyptian. Egyptian royal paraphernalia even played a role in Persian royal iconography. Of special interest is a silver stater found at Susa depicting Artaxerxes III in Persian court-dress, but with an Egyptian double crown. Behind the back of the king we read the name of the god Baal of Tarsus (*B'l Trz*, Wasmuth, ch. 9, fig. 2 and n. 61). The reverse depicts a crouched lion. This is a nice example of ethnic diversity in iconography, which continued

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38. Henkelman, *Other Gods Who Are*, 39–57.

after the demise of the Persian Empire. Both god and lion we see on staters from Babylon struck in the reign of Alexander the Great. The choice for Baal of Tarsus on Alexander coins is mostly attributed to the new satrap Mazaios, who was satrap of Cilicia under the Persians (whose name is on some coins), but we see that there is an Achaemenid precedent. The same holds true for the lion staters of Seleucus I.<sup>39</sup> Lions were used by the Achaemenid kings as royal symbol (Wasmuth, ch. 9, n. 69).

When empires fall, the victor takes all, but the deposition or execution of the last king needs justification. This is usually found in unfaithfulness to the gods, oppression of the people, or illegitimate rule. So, Cyrus had Nabonidus portrayed as an upstart and sacrilegious, Alexander could claim that he would take revenge of the sack of Athens in 480 B.C.E., and the Ptolemies in Egypt had to depict the Persian occupation as unlawful and ruthless, making use of well-known Greek prejudices. The tomb of Petosiris dating from the early period occupation shows, however, the same complexities of how people had to come to terms with the occupations with all the positive and negative aspects of daily life. His biography criticizes the turmoil of the Persian occupation, but at the same time he is well inclined to adopt Persian motifs in forms of art (see ch. 8 by Colburn herein). We can observe the same attitude in the architecture of Nabataea, which exhibits many typical Achaemenid features (ch. 2 by Anderson herein) which need not entail explicit admiration or subjection. The Hasmonean kings, whose kingdom arose in revolt against the Seleucid Empire, issued coins adopting the typical Seleucid anchor motif, a motif we encounter again on a prutah issued in the modern state of Israel in 1949. Political memory can be bizarre indeed.

#### LYDIA

Lydia provides another example of the difficult relations between collaboration and resistance. Herodotus (1.154) reports that Cyrus, after the defeat of Croesus, installed a Persian governor (Tabalos) and a Lydian treasurer

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39. Otto Mørkholm, *Early Hellenistic Coinage from the Accession of Alexander to the Peace of Apamea (336–186 B.C.)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 48–49. Frédérique Duyrat, “The Circulation of Coins in Syria and Mesopotamia in the Sixth to First centuries BC,” in *A History of Market Performance from Ancient Babylonia to the Modern World* (ed. R. J. van der Spek, B. van Leeuwen, and J. L. van Zanden; London: Routledge, 2015), 375–78.

(Paktyes) in Sardis. With good reason (Tabalos is a local, rather than a Persian name) Eduard Rung (ch. 1 herein) assumes that both were Lydians. We may have here again an example of the suppression of memory. Herodotus, perhaps following local opinion, adds that the Lydians, led by the Lydian Paktyes, revolted against the Persians Tabalos and Cyrus (1.153), and so makes it a patriotic revolt of Lydians against Persians. As we have seen in other cases, real life does not fit so easily this dichotomy. The same holds true of the later so-called Ionian revolt of Greek tyrants against Darius I in Western Asia Minor. They owed their position to Persian support, were internally divided, and may have had all kinds of reasons for revolt, other than a nationalistic Greek rebellion against her Persian overlords.

#### GREEKS AND ROMANS

The book does not pay much attention to the Greek perception of the Persian Empire, and with good reason. The attitude of the Greeks towards the Persians has been discussed in a myriad of publications, often in combination with general Greek perceptions of the "barbarians." Allow me to discuss it briefly. The attitude of the Greeks is characterized by the same complexity as we observed in the regions discussed above. The disdain of the Greeks for the Persian "barbarians" is well attested. As a matter of fact, the word acquired its negative connotation only after the Persian wars in which the Greeks were successful. Herodotus is nevertheless capable of discussing Persian practices in neutral terms, an approach which fits into the genre of Greek ethnographic literature. The complexity is also apparent in Greek behavior. Although the Persians were detested as enemies and defamed as effeminate Orientals, they were also admired. The Spartan King Pausanias, who defeated the Persians at Plataea in 479 B.C.E., later adopted Persian customs and dress. Themistocles, the victor at Salamis, ended his life as a Persian governor of Magnesia in Asia Minor. It has been argued that the Athenians were inspired by the Apadana in Persepolis when they built the Parthenon,<sup>40</sup> by the tent of Xerxes when they built the Odeion,<sup>41</sup> and by other Persian tents for the Tholos (a round building

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40. A. W. Lawrence, "The Acropolis and Persepolis," *JHS* 71 (1951): 111–19; Margaret C. Root, "The Parthenon Frieze and the Apadana Reliefs at Persepolis: Reassessing a Programmatic Relationship," *AJA* 89 (1985): 103–20.

