Udjahorresnet the Persian: Being an Essay on the Archaeology of Identity

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Abstract
This essay is an examination of Udjahorresnet’s Persian identity. Best known from the inscription on his naophorous statue now in the Vatican, Udjahorresnet was a high-ranking courtier in Egypt under the Saite pharaohs Amasis and Psamtik III, and subsequently under the Persian kings Cambyses and Darius. While his statue’s form, function and inscription make it clear that he was an Egyptian, certain representational features of the statue indicate that he had a Persian identity as well. These features include the statue’s garment, which evokes the Persian “court robe” depicted at Persepolis and elsewhere, and the lion-headed bracelets on his wrists, which are examples of a well-known class of Achaemenid jewelry. The court robe, which derives from Elamite tradition, is a key visual marker of the idealized “Persian man,” a central aspect of Achaemenid royal ideology, and the lion bracelet, which draws on various material culture traditions from Iran, is a symbol of imperial unity. Udjahorresnet’s decision to include these features on his statue thus suggests that he constructed a Persian identity for himself.

““The apparel oft proclaims the man.”
—William Shakespeare, Hamlet (Act 1, Scene 3)

Who was Udjahorresnet?
At first blush it may seem absurd to suggest that Udjahorresnet was a Persian. Although best known as a courtier to Cambyses and Darius in Egypt and Elam, respectively, even composing the pharaonic titulary for the former, the lengthy hieroglyphic inscription on his naophorous statue makes it clear that he was already a prominent individual in Egypt prior to the Persian invasion. In fact, the construction of his tomb, which lay in the shadow of the Fifth Dynasty pyramids at Abusir, had already begun around 530 BCE. The statue itself is an idiosyncratic type of Egyptian material culture that served a specific purpose in Egyptian religion. And of course his name is unequivocally Egyptian. But identity is not simply composed of birthplace, native language, or even religious beliefs and practices. Rather, it is constructed through decisions people make that emphasize or minimize their affiliations with various groups or institutions. Sometimes these decisions are calculated to create a specific effect; other times they produce identity as a side effect. Identity is thus iterative as well, since people can make different decisions at different times, resulting in different identities. And it is also multiple; people have many identities and need only choose between them when they are in direct opposition to one another.

Whereas discussions of Udjahorresnet’s Egyptian identity focus on the content of the inscription on his naophorous statue, the statue itself suggests that...
he made certain decisions that resulted in the creation of a Persian identity. These decisions concerned the garment and jewelry depicted on the statue (see Fig. 1). The garment is a long robe worn over a jacket with sleeves, which bears a resemblance to the Persian “court robe” worn by courtiers, soldiers, and the Great King himself in reliefs from Persepolis and Naqsh-e Rustam, as well as in other media, but not by any of the subject peoples other than the Elamites (with whom the Persians claimed a special affinity). Udjahorresnet’s choice to be depicted wearing it suggests that he identified with the makers and maintainers of the empire who were based at the royal court. Indeed, one might go so far as to suggest that he subscribed to the ideology of the idealized “Persian man” who figures prominently in Achaemenid royal ideology.  

The lion-headed bracelet similarly alludes to a Persian identity. Such bracelets are part of a larger corpus of Achaemenid jewelry that features animal terminals. Although many of the extant examples of such jewelry are unprovenanced, some have been found in tombs in various parts of the empire, suggesting they were an imperial, rather than a local, phenomenon. This is borne out by the reliefs of the Persepolis Apadana, where animal-headed bracelets are carried by members of several delegations of the empire’s subject peoples. These bracelets, which draw on various material culture traditions from western and northern Iran, are symbols of imperial unity. In wearing a lion-headed bracelet, Udjahorresnet actively identified himself as a participant in the empire, in the same vein as the figures on the Apadana reliefs.

None of this is to deny that Udjahorresnet had an Egyptian identity; his statue and tomb make it abundantly clear that he did. At the same time, he evidently constructed a Persian identity for himself. In this respect he was no different from the Persians, who were figuring out for themselves what it meant to be Persian in the context of the early Achaemenid Empire. Indeed, as is discussed further in the following section, archaeologists have come to recognize that all such identities are constructed and iterative on some level, and that ethnicity alone is not sufficient to explain them.

**Identity and Material Culture**

“Identity” refers to an individual’s feeling of belonging to or disassociation from certain groups of people. Some of these groups, such as the Industrial Workers of the World or the Roman *Legio XXI Rapax*, are formally defined. Most, however, share only a single common feature, such speaking Spanish as a first language, working as a carpenter, or supporting the Boston Red Sox; being part of these informal groups is simply a matter of sharing their single unifying trait. Sometimes the feeling of connection is passive. Other times it is the result of a deliberate action, such as joining the Roman army. And sometimes it is a deliberate yet informal measure, such as becoming a supporter of the Red Sox: to support the team one need only hope that they win; no actions are required. Identity, then, encompasses the sum of an individual’s understanding of what such groups he or she is (or is not) a part.

