“Bad Shepherds” of the Eastern Delta

Lloyd D. Graham

Text Abstract: During the 2nd and 1st millennia BCE, the Nile’s Eastern Delta was supposedly the locale of truculent “shepherds” who were inimical to Egypt. These problematic herdsmen seem largely to have been refractions of foreign powers generated by independent etymological confusions, behind which lie the Hyksos and the Assyrians; however, the caricature may contain a grain of truth. The shepherd-rebels from the Delta, who have intriguing overlaps with the (proto)Israelites of the Exodus, ultimately found their way into Greek novels.

Graphic abstract:

1. Introduction

Egyptian narrative literature of the Late Period tends to take liberties with historical events in the manner of a popular novel or even a folk-tale,¹ and the same trait can be seen in Greek-language histories – or, more accurately, pseudohistories – of Egypt written in the Greco-Roman period.² For example, such accounts claim that, during the Second and Third Intermediate Periods, the Eastern Delta was the locale of mysterious groups of herdsmen who had either assumed the rulership of Egypt or had at least attempted to do so.³ These troublesome herdsmen seem to have been the result of two separate etymological confusions. Behind these “bad herdsmen” of the north-east – unworthy kings and would-be usurpers – lie the Hyksos and, most probably, a divinised representation of the Assyrian army.

As we shall ultimately see, it is possible that something more than coincidence and linguistic accident underpins the repeated characterisation of foreign interlopers from the north-east as herdsmen from the Eastern Delta.

2. Shepherd Kings: The Hyksos and the Exodus

The Hyksos rulers of the Second Intermediate Period, who established their capital at Avaris in the Eastern Delta, were reported by the Jewish historian Josephus (1st century
CE) to be “Shepherd Kings.”

This identification occurs within his Greek-language polemic *Against Apion*. Josephus claims that the passage in question is a verbatim extract from the second book of Manetho’s *Aegyptiaca*; this lost work represents the only known native narrative of the history of ancient Egypt to be written in Greek. Hyksos is a Greek rendering of the Egyptian phrase ḫkṣ(w) ḥḥ.s.wt, “Ruler(s) of Foreign Lands.” As we shall see, Manetho’s – or Josephus’s – misinterpretation probably arose from an over-literal translation of the equivalent term ḫkṣ(w) ḥḥ.s.w, “Ruler(s) of the Shepherds.”

Josephus’s account, which we will next examine in detail, was influential; for example, it was repeated in the 4th century CE by Eusebius, the bishop of Caesarea, an important Christian polemicist and historian.

Josephus ascribes to Manetho’s second book of *Aegyptiaca* the following information about the Hyksos:

“There came, after a surprising manner, men of ignoble birth out of the eastern parts, and had boldness enough to make an expedition into our country, and with ease subdued it by force, yet without our hazarding a battle with them. So when they had gotten those that governed us under their power, they afterwards burned down our cities, and demolished the temples of the gods, and used all the inhabitants in a most barbarous manner; nay, some they killed, and led their children and their wives into slavery. At length they made one of themselves king, whose name was Salatis [...] He chiefly aimed to secure the eastern parts, as foreseeing that the Assyrians, who had then the greatest power, would be desirous of that kingdom, and invade them; and as he found in the Saite Nomos [Sethroite], a city very proper for this purpose, and which lay upon the Bubastic Channel, but with regard to a certain theological notion was called Avaris, this he rebuilt, and made very strong by the walls he built about it [...]”

In reality, Hyksos rule was the result of migration and/or infiltration rather than invasion. It represented a domination of Lower Egypt by Canaanite peoples who had settled in the Eastern Delta; these probably seceded from central Egyptian control near the end of the 13th Dynasty.

It is curious that Manetho/Josephus should mention the possibility of Assyrian invasion in connection with this first wave of “shepherds,” for – as we shall see in Section 4 – a subsequent wave of “shepherds” is likely to be none other than the army that Salites (Dynasty 15, 1648-1590 BCE) allegedly feared – even if it was almost a millennium late in arriving. After naming the next five kings of the Hyksos dynasty, Josephus continues to quote Manetho as follows:

“And these six were the first rulers among them, who were all along making war with the Egyptians, and were very desirous gradually to destroy them to the very roots. This whole nation was styled Hycos, that is, Shepherd-kings: for the first syllable, Hyc, according to the sacred dialect, denotes a king, as is Sos a shepherd; but this according to the ordinary dialect; and of these is compounded Hycsos: but some say that these people were Arabians.”

Hyc – or, more properly ḫkṣ – is the Middle Egyptian word for “ruler,” so this part of the etymology is largely correct. Moreover, Sos is probably the Coptic Shos, “herdsman,” in which case a group of pastoral nomads – “shepherds” – is indeed indicated. Shos is in turn derived from the Middle Egyptian term Shasu (ṣṣ.s.w), which denotes Bedouin tribesmen. Nomadic groups designated as Shasu roamed the desert regions of both
Canaan and Nubia;\textsuperscript{16} in this case, the northeastern origin of the Hyksos and the location of their capital in the Eastern Delta makes it clear that they came from the Levant. The Shasu of Edom, south of the Dead Sea, may have worshipped the god Yahweh (who became the sole god of Israel; Exodus 15:1-26, Deuteronomy 32:8-9) from as early as the 15\textsuperscript{th} century BCE,\textsuperscript{17} a point which may have a bearing on the later entanglement of Hyksos and Israelite traditions (discussed below).

Josephus then interrupts Manetho’s narrative to provide an alternative etymology for the name Hyksos.\textsuperscript{18}

Now in another copy it is said that this word does not denote \textit{kings}, but, on the contrary, denotes \textit{captive shepherds}, and this on account of the particle \textit{Hyk}. In Egyptian \textit{hyk}, in fact, and \textit{hak} when aspirated, expressly denote “captives”;\textsuperscript{19} and this seems to me the more probable opinion, and more agreeable to ancient history.

Underpinning this etymology is the Middle Egyptian word \textit{HAq}, “plunder” or “captive.”\textsuperscript{20} It is only later that Josephus explains why he favours this understanding over the correct one (\textit{HqA}, “ruler”); his logic is revealed in the final excerpt below. But first, Josephus resumes Manetho’s narrative thus:\textsuperscript{21}

“These people, whom we have before named kings, and called shepherds also, and their descendants [...] kept possession of Egypt five hundred and eleven years.”\textsuperscript{22}

After that, resurgent Theban kings drove the “shepherds” from the Egyptian hinterland into their capital, Avaris, and laid siege to them. The ultimately unsuccessful siege was abandoned in favour of a negotiated withdrawal of the foreigners to the Levant. Josephus concludes Manetho’s narrative as follows:\textsuperscript{23}

“They [= the Egyptians] came to a composition with them [= the Hyksos], that they should leave Egypt, and go, without any harm to be done to them, wherever they would; and that, after this composition was made, they went away with their whole families and effects, not fewer in number than two hundred and forty thousand, and took their journey from Egypt, through the wilderness, for Syria; but that as they were in fear of the Assyrians, who had then the dominion over Asia, they built a city in that country which is now called Judea, and that large enough to contain this great number of men, and called it Jerusalem.” Now Manetho, in another book of his, says “That this nation, thus called shepherds, were also called captives, in their sacred books.” And this account of his is the truth; for feeding of sheep was the employment of our forefathers in the most ancient ages; and as they led such a wandering life in feeding sheep, they were called shepherds. Nor was it without reason that they were called captives by the Egyptians, since one of our ancestors, Joseph, told the king of Egypt that he was a captive, and afterward sent for his brothers into Egypt by the king’s permission.