41. Plutarchus, *Pericles*, 13; Oscar Broneer, "The Tent of Xerxes and the Greek

that served as dining place of the *prytaneis*, the executives of the *Boulē*, the Council of 500).<sup>42</sup> Many Athenians visited the court of the Persian kings.<sup>43</sup> The situation in the fourth century was not very different, when Greeks sought the aid of Persian kings in their mutual conflicts, as is exemplified by the “King’s Peace” of 387 B.C.E. Products of art also exhibit a mixture of disdain and admiration. Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones concludes in a study of fourth-century B.C.E. Greek attitudes towards Persia in texts and images: “When we accept that the process of history can be filtered through non-historical texts and images, we must acknowledge that the Greeks were capable of, and enjoyed, creating a sophisticated interplay with the Persian past.”<sup>44</sup>

It is opportune to pause on the use of political memory of the Persian Empire by Alexander the Great and the Seleucids. Alexander the Great’s conquests were no more than the conquest of one empire, viz. the Persian Empire. So, he was the direct successor to the Achaemenid kings. Pierre Briant refers to him as “the last of the Achaemenids,” as this empire fell apart after Alexander’s death.<sup>45</sup> The attitude of Alexander himself was not so straightforward, and he had to choose between diametrically opposing demands of the time. By posing as Persian king, he irritated the Macedonians and the Greeks, by conceding too much to Macedonian and Greek preferences, he could not well act as Persian king. For the Greeks he had to be anti-Persian, as his campaign was justified by the wish to take revenge of the sack of Athens in 480 B.C.E. Persia was the wretched enemy, and he could not pose as a new Achaemenid king. Yet he *was* the new king of the Persian Empire and the successor to the Achaemenids. So he paid reverence to Cyrus (not too embarrassing, as Cyrus had been valued positively

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Theater,” *University of California Publications in Classical Archaeology* 1.12 (1944): 305–12; Margaret Miller, *Athens and Persia in the Fifth century B.C.: A Study in Cultural Receptivity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 218–42.

42. Dorothy B. Thompson, “The Persian Spoils in Athens,” in *The Aegean and the Near East: Studies Presented to Hetty Goldman on the Occasion of her Seventy-fifth Birthday* (ed. S. S. Weinberg; Locust Valley, N.Y.: J.J. Augustin, 1956), 281–91.

43. Miller, *Athens and Persia*, 27, 89, 109–33.

44. Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones, “The Great Kings of the Fourth Century and the Greek Memory of the Persian Past,” in *Greek Notions of the Past in the Archaic and Classical Eras: History without Historians* (ed. J. Marincola, L. Llewellyn-Jones and C. Maciver; Edinburgh Leventis Studies 6; Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 346.

45. Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 876.

by Xenophon) and to the deceased king, Darius III. He also tried to introduce some court ceremonies, such as the *proskynēsis*, but was thwarted in this. Another point is royal court-dress. In this he chose a middle way. He used a diadem instead of the royal tiara but used the royal Persian robe with the royal sash on occasion. His solution to the problem was that he did not pose as king of Persia, but rather as king of Asia or king of the world. Fredericksmeier concludes that Alexander's kingship in Asia was a unique creation of Alexander himself,<sup>46</sup> but in dialogue of course with the Persian past. This practice was continued by the Seleucids, whose realm was also indicated as Asia.<sup>47</sup> It is not entirely new though, as there was an Achaemenid precedent. The Persian kings were called "king of the lands" = king of the world. Note the Babylonian translation of the title of Antigonus Monophthalmus, *stratēgos tēs Asias*, as "general of the lands" (<sup>14</sup>GAL ERÍN KUR.KUR) in Babylonian administrative documents.<sup>48</sup> Coming to terms with the Persian Empire was a nearly unsolvable task. Alexander's main solution was by way of warfare, to garner recognition through continuing military successes; a time-honored method.

In this book the political memory of Persia in the Roman Empire is discussed by Alesandr Makhlaiuk (ch. 12). The Romans stand further apart in time and place from the Persian Empire, and it is clear that their information is solely derived from Greek literature and thus easily adopts the Greek prejudices. The Romans hardly had opportunities to check Greek sources, but they also had no desire to do so. The writing of history in general has a purpose of discussing or mirroring contemporary issues in the world of the historiographer. This is not only true of Greek and Roman historiographers; modern historians often all too easily follow this. For Roman authors, the Persian Empire was a mirror for their own empire. It was effeminate and degenerate and, as such, a warning for their own time. It fitted in with habitual warnings against the decadence and luxury that supposedly proliferated in the Roman society. Although these concepts are taken from Greek literature, it is sobering to note that the Romans

46. Ernst Fredericksmeier, "Alexander the Great and the Kingdom of Asia," in *Alexander the Great in Fact and Fiction* (ed. A. B. Bosworth and E. J. Baynham; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 136–66, esp. 165.