Traditionally archaeologists have focused their investigations of identity on ethnicity. The assumption is that specific ethnic groups, unified by shared ancestry, language, religion, and cultural practices, used specific forms of material culture that were unique to them. Accordingly, finds of seemingly similar material culture could be used to locate the homeland of a given ethnic group, for example, or to trace its migration. Likewise, an individual buried with objects associated with an ethnic group could confidently be assigned to that group, thus establishing his or her native language and religious beliefs.

This approach, however, is problematic for several reasons. First, the concept of ethnicity arose from 19th-century efforts to classify peoples in terms of language, culture, beliefs, and appearance, usually in order to manage or conquer them. These classifications were imposed externally to serve some ulterior, often colonialist, motive and did not reflect how the people so classified identified themselves. Second, ethnic identity is constructed on an individual level. Simply put, a person can choose to emphasize or downplay one ethnicity or another at any given time. Most people can lay claim to more than one ethnic identity; in Ptolemaic Egypt, for example, intermarriage between Greeks and Egyptians is widely attested, and many spoke both Greek and Egyptian. Third, ethnicity is only one of any number of axes along which identity can be constructed. Others include gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, profession, political allegiance, social status, homeland, and so forth. Compared to these axes, ethnicity may not necessarily the most pertinent aspect of identity for a given situation.

This last point is essential. Not only is identity complex and multifaceted, but it is also possible to have simultaneously more than one identity in a single category that might normally be regarded as
exclusive. As Amartya Sen has argued,

There are two distinct issues here. First, the recognition that identities are robustly plural, and that the importance of one identity need not obliterate the importance of others. Second, a person has to make choices—explicitly or by implication—about what relative importance to attach, in a particular context, to the divergent loyalties and priorities that may compete for precedence.\(^9\)

In other words, depending on context a person may emphasize one aspect of his or her identity at the expense of others. Someone with both American and Dutch citizenship, for example, might identify fully with both countries and needs to choose between them only in specific instances, such as when crossing national borders or during the World Cup. Likewise, someone who enjoys both wine and beer needs to choose which to drink on any given occasion—in essence choosing between an identity as a wine drinker or as a beer drinker. Presumably alcohol preference is not a major axis of identity for most people in most situations and does not typically warrant extensive consideration. But it is nevertheless an example of how identity can be constructed through seemingly mundane, everyday decisions. And the choice of beer versus wine certainly could be implicated in other aspects of identity, since among the Greeks and Romans, for example, beer was associated with foreignness and barbarism, whereas wine was considered a civilized drink.\(^10\)

Thus identity is constructed, multiple, and iterative. This has led some scholars to suggest that identity is therefore worthless as an analytical tool, especially for studying ethnicity, because every individual person has too many potential identities.\(^11\) But this view is unduly pessimistic, and it is indeed possible to identify certain group identities archaeologically. This is because the choices people make that affect their identities are not made in isolation. The success of one option over another in a given situation is determined in part by the larger social context in which the decisions are made. This context is what Pierre Bourdieu calls \textit{habitus}: the practices and ideas of a given social group, which are learned from an early age and reinforced through repetition.\(^12\) As Bourdieu explains,

\textit{Habitus} provides the basic parameters for any decision about identity and material culture, and it gives meaning to the choices an individual can make. In essence, it delimits successful options for identity in a given setting.

Successful choices are more likely to be repeated. When these choices involve material culture, they are visible archaeologically, even if it is not always possible to recognize or understand them in the present. When enough people make similar choices about material culture it becomes possible to identify a group identity, i.e., a group of people with a shared \textit{habitus}. Some such groups certainly coalesced around ideas of being “Persian” or “Egyptian.” This is different from an ethnic group, because common ancestry, language, and religion, for example, need not play a role (although they certainly can). But the people in such groups nevertheless have shared ideas, conventions, and beliefs that contribute to a sense of community. Thus by parsing an individual’s decisions about material culture and asking in what sort of \textit{habitus} they might be regarded as successful, it may be possible to say something about that individual’s identity.