This account identifies the biblical Exodus of the (proto)Israelites with the expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt. In reality, the latter is likely to have predated the former,\textsuperscript{24} and the biblical account may to some extent incorporate folk-memories of the Hyksos’ banishment.\textsuperscript{25} One point of overlap lies in the biblical assertions that the Israelites built the city of Raamses/Rameses (Exodus 1:11) and commenced the Exodus from there (Numbers 33:3-5); a geographic link with the Hyksos becomes apparent in Jacobus van Dijk’s
statement that “Rameses II [...] expanded the city of Avaris and made it his great Delta
residence called Piramesse (‘house of Rameses’), the Raames of biblical tradition.”
Although in part ascribed to Manetho, the identification of the Hyksos’ expulsion with the
Exodus is most likely a later Jewish interpolation – one well suited Josephus’s agenda.

That the Egyptians considered at least some hḥz. w ḫs. wt – the Egyptian phrase that
underpins the Greek word Hyksos – to be the chieftains of herdsmen is suggested by a
scene in the Middle Kingdom tomb of Khnumhotep II at Beni Hasan. There, clad in
Joseph-grade coats of many colours (Genesis 37:3) and conducted by a hḥz ḫs t named
ib-ḥṣ (Abisha, an Israelite name found in 1 Chronicles 2:16), a group of thirty-seven
Asiatics (‘mt.w, Aamu) arrive before the nomarch, accompanied by many animals (Fig. 1).
The non-pack animals are wild ungulates (specifically, ibex and gazelle), so they are
perhaps symbolic of the delegation’s desert homeland rather than representative of their
flocks; nevertheless, the nomads tend to them in the manner of herd animals. The gazelle
may be an emblem of “Gazelle-land,” which Hans Goedicke identifies as “denoting part of
the Wadi Tumilat and the north-eastern Delta fringe as the area of nomads,” but the
inscription says the nomads originate from a locale called šw(t), which is thought to be in
northern Sinai.

We have already noted the interchangeability of the words ḫs. wt and ḫs. w (Shasu), with
the latter probably accounting for the first word of “Shepherd Kings.” William Murnane
observes that, at the start of Egypt’s 19th Dynasty, “Problems with Shasu marauders had
been perennial in southern Palestine” and that in this case “The terrain that the Shasu had
rendered impassable would be the hilly country bordering the main highway between
Egypt and Asia, lying south of this road [...] and following the coastal plain northeast into
Palestine.” As rebels of the Levantine hill-country, the Shasu were behaving in a manner
consistent with that expected of the (proto)Israelite population in Canaan/Palestine, and
such attributes – together with the previously-noted association of some Shasu with
Yahweh – provide good reasons for believing that the Israelites may have been
sedentarised Shasu.

No doubt the identification of the (proto)Israelites as Hyksos “shepherds” by ancient
Jewish redactors (3rd century BCE – 1st century CE) was aided by Genesis 46:31-32, the
passage in which Joseph said to his family: “I will go up and tell Pharaoh, and will say to
him, ‘My brothers and my father’s household, who were in the land of Canaan, have come
to me. The men are shepherds, for they have been keepers of livestock; and they have
brought their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have.’”

In the last block quotation from Josephus, we may note that, once again, this author
(anachronistically) mentions the threat posed by the Assyrians – a foreign power that will
form the focus of Section 4 in this paper.

3. Lepers and shepherds: Amarna and Israel

Later in Against Apion, Josephus again cites Manetho to narrate a postscript in which the
“shepherds” (Section 2) return to Egypt 518 years after their expulsion. By this stage,
Avaris had become a refuge for 80,000 lepers and other “unclean people” from Egypt.
This population decided to revolt against the Egyptian king and, to bolster their strength, the rebels invited the shepherds to return to their former stronghold of Avaris. As a result, an army of 20,000 shepherds returned to this city from the Levant.\(^{44}\) Josephus reports Manetho as saying:\(^{45}\)

\begin{quote}
Meanwhile, the army that had come back to Egypt ... and joined with the “unclean” Egyptians treated the people so impiously that their previous occupation as “Shepherds” seemed like a golden age to those who saw their current sacrileges. They not only burned cities and villages, plundered the sanctuaries, and befouled the images of the gods, but they also kept the kitchens going to cook the sacred animals that the people revered. They forced priests and prophets to slay and butcher the animals, and they threw the men out naked. It is said that the man who gave them their constitution and laws was a priest of the people of Heliopolis [...]
\end{quote}

The stated chronology – 518 years after the expulsion of the Hyksos – places the return of the shepherds at the beginning of the 21\(^{\text{st}}\) Dynasty, i.e. at the start of the Third Intermediate Period. This was indeed the start of a time of instability and fragmentation within Egypt, during which non-Egyptians – specifically, Libyans and Nubians/Kushites – came to power in the 23\(^{\text{rd}}\) to 25\(^{\text{th}}\) Dynasties.\(^{46}\) However, the Egyptian kings named in the narrative belong to the New Kingdom. The pharaoh against whom the “unclean people” rebel is called Amenophis, which situates the crisis in the 18\(^{\text{th}}\) Dynasty,\(^{47}\) while “his son Sethos, who was also named Ramesses” is clearly a conflation of the first three kings of the 19\(^{\text{th}}\) Dynasty.\(^{48}\)

The historical crisis in the 18\(^{\text{th}}\) Dynasty, which rocked Egyptian society to its foundations, was of course the religious upheaval implemented by Amenhotep IV – better known as Akhenaten – in which the traditional pantheon of Egyptian gods was suppressed in favour of sole worship of the Aten, a deity whose manifestation was the sun-disk. The religious perversions of the “unclean Egyptians” and the identification of their leader as a priest of Heliopolis – the “city of the sun” – provide a good fit for the Atenist revolution and its sun-struck protagonist, Akhenaten.\(^{49}\) Moreover, the thirteen-year “reign of the lepers”
approximates the twelve-year duration of the rule of this king from his purpose-built
capital, Akhetaten. Manetho’s king Amenophis is clearly an amalgam who embodies the
pre-Amarna era of Amenhotep I–III, against whose inherited traditions the heretic pharaoh
rebelled. None of Akhenaten’s revolution involved foreign intervention, but it is obvious
that his forced relocation of Egypt’s capital from Thebes to Akhetaten – a completely new
city, built at forced pace in the desolate plain of Amarna – has become confounded with
memories of that other remote and unwelcome capital, the Hyksos stronghold of Avaris. It
is for this reason that the “shepherds” were brought back to Egypt by Manetho and/or
Josephus. It would seem that whenever Egypt is in peril, subversive shepherds are sure to
be involved.

