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Resistance against the Achaemenid Empire: the Egyptian Rebellions of 521 and 487/86 BC

Wijnsma, U.Z.

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Resistance against the Achaemenid Empire
The Egyptian Rebellions of 521 and 487/86 BC

PROEFSCHRIFT

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Promotores: Prof. dr. C. Waerzeggers
Prof. dr. J.F. Quack (Universität Heidelberg)

Promotiecommissie: Prof. dr. O.E. Kaper
Prof. dr. P.M. Sijpesteijn
Prof. dr. C.C. de Jonge
Dr. A. Schütze (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München)
Dr. D. Agut-Labordère (Centre National de la Recherche
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Uzume Z. Wijnsma

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introducing Achaemenid Egypt

In the sixth to fourth centuries BC, the Achaemenid Persian Empire (ca. 550 – 330 BC) was the dominant political power in the ancient Near East. The empire had been founded by Cyrus II, an initially obscure ruler from Persia (southwestern Iran). Though we know little about Cyrus' life, we know that he managed to defeat the Median Empire of Astyages, the Lydian Empire of Croesus, and the Neo-Babylonian Empire of Nabonidus in little over a decade.¹ According to a legend that developed after Cyrus' death, the imperial founder had died while fighting on the Eurasian steppe, attempting – though failing – to incorporate the nomadic tribe of the Massagetae into his fledgling state (Herodotus, *Histories* 1.201-14).² The empire's expansion continued after Cyrus' passing. Persian armies went on to campaign in e.g. Sudan, Libya, Greece, Macedonia, the Ukraine, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. The resulting state was the largest the world had ever seen. In the words of one scholar: at its height, the Persian Empire stretched “from the Aral Sea and the western edge of the Himalayas (Central Asia) to the Sahara (Africa), and from the Indus River Valley (Indian subcontinent) to the Danube (southeastern Europe) – the first world empire, indeed.”³ For ca. a century and a half, Egypt was one of its many provinces.

Before Egypt became a part of the Persian Empire in the late sixth century BC, the country had been ruled by a series of native kings. This period is known today as the Twenty-Sixth or Saite

¹ For introductions to the Persian or Achaemenid Empire – terms that will be used interchangeably in the present study – see e.g. Wiesehöfer, *Ancient Persia*, Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, and Waters, *Ancient Persia*. In addition, Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, provides an introduction to the sources on which the study of the empire is based, and Jacobs and Rollinger, *Companion to the Achaemenid Persian Empire*, provide introductions to a large number of empire-related topics. For the difference between Persian, Achaemenid and Teispid, see e.g. Jacobs, ““Kyros, der große König,”” 635-63, and Henkelman, “Cyrus the Persian,” 577-634.

² The story about the Massagetae was but one version of Cyrus' death. For the variety of the tradition, see e.g. Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 99-102 nos. 3.34-36, and Beckman, “Many Deaths of Cyrus,” 1-21.

³ Waters, *Ancient Persia*, 82.

Figure 1. Map of the world of the Persian Empire: at its height, the empire stretched from the Aral Sea to the Sahara, and from the Indus River Valley to the Danube. (Adapted by the author from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Achaemenid_Empire_500_BCE.jpg)



Dynasty (ca. 664 – 526 BC).⁴ The Saite Dynasty is sometimes regarded as a “renaissance” of sorts: after several centuries in which Egypt had been politically divided and, at times, occupied by foreign powers, the kings of the Delta city of Sais had ushered in a period of unified rule. It was characterized by a resurgence of monumental building: construction works were carried out at temple sites throughout the country, and royal statues were erected the size of which rivaled those from the New Kingdom.⁵ Outside of its borders, the Egyptian army competed with the Neo-Babylonian Empire for hegemony in the Levant, and with kings of Kush for control over Nubia.⁶ Nevertheless, the last king of the Saite Dynasty – Psamtik III (527 – 526 BC) – was unable to keep the armies of Persia at bay. In the early months of 526 BC, Cambyses, Cyrus’ son and successor, crossed the Sinai desert and arrived in Egypt.⁷ He was met by the Egyptian army near Pelusium, a site at the eastern edge of the Delta. According to a late fifth century BC account, the battle that ensued was fierce; the bones of the fallen soldiers could still be seen on the battlefield after several decades of exposure (Herodotus, *Histories* 3.12). Though hard won, the Persian victory at Pelusium freed the road to Memphis, where Cambyses deposed Psamtik III and claimed Egypt for the empire that had been created by his father.⁸ The decades that followed are known as the Twenty-Seventh Dynasty or the (First) Persian Period of Egypt (ca. 526 – 400 BC).