\textbf{Persian Identity}

If, as discussed in the preceding section, identity is constructed, multiple, and iterative, what did it mean to be “Persian” in the Achaemenid Empire? This is a fair question to be sure, since many texts identify certain people, both specific individuals and large groups, as Persians. Achaemenid royal inscriptions, written in Old Persian, Elamite, Babylonian Akkadian, and sometimes also Egyptian, all refer to Persians. Notably, in the trilingual cuneiform inscription on his tomb at Naqsh-e Rustam, Darius identifies himself as a Persian: “I am Darius the great king, king of kings, king of countries
containing all kinds of men, king on this great earth far and wide, son of Hystaspes, an Achaemenid, a Persian, son of a Persian, an Aryan, having Aryan lineage.” The throne-bearers on the façade of the tomb are explicitly labeled as well with trilingual cuneiform inscriptions identifying them as various peoples of the empire, including a Persian. They are further distinguished by their clothing, in the same manner as on the reliefs of the Apadana and elsewhere at Persepolis. The Persepolis Fortification Archive, a large archive of clay tablets generated by a bureaucratic entity responsible for provisioning official travelers in the greater Persepolis region, contains references to groups of people identified explicitly as Persians. Finally, Persians frequently appear in the works of Greek historians, such as Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon, and playwrights, such as Aeschylus, Aristophanes, and Timotheus of Miletus.

Yet what is meant by “Persian” is not so straightforward. Presumably Persians would be unified by a common homeland, language, religion, cultural practices, etc. The homeland of the Persians, called Parsa in Old Persian, corresponds roughly to the modern Iranian province of Fars. But this region also overlapped significantly with that of the Elamites; Anshan, a former capital of the Elamite kingdom and Cyrus’ original power base, was a mere 27 km from Persepolis. So not everyone from Parsa was necessarily Persian. Likewise, identifying native speakers of Old Persian is difficult, in part because the language was not written down until the reign of Darius (ca. 522–486 BCE). Aside from monumental inscriptions on stone and brick and versions of them written on clay, the only direct evidence for speakers of Old Persian is a single tablet from the Persepolis Fortification Archive. The Elamite tablets in the Fortification Archive exhibit signs, such as the presence of Old Persian loanwords, of having been written by speakers of Old Persian (though some were doubtless written by native Elamite speakers as well). There are many Iranian names attested in Elamite and other languages that may well have belonged to speakers of Old Persian, but names are not necessarily markers of ethnicity or native language. It is similarly difficult to identify a specific Persian religion. While Auramazda plays a prominent role in Achaemenid royal inscriptions, the Persepolis Fortification Archive reveals a much more complex religious landscape that includes numerous gods whose cults are provisioned by the imperial bureaucracy.

Nor does Achaemenid iconography provide clear markers of Persian identity. As noted above, the façade of Darius’ tomb, and indeed all of the royal tombs at Naqsh-e Rustam and Persepolis, features images of the peoples of the empire, including Persians. However, the Persian and the Elamite both wear the same garment with flaring sleeves and an Elamite dagger tucked into the belt. This is the Persian court robe, which is discussed in further detail in the next section. At Persepolis it is worn by Persians and Elamites, and it is the only garment in which the Great King is depicted. Further ambiguity is created by the Medes depicted on the royal tombs, who wear trousers, a sleeved tunic and a hemispherical cap. This outfit is also worn by Persians at Persepolis and Naqsh-e Rustam, most notably Aspathines on the façade of the tomb of Darius. According to Herodotus (3.70), Aspathines was one of Darius’ co-conspirators against Gaumata, and Herodotus explicitly identifies him as Persian. Thus neither the court robe nor the riding costume was specific to the Persians. Rather, from an iconographic standpoint, Persians, Medes, and Elamites are largely indistinguishable from one another. This is arguably true from an administrative standpoint as well. In the Fortification Archive, people are identified as Persians only four times in the nearly five thousand Elamite tablets edited thus far; Medes are explicitly identified only once, and Elamites not at all. By comparison, other ethnicities are mentioned many hundreds of times. As Wouter Henkelman and Matthew Stolper put it, “from an institutional perspective, speakers of Elamite, Median or Persian were considered to be ‘us.’”

This brief review has shown that the Persians themselves regarded their identity as constructed, with Elamite and Median components as key ingredients. This is best summed up by Henkelman:

To be “Persian” is unlikely to have denoted partaking in a cultural identity that was the direct heir and linear continuation of a migrant Indo-Iranian identity; instead, it meant to subscribe to a relatively new and inclusive identity, informed by both Elamite and Indo-Iranian traditions and developed and transformed pari passu with the incredible dynamism from which the Persian empire emerged.
In other words, one could be a Persian without having been born one. While Elamites and Medes were most able to adopt such an identity, in theory anyone could become a Persian through choices about language, religion, dress, and other aspects of material culture implicated in Persian cultural practices, such as drinking vessels. This is not to say that Persian identity was superficial, but that it was inclusive rather than exclusionary.