Ultimately, Manetho’s king Amenophis and his son Ramesses return with their armies
from their thirteen-year exile in Ethiopia (by which is meant Nubia and other territory
south of Egypt), whereupon they successfully purge Egypt of the “unclean ones” and
their shepherd reinforcements, pursuing any survivors “as far as the borders of Syria.”
Subsequent to the restoration of traditional religion in Egypt, the historical Ramesses II did
of course campaign into Nubia and the Levant; his expansionism established a “golden
era” of Egyptian power and prosperity akin to the country’s former glory under Amenhotep
III.

Egypt’s religious convulsion in the 18th Dynasty had impacts far beyond its time and place.
Akhenaten’s exclusive worship of the Aten has prompted some modern scholars to identify
him as the first monotheist, an honour traditionally enjoyed by Moses. Jan Assmann’s
groundbreaking book, Moses the Egyptian, connects the two figures, tracing the origins of
Moses’s monotheism back to Akhenaten. However, as we shall soon see, Assmann is far
from the first person to make such an identification. It is well known that Akhenaten is the
new name that Amenhotep IV chose for himself when he disavowed Amun, the king of the
traditional gods honoured in his original theophoric name; his new theophoric name
reflected his new-found devotion to the Aten. Josephus – claiming the authority of
Manetho – tells us that the heretical priest from Heliopolis, in whom we have recognised
the figure of Akhenaten, did precisely the same thing: “When he changed his allegiance, he
changed his name.” What is startling is the new name that we are told he chose for himself.
Originally called Osarseph, in honour of the traditional god Osiris, “he changed his name
and was called Moses.”

Ian Rutherford has pointed out that some geographical details of the Exodus under the
biblical Moses, which (as we noted in Section 2) may recapitulate the expulsion of the
Hyksos, show intriguing overlaps with surviving narratives of the “lepers and shepherds.”
For example, Josephus reports another tradition about the “unclean ones,” this time on the
authority of Chaeremon, in which – after their expulsion by Amenophis – they linked up
with another group of exiles at Pelusium. Baal Zephon, opposite which the escaping
(proto)Israelites were specifically instructed to camp (Exodus 14:1 & 9), was a major
sanctuary at Pelusium – moreover, one devoted to a Canaanite storm-god worshipped
locally as Seth of Avaris, and thus linked with the Hyksos. Mention of Pelusium, as well
as the fact that this second group of exiles had been denied permission by Amenophis to
cross Egypt’s border, suggests that they could have elements in common with the
(proto)Israelites of the Exodus. In addition, the Sea of Reeds (Heb. yam suf; Exodus 13.18), which provides such a memorable part of the (proto)Israelites’ journey toward Sinai (Exodus 14-15), is most likely located within the marshlands of the Eastern Delta, the territory of the troublesome shepherds. Indeed, the Hebrew word suf (“reeds”) is thought to be a loanword from Egyptian; yam suf is probably cognate with the Egyptian toponym ps twf, “the Papyrus Thicket,” which we will meet again in Section 4. The Onomasticon of Amenope lists ps-tw finger toponym at the eastern edge of the Delta.66

4. Marauding shepherds: The Aamu and the Assyrians

The next time that troublesome shepherds from the north-east make an appearance Egyptian (pseudo)history occurs in the Inaros-Petubastis cycle of stories, which are thought to date to early Ptolemaic times. In the words of Franziska Naether, who draws upon the groundwork of Joachim Quack:

We turn to another region, the Eastern Delta, which was home to a group constantly opposing the crown, especially in the Third Intermediate Period (c. 1069-664 BCE). Though dwelling in Egypt, the inimical shepherds living there are one of the groups challenging the Pharaoh in the narrative cycle of the Inaros-Petubastis-Stories. They are called “herdsmen” (“sm.w) and appear especially in the stories The Fight for the Prebend of Amun and The Fight for the Armor of Inaros. [...] One can assume that the territory of the rebellious shepherds in the Eastern Delta was not far away from the Sinai and their presumed wandering communities must have led to this designation – even though [in the stories] they perform Egyptian rites and worship Amun.70

Petubastis has been identified with the historical Petubastis II, a Delta king of the 23rd Dynasty based in Bubastis or Tanis. Date estimates for his reign vary widely: some assign Petubastis’s rule to ca. 765-730, making him a contemporary of Takelot III and his successors in Upper Egypt at the end of the 22nd Dynasty. Others identify Petubastis as the king of Tanis ca. 680-665 BCE, and thus coincident with the two late-25th Dynasty rulers of Upper Egypt, the Kushite kings Shebitqo and Taharqo. The latter assignment also places Petubastis as a king in the Delta at the time of the Assyrian invasions of Egypt. Even if the historical king who informs the Petubastis of the Inaros-Petubastis story cycle predates the arrival of the Assyrians, other key characters in the narrative – including Inaros – “are indeed historical characters of the 7th century.” Petubastis’s rule is complex. It opens (1) with king Petubastis, who has travelled to Thebes with his army, claiming the prebend of Amun – a benefice or salary paid to the High Priest of Amun – for his son, Anchhor. But, as Thomas Schneider explains, this decision is contested.

(2) The next day, a contender for the benefice of Amun appears on the stage: a young Horus priest from Buto [...] claims that it is he who is actually entitled to the benefice of Amun. [...] He is accompanied by 13 shepherds [...] To the dismay of Petubastis, Amun confirms the righteousness of the young priest’s claim. [...] The Horus priest intends to take the barge [= sacred barque] of Amun as a security. Anchhor (Chayris), supported by the general Teos, and the Horus priest become enraged and prepare to fight.

(3) Petubastis’ son Anchhor (Chayris) and his army from four nomes is opposed to the Horus priest and the thirteen shepherds. In the first two duels, the Horus priest defeats Anchhor.
(Chayris), and one of the shepherds defeats Anchhor’s general Wertepiamonnut. They are bound in fetters and imprisoned below deck on the barge of Amun. The priest and his supporters celebrate their victory on board with a festival. [...]  

(4) [...] Minnebmaat, prince of Elephantine and overseer of Upper Egypt, arrives to support Petubastis. He is able to reach, in four consecutive duels with four of the shepherds, draws. Then Petechonsis and Pemau arrive from the north and engage in more duels with the remaining shepherds. Although the text becomes very fragmentary towards the end of the story, it may be inferred that each of them fought another four times (1 + 4 + 4 + 4 [=13, one duel for each shepherd]).  

(5) The end of the story and solution to the conflict is not preserved. In accordance with the oracles conveyed throughout the text, it seems likely that a solution respecting the interests of all sides was reached. The combative herdsmen supporting the priest from Buto are described as coming from the swamps and marshland, which clearly indicates an origin in the Delta, and most probably its eastern part, for “the Delta, and particularly the Eastern Delta, was a marshy land in antiquity.” For example, the shepherd-warriors’ homeland is so understood by Naether in the first block quotation in this section.