⁴ For introductions to Saite Egypt, see e.g. Lloyd, “Late Period,” 282-86, Jansen-Winkeln, “Bild und Charakter,” 165-82, Perdu, “Saites and Persians,” 140-49, Agut-Labordère, “Saite Period,” 965-1027, and Leahy, “Egypt in the Late Period,” 720-26.

⁵ For Saite royal monuments, see e.g. Arnold, *Temples of the Last Pharaohs*, 63-91, and Der Manuelian, *Living in the Past*, 297-385. See also Youssef, “So Many Pharaohs,” on a colossal statue of Psamtik I that was discovered at Matariya. For an overview of both royal and private hieroglyphic texts that can be dated to the Saite Dynasty, see Jansen-Winkeln, *Die 26. Dynastie*.

⁶ See e.g. Perdu, “Saites and Persians,” 142-49, and Agut-Labordère, “Saite Period,” 986-95. Both also emphasize the military aspirations of the Saite Dynasty in the eastern Mediterranean.

⁷ Cambyses’ conquest used to be dated to ca. 525 BC. For the new date, see Quack, “Zum Datum der persischen Eroberung Ägyptens,” 228-46.

⁸ The departure point for reconstructions of Cambyses’ conquest of Egypt is usually the *Histories* of Herodotus, Book Three of which provides an extensive account of the invasion – including the battle at Pelusium and the siege of Memphis; see e.g. Cruz-Urbe, “Invasion of Egypt,” 10-60, and Kahn, “Note on the Time-Factor in Cambyses’ Deeds,” 103-12. For a recent critique of its reliability, see Irwin, “Herodotus’ *Logos* of Cambyses’ Egyptian Campaign,” 95-141.

Though Cambyses' conquest of Egypt must have been a momentous event on the international scene, contemporary accounts of the invasion are regrettably scarce.⁹ One of the earliest and rare Egyptian versions of the conquest can be found in the autobiography of Udjahorresnet, a high-placed official who served under the reigns of Amasis, Psamtik III, Cambyses, and Darius I.¹⁰ The autobiography consists of a hieroglyphic inscription that covers part of a naophorous statue. It may originally have stood in the temple of Neith at Sais.¹¹ The sections that relate to Cambyses' reign are concentrated beneath the left and right arms of the figure, and on the naos which it holds between its hands. The Persian conquest is described in the following terms: "The Great Chief of all foreign lands, Cambyses came to Egypt, the foreign peoples of every foreign land being with him. He gained majesty of this land in its entirety. They established themselves in it, and he was Great Ruler of Egypt and Great Chief of all foreign lands."¹² After this succinct description, the text primarily emphasizes the importance of Udjahorresnet's role in ensuring a smooth transfer of power to the Persian invader. One of the first things Udjahorresnet claims to have done, for example, was to compose an Egyptian throne name for Cambyses: the king would be known in Egypt as Mesutire, i.e. "Offspring of Re." In addition, Udjahorresnet would have showed the king the greatness of Sais, the former dynastic capital of Egypt, and the splendor of its goddess Neith.¹³ Throughout the text, Cambyses appears to have been more than willing to cooperate: on the request of Udjahorresnet, he purified the temple of Neith, ousting a group of foreigners who had dwelt there; he commanded that

⁹ Aside from Egyptian texts that are dated to Cambyses' reign in Egypt (on which see below), the earliest allusion to the conquest is included in the Bisitun inscription of Darius I. The Old Persian and Elamite texts simply state that Cambyses went to Egypt; the Babylonian text adds that he went "with troops" (*itti uqu*); see Bae, "Comparative Studies," 88-91.