In light of the foregoing discussion, the decisions made by Udjahorresnet concerning material culture as discernible from his naophorous statue are especially important for understanding how he constructed his identity. Of particular note are the garment that he wears and the lion-headed bracelet that is depicted on his wrists, as the decision to include these two items on his statue suggests that Udjahorresnet himself subscribed to “a relatively new and inclusive identity, informed by both Elamite and Indo-Iranian traditions.”

**Udjahorresnet’s Clothing**

In his statue Udjahorresnet is depicted wearing a garment comprised of a sleeved jacket tucked into a robe that reaches from his armpits to his ankles (Fig. 1). This article of dress is often called the “Persian garment” in Egyptological literature, even though it is attested in Egypt in the 6th century BCE prior to the advent of Achaemenid rule. It seems to have become popular in the late 6th and 5th centuries BCE because of its resemblance to the Persian “court robe” depicted at Persepolis. Unlike the Egyptian “Persian garment,” the Persian court robe seemingly consisted of a single piece of cloth that was cut and resewn to create wide, flaring sleeves and an ankle-length garment with folds of drapery at the front and back. It was worn hitched up at the waist with a belt. The court robe is depicted widely in the reliefs at Persepolis, where it is worn by the Great King and crown prince, as well as by courtiers, ushers, soldiers, and servants. It is also worn by the Elamite delegations on the northern and eastern facades of the Apadana (Fig. 2) and by the royal hero figures that adorn various doorjambs on the Persepolis takht. At Naqsh-e Rustam it is worn by the Great King and by the Persian throne bearers. It appears on a small number of the seals attested in the Persepolis Fortification and Treasury Archives as well. In the relief of Darius at Bisitun it is worn by the king and by his attendants Intaphernes and Gobryas. The soldiers depicted on the glazed bricks at...
Susa also wear the Persian court robe, where it is shown richly decorated with rosettes, geometric patterns, elaborate borders, and bright colors. Finally, it is worn by the crowned archer who appears on Achaemenid coinage.

In earlier scholarship the court robe was called “Persian garb” to distinguish it from the riding costume consisting of trousers, a sleeved tunic, and a round hat, identified as “Median” because it is worn by the Median delegations in the Apadana reliefs. It is now clear that the distinction is not ethnic but one of function, as indicated by the current terminology used for these costumes. Their combination on the Apadana thus represents two key facets of Persian identity, namely their equestrian prowess, which they share with the Medes and other Iranian peoples, and the courtly aspect, which they shared with the Elamites, in whose former kingdom the Persian Empire was born. Yet, despite this dual identity, the king is always depicted wearing the court robe, not the riding costume. This may be because, as Margaret Root has argued, a key aspect of Achaemenid ideology is the Great King’s representation as an idealized “Persian man.” Darius refers to himself as “the Persian man” in an inscription on his tomb (DNa §4), and, as Root argues, the heroic figure in the doorjamb reliefs at Persepolis, who wears neither a royal headdress nor royal footwear but does wear the court robe, may be a depiction of the “Persian man.” The same is arguably true of the archer on Achaemenid coinage, which combines kingly virtues.
with a longer glyptic tradition of heroic imagery.\textsuperscript{30}

The court robe must further bolster this ideology, in the sense that it must be the most suitable costume for the idealized Persian man. The explanation for this may lie in its Elamite origin. As noted above, it is worn by the Elamite delegations on the Apadana, and the implication is that, in addition to being the most suitable garment for the “Persian man,” it is also the most representative costume for depicting Elamites. This suggests that the court robe was an Elamite garment of some kind, perhaps, as Root suggests, a royal robe.\textsuperscript{31} That it came to be so closely associated with the Persians is probably due to the important role played by Elamite culture and institutions in the creation of Persian identity. After all, Cyrus was king of Anshan, one of the capitals of the former Elamite kingdom, and Elamite language and bureaucratic practices were adopted by the Persians, along with aspects of Elamite religion and material culture.\textsuperscript{32} Indeed, the “Elamite dagger,” which is carried by the Elamite delegations on the Apadana, is also worn by a variety of Persians, including the Great King, at both Persepolis and on the Egyptian statue of Darius found at Susa. While it may not in fact be an actual type of Elamite weapon, like the court robe it came to be a highly visual marker of Persian identity intended to make explicit links with the Elamites.\textsuperscript{33}