If the nature of the ending suggested by Schneider – i.e., part (5) in the block quotation – is indeed correct, then the resolution of the Petubastis tale mirrors that of the negotiated solution to the “Hyksos problem,” as reported by Manetho/Josephus; in both cases, the troublesome “shepherds” were repulsed under a negotiated settlement rather than vanquished in open combat. In reality, of course, the Hyksos were defeated militarily by the Theban kings Sequenenre, Kamose and Ahmose I (17-18 Dynasties) and the Asians were either expelled from Egypt or – if they had useful skills – resettled within it. It is worth noting that Joachim Quack believes that the tradition of Osarseph and his shepherd army from the Levant, as recorded in Greek-language texts about Egypt (Section 3), helped to shape the Egyptian story of the Horus priest from Buto and his shepherd-warriors from the Delta.

The interpretation of sm.w given by Naether in the first quotation of this section is correct; in Demotic – the language of the stories – this word means “herdsmen” or “shepherds.” However, the classical meaning of sm.w in Middle Egyptian – which we already encountered in Section 2 – is “Asiatics,” a sense which persisted into Demotic times. The intercompatibility of the terms sm(w) and hkk3(w) h3s(w) – the latter being the Egyptian phrase underpinning the word Hyksos – has already been illustrated by Fig. 1. The homeland of the shepherds in The Fight for the Prebend of Amun is called pr dww, beneath which probably lies the Egyptian toponym ps-tw3w – a locale at the eastern edge of the Delta named “the Papyrus Thicket” that we met at the end of Section 3. Its location at the north-eastern boundary of Egypt would certainly accord with these sm.w n.(w) pr dww being Asians.

If the warriors in The Fight for the Prebend of Amun were indeed Asians rather than shepherds, then there are good reasons to identify them with the Assyrians, who – first under Esarhaddon, and then under Ashurbanipal – invaded Egypt via the Eastern Delta between 674 and 667 BCE. As we have seen, Petubastis may well have been a king at Tanis in the Eastern Delta at the time of the Assyrian invasions. Several tales from the
Inaros-Petubastis cycle centre upon Esarhaddon or other Assyrian figures, and *The Fight for the Armour of Inaros* – one of the stories cited in the Naether quotation as involving the shepherds – links Petubastis directly to Esarhaddon’s unsuccessful campaign of 674 BCE in the following terms:

Pemu said: Woe and misery! By Re-Harakhte, the Chief of the Gods, the Great God
when the chief of Ashur Esarhaddon son of S[ennacherib ---
] to take Egypt from pharaoh Petubastis,
I jumped in, I made very much bloodbath and destruction.
I caused him to return to the east

Overall, Jacqueline Jay concludes that “The chaotic period immediately following the Assyrian domination provides a rough background for a number of tales [...] including Prebend and Armour.”

Thomas Schneider analyses the attributes of the Asiatic shepherd-warriors – thirteen armoured Aamu sporting horned helmets, shields and sickle-shaped swords – and concludes that they represent a divinised form of the Assyrian army. This idea is corroborated by the fact that the Egyptians speak of them exactly as one would speak of a foreign army that threatened to invade the kingdom. More specifically, Schneider suggests that the details of these warriors – their number, dress and weapons – may well derive from genuine Egyptian encounters with battle-standards featuring the Assyrian war-god Nergal flanked by his twelve divine warriors. Based on possible paronomasia, Schneider also identifies the unnamed priest as Horchebi, grandson of the Kushite king Shabaqo and son of the High Priest of Amun, whose office he successfully inherited (along with its prebend) around the time of the Assyrian conquest of Thebes. The conquest, which in the tale is encoded by the inconclusive conflict between the Kushite overseer of Upper Egypt (aided by pro-Kushite princes from the north) and the invading shepherd-warriors, did essentially end in a negotiated resolution, as per point (5) above – one that quickly proved beneficial to Egypt.

5. The rebel shepherds (*boukoloi*) of Greek novels

The idea that the Aamu warrior-shepherds discussed in the last section might have served as an inspiration for the warlike *βουκόλοι* (*boukoloi*, “herdsmen”) of the Nile Delta that appear in Greek novels of the 2nd-3rd centuries CE dates back at least to Gaston Maspero in the late 1800s. Ian Rutherford observes that “On the level of semantics, there is no doubt that the Egyptian word ‘aAm’ [...] would have been taken as the precise equivalent to the Greek *boukoloi*.” The *boukoloi* feature prominently in fictional stories by three writers: *Aithiopica*, by Heliodorus of Emesa, *Cleitophon and Lucipe*, by Achilles Tatius, and *Ephesiaca*, by Xenophon of Ephesus.

In *Aithiopica*, the leader of the *boukoloi* – Thyamis – is the son of a Memphite priest called Kalasiris; Thyamis’s younger brother, Petosiris, has dispossessed him of the priesthood, such that the two end up fighting a duel at Memphis. The situation is resolved by the
unexpected arrival of Kalasiris. The storyline of this sub-plot seems to echo that of The Fight for the Prebend of Amun: in both cases, the herdsmen are led by the son of a priest who has unfairly been dispossessed of his father’s office; the herdsmen take the side of the plaintiff against the established authority of the king or governor; the opposing sides engage in duels over the dispute; and the conflict is ultimately resolved in a non-violent manner. Of the boukoloi, we are told that they eat raw fish (to the Greek mind, a hallmark of barbarity) and that:

The Herdsmen cultivate an alarming appearance, particularly as regards their hair, which they pull forwards to meet their eyebrows, and toss violently as it falls over their shoulders, for they are well aware that long hair makes lovers seem more alluring, but robbers more alarming.

In Cleitophon and Lucippe, the protagonists sail from Pelusium toward Alexandria, but at one point their boat is menaced from the shore by a group of boukoloi:

All at once, the shore was full of wild frightening men, all large and black (not deep black like Indians, but black as, say, a half-Ethiopian might be), bareheaded, heavyset but quick on the feet. They all shouted in a foreign language ...

The homeland of these brigands is described thus:

In the region inhabited by the robbers, the Nile when it retires [after the annual inundation] leaves many ponds, shallow and muddy, on which the robbers sail, in light boats containing one person: any other kind would run aground at once. When water fails, these are taken on the sailor’s back and carried to a deeper channel. Among the swamps, the uninhabited islands are covered with papyrus growing close, behind which, as behind a rampart, the pirates hold their councils and plan their ambushes. In the inhabited islands are rude huts, like a city walled in by the marsh. The robbers had retired to the island of Nicochis, for this place, though connected with the land by a causeway, was otherwise wholly surrounded by the lagoons.

Both of the novels’ protagonists end up being captured by the boukoloi, and at one point Lucippe is in danger of being sacrificed, for: “We have a tradition”, says the leader of the robbers, ‘that sacrifices, especially human sacrifices, must be performed by newly initiated bandits.’ The ritual typically includes cannibalism, for we are told of a previous instance where they were obliged to “offer up a maiden, taste her liver, put her body in a coffin, and retire so that the enemy might take the site of the sacrifice.”

In Ephesiaca, herdsmen capture the hero – Habrocomes – when he makes landfall in the Eastern Delta. These bandits, who are not called boukoloi but ποιμένες (poimenes, “shepherds”) convey Habrocomes to Pelusium, where he is sold into slavery.

