At its height, the Persian Empire stretched from India to Libya, uniting the entire Near East under the rule of a single Great King for the first time in history. Many groups in the area had long-lived traditions of indigenous kingship, but these were either abolished or adapted to fit the new frame of universal Persian rule. This book explores the ways in which people from Rome, Egypt, Babylonia, Israel, and Iran interacted with kingship in the Persian Empire and how they remembered and reshaped their own indigenous traditions in response to these experiences. The contributors are Björn Anderson, Seth A. Bledsoe, Henry P. Colburn, Geert De Breucker, Benedikt Eckhardt, Kian Foroutan, Lisbeth S. Fried, Olaf E. Kaper, Alesandr V. Makhlaiuk, Christine Mitchell, John P. Nielsen, Eduard Rung, Jason M. Silverman, Květa Smolárková, R. J. van der Spek, Caroline Waerzeggers, Melanie Wasmuth, and Ian Douglas Wilson.

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POLITICAL MEMORY IN AND AFTER THE PERSIAN EMPIRE
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Edited by
Jason M. Silverman and Caroline Waerzeggers

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## Contents

Abbreviations .......................................................................................................................... vii

Assessing Persian Kingship in the Near East: An Introduction  
Jason M. Silverman and Caroline Waerzeggers ........................................... 1

The End of the Lydian Kingdom and the Lydians after Croesus  
Eduard Rung .......................................................................................................................... 7

Persian Memories and the Programmatic Nature of Nabataean  
Funerary Architecture  
Björn Anderson .................................................................................................................. 27

“I Overwhelmed the King of Elam”: Remembering Nebuchadnezzar I  
in Persian Babylonia  
John P. Nielsen .................................................................................................................. 53

Heroes and Sinners: Babylonian Kings in Cuneiform Historiography  
of the Persian and Hellenistic Periods  
Geert De Breucker .............................................................................................................. 75

Facts, Propaganda, or History? Shaping Political Memory in the Nabonidus Chronicle  
Caroline Waerzeggers ........................................................................................................ 95

Petubastis IV in the Dakhla Oasis: New Evidence about an  
Early Rebellion against Persian Rule and Its Suppression in Political Memory  
Olaf E. Kaper ...................................................................................................................... 125

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  
Květa Smoláriková ............................................................................................................ 151
CONTENTS

Memories of the Second Persian Period in Egypt
   Henry P. Colburn ................................................................. 165

Political Memory in the Achaemenid Empire: The Integration of
Egyptian Kingship into Persian Royal Display
   Melanie Wasmuth ............................................................... 203

Conflicting Loyalties: King and Context in the Aramaic Book of
Ahiqar
   Seth A. Bledsoe ................................................................. 239

Achaemenid Religious Policy after the Seleucid Decline: Case Studies
in Political Memory and Near Eastern Dynastic Representation
   Benedikt Eckhardt ............................................................... 269

Memory and Images of Achaemenid Persia in the Roman Empire
   Aleksandr V. Makhlaiuk ..................................................... 299

Yahweh’s Anointed: Cyrus, Deuteronomy’s Law of the King, and
Yehudite Identity
   Ian Douglas Wilson ............................................................ 325

The Testament of Darius (DNa/DNb) and Constructions of Kings
and Kingship in 1–2 Chronicles
   Christine Mitchell ............................................................... 363

No King in Judah? Mass Divorce in Judah and in Athens
   Lisbeth S. Fried ................................................................. 381

References to Zoroastrian Beliefs and Principles or an Image of
the Achaemenid Court in Nehemiah 2:1–10?
   Kiyan Foroutan ................................................................. 403

From Remembering to Expecting the “Messiah”: Achaemenid
Kingship as (Re)formulating Apocalyptic Expectations of David
   Jason M. Silverman ........................................................... 419

Coming to Terms with the Persian Empire: Some Concluding
Remarks and Responses
   R. J. van der Spek .............................................................. 447

Index of Ancient Sources ...................................................... 479
Index of Modern Authors ..................................................... 490
Memories of the Second Persian Period in Egypt*

Henry P. Colburn (Getty Research Institute)

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.¹ The modern understanding of this

¹ I am grateful to Terry Wilfong for philological help; to David Klotz for bibliographic help; to Margaret Root for discussing PFS 1601* with me; to Susanne Ebbinghaus for sharing her research on rhyta with me; to Jason Silverman and Caroline Waerzeggers for the opportunity to participate in the conference in Leiden; and to the other conference participants for their comments and feedback. I am also grateful to Michelle Fontenot and the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology for permission to reproduce figure 1 and to the Brooklyn Museum for their generous and progressive policies concerning the use of images.