The court robe was clearly regarded as the most suitable garment to represent the “Persian man,” whether he is the King or a servant hauling a wineskin to the royal table. There are no extant examples of court robes, and it is impossible to say how widespread its use was as an article of clothing. Nevertheless, if Udjahorresnet had elected to wear such a garment at Persepolis or Susa, he would have presented himself unequivocally as a “Persian man.” Arguably the same is true if he wore it in Egypt. Although divorced from the context of the royal court, images of the Persian court robe were disseminated to Egypt, most notably on the famous statue of Darius discovered in Susa.\textsuperscript{34} According to the trilingual cuneiform and hieroglyphic Egyptian inscriptions on the statue, it was made in Egypt. The statue utilizes iconographic features and sculptural conventions from both Persian and Egyptian artistic traditions, and as a result it is intelligible in both a Persian and an Egyptian context. In a Persian context the statue represents Darius as the idealized “Persian man,” in his court robe wearing an Elamite dagger and animal-headed bracelets. It is in essence a wholesale importation to Egypt of Achaemenid royal ideology as discernible at Persepolis, albeit with modifications so as to function properly in an Egyptian setting. So while the Egyptians would certainly have recognized it as an image of their king, the statue also definitely cemented the association between the court robe and Persian identity for the Egyptians. Nor was the statue of Darius unique in making this connection; the court robe also appears on the cuneiform sides of the stelae erected along the course of Darius’ canal.\textsuperscript{35}

As noted above, the garment depicted on the naophorous statue of Udjahorresnet is different from the Persian court robe. It is an Egyptian garment, combining two articles of clothing, that evokes the court robe. Udjahorresnet could have chosen to be depicted wearing the Persian court robe, but instead he selected an Egyptian garment. In doing so he created a monument that, like the statue of Darius, could operate in both Egyptian and Persian contexts. This permitted it to perform its religious function; after all, naophorous statues had specific theological significance that was only meaningful in an Egyptian setting.\textsuperscript{36} At the same time it would still mark him as a “Persian man,” at least to those to whom such an identity was important.

Udjahorresnet was not alone amongst Egyptians in regarding the trappings of the “Persian man” as appropriate to his identity. There are other examples of Egyptian statues wearing garments evoking the Persian court robe, notably the statue of Ptahhotep in the Brooklyn Museum.\textsuperscript{37} The owners of these statues presumably shared Udjahorresnet’s concern for creating dually intelligible monuments. Djedherbes, whose funerary stela was discovered at Saqqara, adopted a slightly different approach to the same problem.\textsuperscript{38} The seated figure in the lower register of the stela, probably intended to depict Djedherbes himself, wears the Persian court robe. The stela also features the Egyptian gods Isis, Anubis, and Nephthys in the process of embalming, and the text of a spell from the Book of the Dead. Thus it both fits Djedherbes’ identity as a “Persian man” and serves its purpose as an Egyptian funerary object. There are also images of the court robe on at least two of the bullae found in the Palace of Apries at Memphis, and on a cylinder seal excavated at Tell el-Herr in the eastern Nile Delta.\textsuperscript{39} These seals were most likely carved at or near Persepolis, as their style of carving and iconographic content are very much in keeping with the seals of the Persepolis
Fortification Archive. The Tell el-Herr seal was certainly brought to Egypt, and the seals that made the Memphis bullae might have been used in Egypt too. Since seals were typically used as proxies for individuals, a major factor in selecting a seal was that its imagery was appropriate for the identity of its owner. These seal owners regarded the court robe as appropriate markers of their identities, suggesting that the imagery of the “Persian man” had some resonance for them too. 40

**THE LION BRACELET**

The lion bracelet on the statue’s right arm (the left arm is a modern restoration) is the second instance of a choice made by Udjahorresnet that implicates him in a Persian identity. The bracelet features protomes in the form of lion heads. Given their small size, it is difficult to make out much detail; even so, it is clear that the rendering of the lions follows contemporary Egyptian sculptural conventions, including modeled features, round ears, and prominent brows. Yet this type of bracelet is rare in Egyptian jewelry. A silver rod with a lion’s head found at Athribis in the Nile Delta shows some similarity to the heads on the statue, but its date is uncertain, and, even though it was found in a hoard of jewelry and other objects, there is no indication that this is in fact part of a bracelet. 41 Such bracelets are, however, a well-known feature of Achaemenid material culture, with many examples in museum collections around the world. 42 More importantly, they have been found in burials in different parts of the empire, as have similar bracelets decorated with the heads of other animals.

Perhaps the closest comparison is a bracelet discovered in Tumulus A at Gordion, dating to ca. 530–525 BCE (Fig. 3). 43 The lion heads on this large bracelet are modeled in a similar manner to those on Udjahorresnet’s statue. Two more gold and glass bracelets with similar heads were looted from a tumulus at Toptepe, some 20 km west of Uşak in western Turkey. 44 Another was excavated from the cemetery at Vani in Georgia. 45 A grave on the Acropole at Susa dating to the late 5th century BCE contained two gold bracelets, as well as a gold torque, with lions’ heads. 46 The heads, which are inlaid with lapis lazuli, turquoise and carnelian, are more stylized than on the bracelet from Gordion. The grave also contained a silver drinking vessel, two alabaster vessels, and other items of jewelry. A silver bracelet comprising a filigree chain with lion terminals flanking the clasp was excavated from a burial at Hacnebi on the Euphrates River in southeastern Turkey. 47 Finally, a painting in a tomb at Karaburun in Lycia depicts the deceased wearing a lion-headed bracelet. 48