Taken as a whole, we can see telltale indications of continuity between these stories and earlier accounts of shepherd-warriors from the Delta (Sections 2-4). The association with piracy, which in the novels arises naturally from the waterlogged maze presented by the boukoloi’s homeland and sees them capture both Cleitophon and Lucippe, is a signature activity even in far less conducive environments; for example, in The Fight for the Prebend of Amun, the warrior-shepherds seize the sacred barque of Amun and imprison their
captives below its deck. However, we should also recognise that, to some extent, the Greek stories about bandit boukoloi reflect the actual situation in the Delta in Ptolemaic times, ca. 200 BCE. As Günther Hölbl relates:

A papyrus dating to the end of the third century [BCE ...] describes how Egyptian bandits attacked a military post and a temple precinct; the attackers came from an area outside the village community. This is obviously an example of the well-known phenomenon of anachoresis in which individuals would seek refuge in the deserts and the Delta marshes as a result of the intensive exploitation of the Egyptian peasantry. Such indigents gathered together and plundered wherever there was something to be had; it was of no concern to them whether the owners were Greeks, Egyptians or even Egyptian priests. From the Rosetta Stone we also know that, at the end of [Ptolemy IV] Philopator’s reign [= 204 BCE], civil war raged in the Delta. In light of the fact that the “enemies” even attacked sanctuaries, this war should be viewed as a rebellion of the lower classes inspired by social injustice. This uprising in Lower Egypt dating to the last years of Philopator’s reign represented a growing movement which would be completely quashed only in 185 [BCE].

Despite the accuracy of this quotation, native resistance to Greek rule in Ptolemaic Egypt was concentrated not in the Delta but in Upper Egypt, especially around Thebes. For example, Horwennefer and Ankhwennefer led a rebellion in which parts of Upper Egypt seceded from Ptolemaic control between 206-186 BCE. Egyptian nationalists vilified their Greek overlords as successors to the Hyksos (of some 1500 years earlier!) by referring to them as “Sethians” or “Typhonians.” This slur occurs repeatedly in the anti-Greek Potter’s Oracle (Demotic, 2nd century BCE), which bewails: “For in the time of the Typhonians they [= Egyptians] will say: ‘Wretched Egypt, you are wronged by terrible iniquities wrought against you.’” Although nationalist polemics equated the Greeks with the Hyksos, they do not seem to have portrayed them as royal or reprobate shepherds.

Some of the Greek novels’ supposedly fictional accounts of harassment by boukoloi even contain details that can be verified as authentic. For example, the island of Nikokhis and its lawless denizens from Cleitophon and Lucippe has a counterpart in contemporaneous historical records – an administrative papyrus of the late 2nd century CE from Thmouis in the Eastern Delta (just south of Mendes, and somewhat west of Avaris) complains of attacks from the “unholy inhabitants of Nikokis,” and records that “most of the inhabitants of the village of Kerkenouphis had been killed by the ‘impious men of Neikokis’, who came to the village and burnt it.” At a later date, the record-keeper adds that “some fishermen had been killed by the ‘impious men of Nikokhis’.” In another cross-over of fact with fiction, the historian Cassius Dio tells of a group of boukoloi who caused a civil disturbance in 171 CE under a priest called Isidorus:

The so-called Boukoloi were disturbed in Egypt and made the rest of Egypt revolt under the priest Isidorus. First, they deceived the Roman centurion, wearing female clothing as if they were the wives of the Boukoloi, and about to give them gold on behalf of their husbands. When he approached them, they killed him, and his companion they sacrificed and swore an oath over his entrails, and ate them. Isidorus was the best of his generation in bravery. Then in pitched battle defeating the Romans in Egypt, they would have taken Alexandria itself, had not Cassius sent from Syria conducted a campaign in such a way as to destroy their common purpose and separate them from each other.
In this historical account we see a group of herdsmen being led by a priest and engaging in armed conflict with the authorities, as in *The Fight for the Prebend of Amun* and in *Aithiopica*; the group has communal rituals, as in *The Fight for the Prebend of Amun* (when, for example, the shepherd-warrior Aamu hold a festival on the captured barque of Amun to celebrate their victory), and these rituals may extend to human sacrifice with cannibalism, as in *Cleitophon and Lucippe*. In such cases, it is difficult to determine whether art is imitating life or life is imitating art. Rutherford quite reasonably suggests that, as Egyptian nationalists operating in a time of unrest, “the Boukoloi whom Avidius Cassius subdued 172 CE are likely to have called themselves ʿsm.w and to have set themselves in the tradition of the heroes of the Inaros-Petubastis cycle.”

The location of the *boukoloi* homeland is a subject of debate. In Achilles Tatius’s *Cleitophon and Lucippe* it is (as we saw above) near Nikokhis in the Eastern Delta. The *Ephesiaca* also locates its bandit-shepherds in the Eastern Delta. (In both accounts, we might note that Pelusium provides a point of intersection with the Hyksos/Israelite trajectories of Section 3.) Herodotus refers to a “Bucolic” branch of the Nile, and this has traditionally been identified with the modern Damietta branch in the Eastern Delta. More speculatively, the class of Egyptian warriors that Herodotus calls ἔρμοτύβιες (hermotubies) might take their name from a Hellenised contraction of ʿsm.w n(w) pr ḫw.f, the term that designated the warrior-shepherds in *The Fight for the Prebend of Amun* (Section 4); numbering 160,000 in the 26th Dynasty, the hermotubies were reportedly drawn from six nomes of the central and western Delta. Other accounts, too, favour the west. In Heliodorus’s *Aithiopica*, a lake and its fringing marshland – collectively designated Boukolia – “is the home of the entire bandit community of Egypt, some of them building huts on what little land there is above water, others living on boats that serve them as both transport and dwelling.” As the novel’s plot seems to place this locale near Chemmis, it has been identified with an actual region of the Western Delta – near Alexandria and Lake Mareotis – which is named Boukolia. Eratosthenes tells of a time, prior to the founding of Alexandria, when its “harbour at Pharos […] was not of free access, but watched and guarded by herdsmen, who were robbers, and [who] attacked those who attempted to sail into it.” Although these herdsmen were probably not outlaws opposed to central authority so much as natives who sought to repel foreign invaders, their memory may, over time, have become assimilated into that of the *boukoloi*. There is also indirect support for a Western Delta location in the texts discussed in Section 4, insofar as the young Horus priest in *The Fight for the Prebend of Amun* comes from Buto. Overall, we may conclude with Ian Rutherford that the *boukoloi* were probably not confined to just one half of the Delta, but could be encountered in any of its marshlands.

If we accept that the Egyptian *boukoloi* and their antecedents always enjoyed a pan-Delta distribution, as opposed to their range being expanded only in the Hellenistic imagination, then the “savage shepherd” trope is opened up to other influences coming to Egypt from the west. It is to one such candidate that we now turn.

6. Other influences: *The Herdsman’s Tale*

The *boukoloi* are probably not solely the heirs of the Hyksos, Aamu, Assyrians, and so on. To some extent, these wild, frightening, black, hairy male marsh-dwellers – who are eaters
of raw flesh and lovers of human sacrifice – may also be gender-inverted transformations of the hairy goddess from *The Herdsman’s Tale* (Dynasty 12), whose abnormal appearance strikes terror into the eponymous herdsman in his marshland setting. As the preserved text breaks off, she is approaching the herdsman as a naked woman whose hair is disordered, a nexus reminiscent of the crazy coiffure of Heliodorus’s *boukoloi*, whose long hair made them more alarming opponents but more alluring lovers.