47. The evidence is nicely collected by Paul J. Kosmin, *The Land of the Elephant Kings: Space, Territory, and Ideology in the Seleucid Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2014), 121–25.

48. CT 49 34: 24.



themselves often looked down on soft Greek habits that were compared to Roman militancy, and so did the Athenians vis-à-vis their Ionian kinsmen, who lived in Asia Minor. It seems as though one common trait is that effeminacy comes always from the east.

#### INVENTED TRADITION

So far, I have not paid much explicit attention to the fact that much of the political “memory” is not memory at all, but constructed memory for the benefit of local and later interests. These views do tell more about the authors who depict the Persians than about the Persians themselves. The Cyrus Cylinder reveals more about a desired attitude of the Persian conqueror (desired by the Babylonian temple elite and for propagandistic purposes granted by Cyrus) than the real behavior of Cyrus. The Satrap Stela of Ptolemy I, describing repatriation of spoilt divine statues, does not give reliable information about Persian policy as regards the treatment of gods. The authors of Isaiah and Nehemiah present a rather Judeo-centered view of the King’s interests and plans. The Greek and Roman view of the Persian barbarians tells us more about Greeks and Romans than about Persians.

Benedikt Eckhardt (ch. 11 herein) pays specific attention to this issue. He describes a few later, small kingdoms that explicitly use the memory of the Persian kingdom to either advance their own dynasty with a Persian flavor (in the case of the dynasties of the kings of Commagene and of Pontus and the Fratarakā dynasts in Persia) or to adduce the Persians as an example of the wretched enemy, as in the case of the Hasmonean kings, in whose time probably the book of Esther was produced. The Persian king Ahasveros is a kind of alter ego of Antiochus IV and is depicted as persecutor of Jews, disregarding the right of the Jews to live according to their ancestral laws (Esth 2:8–9). Thus, where Isaiah and Ezra-Nehemiah stress the wish of the Persian king to observe Jewish rights, it is now a Persian king that does the opposite. It is perhaps not coincidental that they used Xerxes (if Ahasveros stands for Xerxes, and not Artaxerxes, as is done in the Septuagint and Josephus), who had a really bad reputation in the Greek world. The author of Daniel used another bad guy, a Babylonian this time, viz. Nebuchadnezzar, as a model of Antiochus IV. It is to be noted that both repented, thus giving Antiochus a way out. Whatever the stories are, they only illustrate the intentions and concerns of the authors.

## CONCLUSION: THE IMPACT OF THE PERSIAN EMPIRE

When we review the uses of the political memory of the Achaemenid Empire it is difficult to draw general conclusions as to how this memory was shaped. Many different memories were created that suited the needs of the day and that suited the authors of texts and the artists. So we often see contradictory memories of the Persians at the same time. The interest of the beholder is what matters. This could be a way of living and working under the sway of the Persians, or the view of outsiders who had to cope with them in wartime, trade, and negotiations, or had to deal with them as part of their history. The memory was more fragmentary than collective, although certain prejudices prevailed.

This does not mean that all history writing concerning the Persians can be discarded as unreliable. Historiography may give reliable facts, but these facts (even if they are correct *per se*) betray the interest and the world view of the author. That was so in antiquity just as it is today. The Persian past may also be used for making completely invented stories, such as the book of Esther. Modern historians have to treat these texts and works of art always taking into account the five W's: Who wrote (made) what, where, when, and why?

Allow me, finally, as a modern historian, to make a few remarks about the impact of the Persian Empire and the memory of it on the present world. In the first place, the Persian Empire was the neighbor and partly ruler of the Greek world. It was the United States of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E., and it is evident that Greek civilization was shaped by the interaction with that neighbor, be it by learning from it or by being challenged to behave in antithesis. The mainstream Greek view of the Persians as effeminate, slavish, and irrational Orientals has shaped the European view of the East for centuries. The impact of the Persian Empire was *a fortiori* strong on the Hellenistic empires that emerged on the soil of their Persian predecessor. The Hellenistic empires, in their turn, were a challenge for the Romans. The Romans overcame these empires, which nevertheless left their imprints as examples of empire when the Roman monarchy came into being. The imprint of the Roman Empire on European civilization is seldom contested.

As we have seen, the Persian Empire also helped to make the religion of Israel become a more general religion with a universal god who ruled the world in the manner of an Achaemenid king and had some resemblance with Ahura Mazda. Here, Zoroastrian influences may be at work, though

this is difficult to prove (cf. ch. 16 by Foroutan herein). Many books of the Bible received their final redaction in the Persian period and were the result of coming to terms with the Achaemenids. Although the Jews and Zoroastrians (Farsis) themselves finally chose to close their community by marriage restrictions and purity laws, the idea for a universal religion was taken up by Christians and Muslims.

In the modern world the Persian Empire is still part of modern political debate. This is especially apparent in the discussion about the significance of the Cyrus Cylinder. The political memory of the empire is still at work in the various ways in which it is studied and described. Modern historians sometimes still have difficulty in coming to terms with the Persian Empire.

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