As noted above, bracelets with animal terminals are a well-known feature of Achaemenid material culture. It is especially noteworthy that they are depicted on the reliefs of the Persepolis Apadana, where they are carried by members of Delegations I (Medes; Fig. 4), VI (Lydians or Syrians), XI (Saka

**FIGURE 3:** Lion-headed bracelet (15 J 1), Tumulus A, Gordion, ca. 530-525 BCE (photographed by G. Bieg; reproduced by permission of the Penn Museum Gordion Archive).
Tigraxauda), and XVII (Sogdians or Saka Haumavarga). These bracelets are oversized, perhaps in order to render them more visually intelligible, though it remains a possibility that they are torques rather than bracelets, since many extant examples of Achaemenid bracelets are ovoid rather than round, like the objects depicted on the Apadana. Regardless of their specific function, these objects do not seem to be associated with any one people or region of the empire. Indeed, while it is generally difficult to discern the animals represented on the terminals, the bracelets carried by the Lydian delegation clearly have griffin protomes, a well-known feature of Achaemenid, but not Lydian, iconography. This suggests that, like many of the objects carried by the delegations on the Apadana these bracelets are markers of imperial unity. The association between animal-headed bracelets and imperial unity was no doubt furthered by the Great King’s practice, alluded to in Greek sources, of giving bracelets as gifts.

The lion imagery is significant as well. Along with bulls, lions play a significant role in Achaemenid royal iconography. The reliefs of lions attacking bulls on the eastern and northern facades of the Apadana are especially noteworthy, as are the lion friezes that appear on various structures at Persepolis, as well as on the royal tomb facades. Unsurprisingly, lions were associated with kingship on account of their strength, ferocity, and status as apex predators. Beyond that their precise significance is unclear, but it is interesting to note that the Elamite delegation depicted on the Apadana brings a lioness and cubs. Root has argued that this image is a reworking of Neo-Assyrian iconography, in which lions stand in for Elamites and are accordingly slaughtered by the king in various reliefs. She goes on to suggest that at Persepolis the equation of Elamites with lions is used to imply that the Achaemenid Empire was the successor to the Elamite kingdom. The lioness and cubs especially are suggestive of the idea of integrating...
Elamite royal blood into the nascent Achaemenid dynasty.

This imagery may speak to Darius’ own Elamite connections. Based on the Persepolis Fortification Archive, the most important woman in Darius’ court was Irdabama, as hers is the largest private household attested in the archive; she was presumably either his mother or one of his wives. According to the archive, she had an estate at Šullaggi in Khuzestan, i.e., in the heartland of the former Elamite kingdom. Moreover, Irdabama’s commissioner, who acted on her behalf in administrative matters, used an heirloom Neo-Elamite seal (PFS 77*) bearing an inscription naming “Huban-ahpi,” a person attested in the Neo-Elamite Acropole archive from Susa some decades earlier as “Huban-ahpi of Šullaggi.” It thus seems that Irdabama descended from the Elamite aristocracy, in which case Darius either descended from or married into an Elamite family.

Like the court robe, the lion imagery at Persepolis reinforces the Elamite aspect of the Achaemenid Empire, in particular the connection to Elamite kingship. In fact, lion-headed bracelets may well have been trappings of Elamite royalty. This much is suggested by a limestone stela from Susa depicting Adda-hamiti-Insushinak, ruler of Anshan and Susa in the 650s and 640s BCE, shows the king wearing a lion-headed bracelet. Also, a gold bracelet (or armlet) with bitumen lion-headed terminals was discovered in a tomb near the town of Jubaji, near Ramhormoz in Khuzestan, Iran. The tomb contained two adult females and a large quantity of jewelry, including a gold bracelet inscribed with the name of the Neo-Elamite king Shutur Nahunte, son of Indada. Accordingly the excavators proposed that the deceased were Elamite princesses and dated the tomb to the Neo-Elamite IIIB phase, i.e., ca. 585–539 BCE. If this interpretation is correct, the association between lion-headed bracelets and Elamite royalty was still being made in the decades leading up to the formation of the Achaemenid Empire.