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.²

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.³

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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.4

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.5 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.6 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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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.7 This ideology was made manifest in several ways. First, Ptolemy took Alexander’s corpse from Babylon to Memphis, and then ultimately to Alexandria.8 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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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. 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. 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. 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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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.12

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

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. 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.

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. This force was buried by a sandstorm before reaching its destination, and Cambyses, in a fit of madness, subsequently killed an Apis bull. Accordingly, Alexander, guided

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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. 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. 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. 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. 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


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.21 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).22 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.23 Thus, while not a “royal” monument in the


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 Khabybash 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. 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. This corresponds to the former Achaemenid Empire. Furthermore, the Persians are


explicitly connected with the removal of statues in decrees dating to the reigns of Ptolemy III and IV.\(^\text{26}\) 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” (\textit{OGIS} 56, Austin).\(^\text{27}\) The hieroglyphic text of the same decree even describes the Persians as “vile” (\textit{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.\(^\text{28}\) 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 \(H\text{šryš}\)” 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


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. So it is quite impossible for Xerxes to have revoked a donation made by Khababash. This has prompted suggestions that Ḫšryš 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. Another possibility is “Arses,” the birth name of Artaxerxes IV. 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. Finally, it has been suggested that “Xerxes” is meant as a generic term for Persian kings. This suggestion cannot be proven, but it does fit Ḫšryš’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.


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 Ḫšryš 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.


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. The Satrap Stela even refers to the second of these invasions. There the term used is $p3\ t3\ n3\ h3\ r.w$ (“the land of the Syrians”), which refers specifically to Syria. 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. 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. 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

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.


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 $st.t$ 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 $st.t$ is perhaps most appropriate.

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.41 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.42 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.43 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.44 With

40. OGIS 54.
41. Schäfer, Makedonische Pharaonen, 66–74; Ockinga, “Satrap Stele.”
44. Pithom stela: Christophe Thiers, Ptolémée Philadelpe 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.): Kommenn-
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. 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). The city in question is Alexandria, and the entire oracle is distinctly anti-Greek in its tenor. 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,
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.48 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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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. 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. 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. The Suda (s.v. Απιδες; Ὀχος) 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. 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. 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.

49. Briant, From Cyrus to Alexander, 774–76.
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.\(^{54}\)

**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.\(^{55}\) In this respect the tomb of Petosiris at Tuna el-Gebel is especially valuable.\(^{56}\) 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.\(^{57}\) 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.


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).

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. 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. 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. 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


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.  

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. 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.  

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.” 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). Additionally, two other reliefs on this same wall have scenes in which rhyta are carried or presented. 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

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.67 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.68 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.69 A *rhyton* also appears in a seal impression (PFS 1601*) preserved on a tablet from the Persepolis Fortification Archive showing a banqueting scene.70 The Elamite text on the tablet (PF 2028) records a transaction dated to 498 B.C.E.71 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.72 Certainly in

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).
72. Margaret C. Miller, *Athens and Persia in the Fifth Century BC: A Study in
antiquity the Athenians associated the *rhyton* with the Persians.\(^\text{73}\) 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.\(^\text{74}\) Several other Achaemenid *phialai*, made of a variety of materials including gold, silver, glass and clay, are also extant, though many without known provenance.\(^\text{75}\) 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.\(^\text{76}\) The other bowl depicted on

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73. Miller, *Athens and Persia*, 143.


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. Indeed, versions of this type of bowl have been found at sites throughout the empire, made of a variety of materials.

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. 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. 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). 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...
royal gifts, given by the Great King to important individuals as tokens of esteem. 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. 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,” ἤπειρος, 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

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.84

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.85 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.86 The travertine rhyton found at Tell el-Hesi in Palestine is probably an Egyptian import.87

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.88 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

86. Ebbinghaus, “Rhyta with Animal Foreparts,” 146.
found in Egypt in 1947 as part of the Tell el-Maskhuta hoard. Four of the vessels in the hoard have Aramaic inscriptions recording their dedication to the North Arabian goddess Han-’Ilalt. 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-’Ilalt” (Dumbrell). 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. 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-’Ilalt 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


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. 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. Second, metal and ceramic versions of Achaemenid vessels, especially phialai and Achaemenid bowls, continued to be made in Egypt

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. 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. 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. 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.

unique (as is often stated), but that comparable tombs survive only in very fragmentary condition.

Experiencing the Second Persian Period

The complex memory of the Second Persian Period preserved in Peto-siris’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.” 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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