Thomas Schneider interprets the ambiguous goddess as a Sakhmet-like deity of the Libyan desert who also frequents marshland thickets and who, in this case, is making an appearance in the Western Delta. A folk-memory of her may live on in a widespread Libyco-Berber myth that tells of “a kind of ogress, a man- and animal eating demon. She is a big cat or lioness, but […] when represented as an old and malicious woman, she still retains her animal characteristics – her body is covered with a fur, she has a mane, her face is black, she has long teeth or tusks, and hands with claws. […] She is of startling wildness, eats human flesh and the animals of farmers and herdsmen.” If outlaw-shepherd *boukoloi* are in part a transformation of this unruly force, the result is not only inverted in gender (although we might remember Cassius Dio’s cannibal *boukoloi*, who disguised themselves as women and then ate their ambushed victim’s entrails) but also in function, for in his new Greek setting the *Tale*’s herdsman has morphed from prey into predator.

### 7. Unique or paradigmatic? The Marsh Arabs of Iraq

It is interesting to note that Mesopotamia had an approximate counterpart to Egypt’s troublesome marshlanders: the tribal occupants of the swamps in the south of Sumer, where the Tigris and Euphrates flowed into the Persian Gulf. Accordingly, the Assyrians (Section 4) of the expanding empire in Mesopotamia, who had a formidable army but no navy, had been obliged to engage Phoenician ships and sailors “to subdue Chaldaean rebels in the marshes near the Persian Gulf.” Nevertheless, the Chaldeans intermittently came to rule Babylonia. Chaldaean kings were often fiercely anti-Assyrian, as in the case of Marduk-apla-iddina II (721-710 BCE) – the biblical Merodach-Baladan (2 Kings 20:12; Isaiah 39:1) – who was driven back into the marshes by the Assyrian king, Sennacherib. Chaldaean revenge was was eventually exacted. In 626 BCE, Nabopolassar proclaimed himself the founder of a new Chaldaean dynasty; “by 616, Nabopolassar had consolidated his powers over Babylonia to such an extent that he was able to invade Assyria,” whose capital – Nineveh – he sacked in 612. Babylonia went on to replace Assyria as the regional superpower.

As the Assyrian homeland occupied the northern part of Mesopotamia, whereas Babylonia comprised the southern part, opposition to Assyrian rule from the marshlands of the far south would probably be better viewed as nationalist resistance to an occupying power rather than rebellion against central authority. This would align the Chaldaean marsh-dwellers more closely with Eratosthenes’ pre-Alexandrian cowherds (Section 7) than with the other warrior-shepherd manifestations considered in this paper, since both groups could be viewed as nationalist natives who sought to repel foreign invaders. Either way, the “intransigent marshlander” trope has persisted in Mesopotamia until modern times. Over the millennia, the swamps of Sumer evolved into the marshlands of southern Iraq and became the homeland of the *Arab al-ahwār* (“Arabs of the marshland”), often referred to pejoratively as *ma’dān* (“plain-dwellers”) or *shroog* (“those from the East”) (Fig. 2).
Fig. 2. Marsh Arabs in the wetlands of southern Iraq. (a) A traditional village of reed houses, *ca.* 1978. Photo by Nik Wheeler/Corbis via Getty Images, reproduced here under licence (order 2066937298). (b) Marsh Arabs poling a traditional *mashoof* in 2003. Photo by Hassan Janali; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Digital Visual Library, via Wikimedia Commons, public domain.¹⁴³
They are herdsmen insofar as water-buffalo provide their main source of subsistence. These marshes were long considered a source of – and refuge for – opponents of Saddam Hussein, whose Ba’athist regime exacted retribution for a failed uprising in 1991 by diverting the waters of the Tigris and Euphrates away from the wetlands, drying them out and displacing most of their occupants. The Marsh Arabs’ traditional habitation (Fig. 2a) and transport (Fig. 2b) resemble those attributed by Achilles Tatius to the boukoloi of the Eastern Nile Delta and by Heliodorus to Boukolia (Section 5). In the two panels of Fig. 2 we can almost see the boukoloi returned to life, “some of them building huts on what little land there is above water, others living on boats that serve them as both transport and dwelling.”

8. Conclusion

In the Ancient Near East, a primary duty of the righteous king was to “be the shepherd of his people.” In Egypt, the first hieroglyph of the word hkh (“rule,” “ruler”) is a shepherd’s crook and the Egyptian king carried a crook and flail as insignia of his rulership; yet, despite this, invocations of the shepherd as a metaphor for Egyptian kingship are uncommon in textual references. However, it is not entirely absent; for example, in the Teaching for King Merikare – which seems to be set in the First Intermediate Period – the king is urged to “Shepherd the people, the cattle of God, For it is for their sake that He created heaven and earth.” Indeed, Jan Assmann claims that from this period until the New Kingdom “the role of social reformer and ‘good shepherd’ was a part of the official image of the king.”

The “good shepherd,” or legitimate king, stands in stark contrast to the “bad shepherds” examined in the current paper, which feature in (pseudo)historical accounts from the Late and Greco-Roman Periods. Behind some of these unworthy kings (Section 2) and conquerors (Section 4) we may discern the historical reality of the Hyksos and the Assyrians; as foreign migrants or invaders from Asia, respectively, neither were regarded as legitimate overlords of Egypt. For completely different etymological reasons, both found themselves refracted in later literature as “shepherds.” In Greek, the Hyksos (hkh3.w ḫss.wt, “Rulers of Foreign Lands”) morphed into enigmatic “Shepherd Kings,” perhaps via an overzealous translation of the cognate term ḫkh3.w ḫss.w, “Bedouin chieftains.” For their part, the Assyrians were identified in literary tales as aAm.w (Aamu), a classical Egyptian word for “Asiatics” that – in the Demotic used to record the stories – had changed in meaning to denote “herdsmen.”