Yet lion-headed bracelets were not the exclusive purview of the Elamites; they are attested in northern and western Iran as well, appearing by the early Iron Age. Of particular note is a gold lion-headed bracelet excavated in the cemetery at Marlik. The lion heads are somewhat more stylized than either the Elamite example from Jubaji or the later Achaemenid bracelets; the manes are indicated by small holes, the eyes, which were once inlaid, are raised almost to the point of bulging, and the gaping mouths have straight teeth. But the basic form is fundamentally the same. The chronology of this cemetery has been debated, with proposed dates of its use ranging from the 14th to the 7th centuries BCE. However, a recent reassessment of the site using a typological seriation of finds dates Tomb 36, in which the bracelet was discovered, to the 12th century BCE (early Iron Age I). A bronze bracelet excavated at Surkh Dum in Luristan (Fig. 5), dating to the 8th to 7th centuries BCE, has terminals with stylized animal foreparts; based on comparisons with other examples of Luristan bronzes, these animals may well be lions. There are many other lion-headed bracelets without archaeological provenance which have been attributed to Luristan.

Although removed in time from the Achaemenids by several centuries at least, these bracelets point to an older tradition of lion-headed bracelets in what
is today western Iran. While a firm relationship between the people who made and used them and the Persians cannot be established on current evidence, the bracelets do raise the important possibility that such traditions, like those of the Elamites, were absorbed by the Persians in the course of the formation of the new Persian identity. Possibly the Medes, who were associated with regions of west central Iran, were one of the intermediaries in this process; they are one of the delegations depicted on the Apadana carrying bracelets.64

If Udjahorresnet himself had worn a lion-headed bracelet at Susa or Persepolis, he would have been part of a larger group of people unified by a shared Persian identity. Some of those people may have received bracelets as gifts from the Great King. In the inscription on his naophorous statue, Udjahorresnet says that he received “gold ornaments” from his masters, which may in fact be a reference to his bracelets as royal gifts.65 Others would have understood the bracelets as symbols of the empire’s unity; wearing them would suggest that a person saw himself as a participant in the empire, in the same vein as the figures on the Apadana reliefs. In either case, Udjahorresnet considered the bracelets important enough aspects of his identity to include them on his statue, an object that would serve as his proxy in the temple of Neith in Sais for all time. He apparently shared this aspect of his identity with other people elsewhere in the empire, who similarly decided to include such bracelets in their tombs.

**Udjahorresnet the Persian**

His decisions to include a garment reminiscent of the Persian court robe and lion-headed bracelets in his naophorous statue indicate that Udjahorresnet considered himself, on some level, a Persian. The Persian court robe, which seemingly originated among Elamite royalty, was the garment worn by the Great King, and was also the proper clothing for the idealized “Persian man.” The bracelet was likewise a marker of imperial identity because it drew on earlier traditions from various parts of western Iran and came to symbolize the unity of the empire. The combination of the two items would thus imply that the wearer saw himself as a “Persian man,” who subscribed to some extent to the identity constructed by the Persians in the formative years of the Achaemenid Empire.

According to his statue’s biographical inscription, Darius ordered Udjahorresnet to return to Egypt while he was in Elam.66 This implies that Udjahorresnet himself visited Susa, one of the de facto capitals of the empire, where he would have seen other Persians, including the Great King himself, wearing the court robe and animal-headed bracelets. He would also have been exposed to the Achaemenid iconographic program there, especially the glazed bricks that decorated the walls of the palace of Darius, which featured prominently images of soldiers wearing the court robe and animal-headed bracelets (as well as lions).67 The association between these objects and Persian identity would doubtless have been strong in his own mind.

Udjahorresnet’s Persian identity is significant for several reasons. First, Achaemenid imperial ideology emphasized the diversity of the empire.68 The subject peoples depicted at Persepolis on the Apadana, the doorjambs of the Hall of One Hundred Columns, and on the façades of the royal tombs all wear different clothing to distinguish them from each other and highlight the breadth of the Great King’s domains. Likewise, in the inscription on his tomb at Naqsh-e Rustam, Darius states: “If you now should think ‘how many are the countries which King Darius held?’ look at the sculptures of those who bear the throne, then shall you know ... the spear of a Persian man has gone forth far ... a Persian man has delivered battle far indeed from Persia.”69 The value placed on diversity by Achaemenid ideology meant effectively that there was relatively little pressure to assimilate, to become Persian. That Udjahorresnet chose to do so illustrates the appeal of this identity.

At the same time, Udjahorresnet did not become Persian at the expense of being Egyptian. As noted above the garment depicted on his statue is not a Persian court robe per se; rather, it is a combination of Egyptian garments that evokes the court robe. Moreover, in the statue’s inscription he states “I was a learned man for all my lords; my character was judged good by them. They gave me gold ornaments; they did everything needful for me.”70 The “gold ornaments” are usually understood to refer to the lion-headed bracelets, and in mentioning them in this manner Udjahorresnet is referencing a long tradition, going back to the Old Kingdom, of Egyptian pharaohs awarding “gold of praise” to deserving individuals in recognition of service to the state.71 He has thus represented his Persian bracelets using an Egyptian idiom. This, then, is a clear example of Amartya Sen’s point that “that identities are robustly plural, and that the importance of one
identity need not obliterate the importance of others.” That Udjahorresnet considered himself a Persian did not make him any less of an Egyptian.

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Gates-Foster, Jennifer E. 2014. “Achaemenids, Royal Power, and Persian Ethnicity.” In Jeremy McInerney (ed.), A Companion to Ethnicity in the
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Notes
1. Ladynin, this volume; Marković, this volume; Schütze, this volume.
2. Smoláříková and Bareš, this volume.
3. For earlier bibliography on Udjahorresnet, see Wasmuth 2017a, 241–250; Colburn 2020, 179–187.
4. The discussion that follows is built primarily on archaeological studies of identity, as these are attuned to addressing the specific challenges of investigating identity in the distant past. Yet it is worth noting that studies of identity in the present day employ similar definitions of identity and identify similar axes around which it is formed. These modern studies are considerably more detailed and sophisticated than their ancient counterparts, in large part due to the vastly larger volume of data available for the present, whereas archaeological studies are by necessity simplifications of a more complex lived reality. For an entrée into modern identity studies, see Burke and Stets 2009.

Such a definition presupposes the existence of individuals in antiquity. Julian Thomas (2004, 119–148) has argued cogently that the concept of the individual is a modern, western construct, the applicability of which to other times and places is not established. Yet one need not view oneself as an individual in the modern sense to consider oneself part of or separate from some category of people, however defined, especially when some such considerations are passive rather than deliberate. Moreover, the ability to distinguish successfully between “us” and “them” arguably plays a fundamental role in survival; see Knapp and van Dommelen 2008.


17. Stolper and Tavernier 2007. There are also trilingual cuneiform inscriptions on seals, written in Old Persian, Elamite, and Akkadian, but these are arguably a subset of monumental inscription.
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24 Wasmuth 2017a, 246; Colburn 2020, 140–143.
26 Root 2011, 426–433; forthcoming; Stronach 2011.
28 Summarized in Root 1979, 279–282; Stronach 2011.
29 Root 1979, 303–307; see also Garrison 2013, 582.
30 Garrison 2010.
36 Klotz 2014.
37 Brooklyn Museum 37.353; other examples are given in Bothmer 1960, 75–81; Wasmuth 2017a, 246.
38 Wasmuth 2017c; Colburn 2020, 167–171.
40 One further Egyptian image of a Persian court robe is a small relief of a woman shown frontally wearing what may be the court robe (Brooklyn Museum 63.37; Cooney 1965, 44–46). Cooney proposes an Egyptian origin because the relief is made of Tura limestone. However, it both lacks archaeological provenance and is sufficiently unusual in terms of its carving style and content that it is difficult to know what to make of it.
41 Engelbach 1924, 185.
43 Kohler and Dusinberre forthcoming.
44 Özgen and Öztürk 1996, no. 111.
45 Kacharava and Kvirvelia 2008, pl. 25a.
46 Frank 2013, 349–351.
47 Stein 2014, 270.
48 Mellink 1972, 266.
49 Schmidt 1953, pls. 27, 32, 37, 43. For the identification of the various delegations see Hachmann 1995; Tourovets 2008.

50 As suggested by Root, forthcoming.
51 For example, “Achaemenid bowls,” another symbol of imperial unity, are carried by members of Delegations V (Babylonians), VI (Lydians or Syrians), VIII (Assyrians), XII (Ionians), XIII (Bactrians), and XV (Arachosians or Drangians); see Colburn 2020, 203.
55 Henkelman 2010, 693–697.
56 For PFS 77*, see Garrison 2011, 383–387.
57 Henkelman 2011, 613.
58 Harper et al. 1992, no. 140.
59 Shishegar 2017, no. 79; Ahmadinia and Shishegar 2019, 17, 19.
60 Negahban 1996, no. 344.
64 Closer in date to the Achaemenids is the frequently published gold lion-headed bracelet attributed to Ziwiye and dated to the 8th to 7th centuries BCE (Hassanzadeh 2017, no. 396). The detailed modeling of the lions’ heads, especially the use of rows of raised lines on the snouts, closely resembles the workmanship of the Elamite bracelet from Jubaji. But the lack of meaningful provenance and the uncertainties around the material attributed to Ziwiye (see the seminal study by Muscarella 1977) make it very nearly impossible to use this bracelet to make any sort of argument.
65 Kuhrt 2007, 119; see also Schütze, this volume.
68 Gates-Foster 2014; Colburn 2017.
72 Sen 2006, 19.