The Hyksos – referred to by Hatshepsut as “the abomination of the gods” – represented the first non-native overlords of Egypt, while the arrival of the Assyrians constituted the first organised attempt by a distant superpower to invade Egypt. In literature relating to both of these national traumas, the foreign agents end up recast as shepherds from the Eastern Delta. Interestingly, the first group of troublesome shepherds were resurrected for an ancillary role in the retelling of a third trauma (Section 3), namely the religious revolution of the Amarna period. This time, the historical event was purely internal to Egypt, but its impact was just as shocking as any foreign takeover – perhaps even more so. It was seemingly unthinkable that shepherds from the Eastern Delta were not somehow involved.
Is it possible that there is something more than coincidence and linguistic accident to the repeated characterisation of foreign infiltrators or invaders from the north-east as troublesome shepherds from the Eastern Delta, and the fanciful recruitment of the same group to explain Egypt’s internal aberrations? Perhaps this typecasting of villains as shepherds reflects millennia of friction and conflict between the Egyptian farmers of the Nile valley the nomadic Bedouin of the surrounding deserts, augmented by a bitter memory of Egypt’s subjection to the pastoralist Hyksos who migrated from the Levant into the Eastern Delta. Witness how Akhenaten’s henchmen – who were neither foreigners or nomads – ended up vilified as Hyksos “shepherds;” it would be even easier to recast the Assyrian army, who really did arrive in the Eastern Delta from the Levant, in a similar light. And, as already noted in Section 4, some later stories of shepherd armies from the north-east may have been influenced by the structure of earlier ones. The Greeks of Ptolemaic Egypt, too, were likened by Egyptian nationalists to the Hyksos, although seemingly not to shepherds. However, the memory of problem pastoralists from the north did not disappear, and the motif may even have become augmented by mythological elements of Lybico-Berber origin. Ultimately, the time-honoured trope of outlaw shepherds in the Delta migrated from Egyptian (pseudo)historical narratives into Greek novels, where they appear in the marshlands as pirate-bands of boukoloi (“herdsmen”) or poimenes (“shepherds”) – groups which, like their antecedents, seem to have straddled the boundary between fiction and fact. These groups had Mesopotamian counterparts in the swamp-dwellers of southern Babylonia – a population whose successors have perpetuated the marshlanders’ reputation for rebellion into modern times.

In ancient Egypt, then, we see a recurring distrust and vilification of pastoralists from the marshlands in the north-east of the country. In light of this, we should applaud the biblical Joseph’s insight – and indeed prescience – when he welcomed his newly-arrived family to Egypt with the warning that “All shepherds are abhorrent to the Egyptians.” Equally uncanny was his belief that the proper place for foreign shepherds attracted by Egypt’s bounty was the land of Goshen – a locale in the Eastern Delta.

© Lloyd D. Graham, 2020, excluding third-party quotations and Fig. 2. v02_15.11.20

Cite as: Lloyd D. Graham (2020) “‘Bad Shepherds’ of the Eastern Delta,” online at https://www.academia.edu/44151544/_Bad_Shepherds_of_the_Eastern_Delta.

Endnotes

All URLs were accessed 22 Sep 2020, unless otherwise noted.

1 Quack (2006), 499.
3 Josephus, Against Apion, 1.75-92, in Whiston (1999), 942; Quack (2005), 55-57; Naether (2019), 33-34.
4 Josephus, Against Apion, 1.75-92, in Whiston (1999), 942.
5 Josephus, Against Apion, 1.74, in Whiston (1999), 942.
6 Verbrugghe & Wickersham (1996), 99 fn. 18 caution that it is not certain that Manetho used the word Hyksos or gave any interpretation of the term.
7 Bietak (1980); Rutherford 114, fn. 33; Morentz & Popko (2010), 103-104.


Schneider (2010), 157-159.

Bourriau (2003), 177-179.

The first Assyrian invasion attempt, under Esarhaddon, occurred in 674 BCE; Taylor (2003), 353.


Erman & Grapow (1971) vol. 4, 412.10.

Faulkner (1962), 261.

Bryan (2003), 227.

Bietak (2015), 19-21


The first part of this sentence is taken from the Loeb translation of Manetho’s *Aegyptiaca* [Waddell (1940)], which is also the sense given by Verbrugghe & Wickersham (1996), 157-158. In contrast, the version in Whiston ([1999], 942) reads “shepherds” instead of “captives,” and thus makes no sense.

Faulkner (1962), 163; Bietak (1980).


Actually, just ca. 100 years of Hyksos rule; Bietak (2015), 32; however, the 400-Year Stela from the temple of Seth in Avaris commemorates four centuries of Canaanite cult influence at Avaris; Bietak (2015), 31-32.


Schulz (2010). For example, Bietak (2015) convincingly places the Exodus in the late Ramesside period (20th Dynasty).


Van Dijk (2003), 292. Piramesse (at modern Qantir) was deliberately founded adjacent to Avaris, the former Hyksos capital, and – over time – came to engulf it.


Verbrugghe & Wickersham (1996), 118.

This is the traditional translation, consistent with the Septuagint; however, the Hebrew of this Genesis phrase is uncertain, and may just indicate a long robe with sleeves (NRSV).

Goedicke (1984). In the Chronicles genealogy, Abishai is a descendant of Judah, one of the sons of Jacob/Israel; the capital of the land of Judah in later times was Jerusalem.

Faulkner (1962), 38.


Rutherford (2000), 113, who credits Prof. Rittner (presumably Robert K. Rittner) with identifying them as pastoralists with their herd animals.

Goedicke (1984), 209.


Murnane (1990), 41.


Biblical quotations are taken from the New Revised Standard Edition.


Goedicke (1984), 209.

Here I essentially follow the translation of Goedicke (1984), 205, after consulting the transcription of Newberry (1893), Pl. 38 (digitised by the Heidelberg Historic Literature project, online at https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/newberry1893bd1/0144).

In this reading, the end of the sentence is understood as a present perfect subordinate (circumstantial) clause. The tempting alternative reading, ... *msdm.t Ini n-f* *sm 37*, in which *Ini* is understood as a prospective relative form to yield “... black eye-paint, which the 37 Aamu will bring to him [= Khnumhotep]” is precluded because *msdm.t* is feminine and, as an antecedent, would require *Ini.t*. The same grammatical issue precludes the understanding of *Ini* as a perfective relative form; accordingly, Goedicke ([1984], 206-207] understands the final clause to be an independent statement and (like the present paper) takes the suffix pronoun to refer to Abisha.


Verbrugghe & Wickersham (1996), 162.

Taylor (2003).

Amenhotep I-IV were kings of the 18th Dynasty.
In order: Ramesses I, Seti I and Ramesses II.

Assmann (2002), 227. For Akhenaten’s moon-struck Mesopotamian counterpart, Nabonidus, and the afterlife of this Babylonian “heretic king” in Near Eastern legend, see Lewy (1949).

Assmann (2002), 227. Construction of Akhetaten was begun in Akhenaten’s year 5 [Van Dijk (2003), 269] and Akhenaten died in his year 17 [Van Dijk (2003), 272], which yields an interval of 12 years.

Straddling existing tropes and anticipating ones yet to come in the present paper, Jan Assmann [(2002), 228] writes that: “The Amarna trauma was the motive for recasting memories of the Hyksos Period in the form of a story of religious conflict. […] But the Amarna trauma did not only retrospectively transform the memory of the Hyksos, it also marked Egyptian views and experience of things foreign, and Asiatic in particular, in the age to come. Thus the legend of the thirteen-year rule of the lepers can be seen as collapsing reminiscences of Amarna with memories of the Hyksos, especially of Assyrian conquest, Persian and Greek rule, and ultimately the encounter with the Jews.”

Assmann (2002), 227. Construction of Akhetaten was begun in Akhenaten’s year 5 [Van Dijk (2003), 269] and Akhenaten died in his year 17 [Van Dijk (2003), 272], which yields an interval of 12 years.

Straddling existing tropes and anticipating ones yet to come in the present paper, Jan Assmann [(2002), 228] writes that: “The Amarna trauma was the motive for recasting memories of the Hyksos Period in the form of a story of religious conflict. […] But the Amarna trauma did not only retrospectively transform the memory of the Hyksos, it also marked Egyptian views and experience of things foreign, and Asiatic in particular, in the age to come. Thus the legend of the thirteen-year rule of the lepers can be seen as collapsing reminiscences of Amarna with memories of the Hyksos, especially of Assyrian conquest, Persian and Greek rule, and ultimately the encounter with the Jews.”

Verbrugghe & Wickersham (1996), 100 fn. 19.

Verbrugghe & Wickersham (1996), 163.

Van Dijk (2003), 289-290.


Freud (1955).

Assmann (1997).

Verbrugghe & Wickersham (1996), 163.


So Rutherford (2000), 115. Note, however, that Manfred Bietak considers all claimed identifications of this toponym to be controversial; Bietak (2015), 29 fn. 52.


Bietak (2015), 27.

Bietak (2015), 27.

Bietak (2015), 27 fn. 46.

Verbrugghe & Wickersham (1996), 163.


Bietak (2015), 27.


Bietak (2015), 27 fn. 46.

It is “The next time” in terms of the stories’ settings within Egyptian chronology. The Inaros-Petubastis tales are thought to date to early Ptolemaic times; Rutherford (2000), 109, incl. fn. 13. The oldest records of the two Inaros-Petubastis tales that concern us certainly date to Ptolemaic times [Jay (2016), 128; Schneider (2015), p.5 of online typescript PDF], so the tales’ composition predates Josephus and possibly even Manetho. For estimated dates of both the settings and the extant manuscripts of the two Inaros-Petubastis tales, see Jay (2016), 128. It is quite possible that the extant copies of these Demotic tales of rebel shepherds from the Delta also draw upon the historical reality of that region ca. 200 BCE, when peasants driven to desperate measures by Ptolemaic over-taxation formed bandit gangs that launched indiscriminate attacks on any source of wealth; see ahead to the quotation from Günther Hölbl in Section 5.

Rutherford (2000), 110, translating from P. Spiegelberg, col. 4.

Schulz (2010).

Schulz (2010). Depauw [(1997), 88] says that “the historical background of the characters, mostly warriors, is the Third Intermediate Period […] The narratives themselves, however, do not refer to actual historical facts and are timeless.”

Schneider (2015), p.6 of online typescript PDF.

Schulz (2010). Consistent with this, Jay [(2016), 136] says that “the tale’s portrayal of conflict between the minor kings and nobles of the Delta certainly fits the scenario at the end of the Third Intermediate Period.”


Schneider (2015), p.5-6 of online typescript PDF.

“The young priest arose against Ankh-Hor, the royal son, as a lion against a wild ass, as a nurse against her nursling (?); he seized the inside of his armour, he threw him on the ground, he bound him firmly, he pushed him on the road before him. The thirteen herdsmen rushed after him, and not a person in the world attacked them, so great was the fear that they imposed.” Rutherford (2000), 110, translating from P. Spiegelberg, col. 5.

In line with this, Rutherford [(2000), 110] suggests that “Ankh-Hor probably secured the Benefice, and the young priest of Buto departed with his band of thirteen herdsmen.”
The association of herdsmen with marshland and swamps is iconic. For example, in the early 12th-Dynasty *Herdsman’s Tale* (discussed in Section 6), the preserved portion begins: “Look, I had descended to (= I was down in) the marsh/swamp, which is close by this low-lying land/pasture” (v. 1-2) and the text later contains the declaration “There will be no driving me away from this marsh” (v. 19); Schneider (2007), 311.

Quack (2005), 57. Quack ([2005], 87) also sees parallels between the shepherd assistants of the Horus priest and the marshland shepherds who assisted the young Horus in the Delta in mythological times, a connection reiterated by Rutherford (2000), 111, incl. fn. 21. Schneider ([2015], p.9 of online typescript PDF) reviews the textual layers identified by Quack and other scholars.


Schneider (2015), p.7-8 of online typescript PDF. Rutherford [(2000), 114] points out that the two senses could have a common root, if Asiatics were mainly perceived as working as herdsmen.

84 Schneider (2015), p.9 of online typescript PDF. Rutherford [(2000), 114] points out that the two senses could have a common root, if Asiatics were mainly perceived as working as herdsmen.


86 Rutherford (2000), 110. Both terms are here given in the singular.


88 See Section 4, second block quote, point (3). Rutherford (2000), 111.
113 Hölbl (2001), 154.
115 Pfeiffer (2019). For the Hyksos as worshippers of Seth/Typhon, see Section 3.
116 Smith (2020).
120 See Section 4, second block quote, point (3). Rutherford (2000), 111.
121 The barbarous trait of eating uncooked flesh (in *Aithiopica*, raw fish) taken to its ultimate extreme.
123 Rutherford (2000), 115 fn. 39. In addition, the domination of Egypt by the detested Persians had begun when Cambyses II defeated Psamtek III at Pelusium in 525 BCE, and was reprised when Artaxerxes III defeated Nectanebo II at the same site in 343 BCE. In the Egyptian imagination of Ptolemaic times, Pelusium must have been well enmeshed with the activities of unwelcome foreign powers.
125 E.g. Negm et al. (2015), Fig. 1. See the discussion in Rutherford (2000), 112 fn. 24.
127 The term underpinning the name of Herodotus’s other class of Egyptian warrior, the *kalasiris*, also features in *The Fight for the Prebend of Amun*; see note 101.
128 Fischer-Bovet (2013), 210-211.
129 Heliodorus 1.5. Translation from Rutherford (2000), 112.
131 Rutherford (2000), 109. In the same vein, earlier Greek material (*ca.* 6th century BCE) tells of “Bousiris, a mythical Egyptian king and eponym of a town in the Delta region [... who] himself is also on occasion depicted as black-skinned” and who is known for “his transgressive act of sacrificing any foreigner who made landfall in Egypt;” Skinner (2012), 103-104.
133 Schneider (2007), 316.
134 Schneider (2007), 316.
135 Schneider (2007), 317-318. Schneider’s proposal remains viable even now that additional fragments from the *Herdsman’s Tale* have been recovered; Escolano-Poveda (2017), 37-40.
137 Van de Mieroop (2016), 271.
139 Van de Mieroop (2016), 273.
140 Van de Mieroop (2016), 285.
141 Van de Mieroop (2016), 286.
143 Wikimedia Commons, online at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Marsh_Arabs_in_a_mashoof.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Marsh_Arabs_in_a_mashoof.jpg).
144 Partow (2001), 16-17, incl. Fig. 8.
145 Wheeler (2020).
146 Partow (2001), 23-35.
147 Heliodorus 1.5. Translation from Rutherford (2000), 112; quoted at greater length earlier in Section 5.
148 Winter (2008), 83.
149 Sign S38; Gardiner (1957), 508.
151 Graham (2019), 37 (endnote 103).
152 Tobin (2003), 164.
154 Bourriaud (2003), 203.
155 Genesis 46:34. For a discussion of actual motivations for this distaste, see Pinker (2009), 161-166.
156 Genesis 46:34.

Bibliography

All URLs were accessed 22 Sep, 2020, unless otherwise noted.