¹⁰ For an edition of Udjahorresnet's autobiography, see Posener, *La première domination perse*, 1-26 no. 1. An English translation is provided by Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 117-22 no. 4.11. For recent studies of the statue and the man which it commemorates, see and Wasmuth and Creasman, "Udjahorresnet and His World."

¹¹ The statue has been housed in the Vatican since the eighteenth century. The history of the statue before the Vatican's acquisition remains obscure; see Ruggero, "Udjahorresnet's *Naoforo Vaticano*," 149-65, and Wasmuth, "Statues of Udjahorresnet," 196-99.

¹² Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 118 no. 4.11 c. Compare Posener, *La première domination perse*, 6-14 no. 1 B.

¹³ See *ibid.*, and Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 118 no. 4.11 c-d. For a discussion of the composition of Cambyses' Egyptian throne name, and its possible religious context, see Ladynin, "Udjahorresnet and the Royal Name of Cambyses," 88-99.

offerings should be given to the goddess and that all her festivals should be organized as before; and he even entered the temple himself, and touched the ground before the deity's cult statue.¹⁴

To some extent, the picture of “pharaonic continuity” that is painted by the autobiography of Udjahorresnet – a text which was probably written during the reign of Darius I – is corroborated by texts that were contemporary with Cambyses' reign of Egypt. At present, ca. nine Egyptian texts can be dated to this timespan. They consist of an unprovenanced seal and seal impression, a sculptural fragment with the beginning of Cambyses' name in paint from the palace of Apries at Memphis, two inscriptions on an Apis epitaph and Apis sarcophagus from the Serapeum at Saqqara, and ca. four demotic papyri from Asyut.¹⁵ The inscriptions on the Apis monuments, for example, confirm that Cambyses adopted the Egyptian throne name “Mesutire”: the name features twice on the Apis sarcophagus, directly followed by “Cambyses,” and twice on the Apis epitaph.¹⁶ In addition, the monuments show that he adopted an Egyptian Horus name as well: “Smatawy,” i.e. “The one who joins the Two Lands.”¹⁷ What is more, the texts on the seals, the Apis inscriptions, and the date formulae of the papyri indicate that the Persian king was consistently referred to by traditional Egyptian titles. He was the “Pharaoh,” “King of Upper and Lower Egypt,” “Lord of the Two lands,” and the “Beautiful God” who “lives forever.”¹⁸ This policy of adopting the royal traditions of the recently conquered region was likely meant to legitimate Cambyses in the eyes of the Egyptian population. A similar policy had been implemented by Cyrus after his conquest of Babylonia: though the Persian king was known by the traditionally Elamite title “king of Anshan,” contemporary Babylonian texts simultaneously referred to him as “king of Babylon” and “king of Sumer and Akkad.”¹⁹ Identical titles had been claimed by the kings of the Neo-Babylonian Dynasty. Even if we allow

¹⁴ See Posener, *La première domination perse*, 14-17 no. 1 b-C, and Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 118 no. 4.11 e-f.

¹⁵ See Hodjache and Berlev, “Objets royaux,” 37-39 (seal and seal impression), Petrie, *Palace of Apries*, 11 no. 31 (sculptural fragment), Posener, *La première domination perse*, 30-36 nos. 3-4 (Apis inscriptions), Spiegelberg, *Demotische Inschriften und Papyri*, 42-48 nos. 50059-60, 52-53 no. 50062, and Shore, “Swapping Property at Asyut,” 200-206 (papyri from Asyut). The Asyut papyri are currently being studied by Jannick Korte at Heidelberg University.

¹⁶ See Posener, *La première domination perse*, 30-36 nos. 3-4, and Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 122-24 nos. 4.12-13.

¹⁷ See *ibid.*

¹⁸ See *ibid.*, Hodjache and Berlev, “Objets royaux,” 37-39, and Spiegelberg, *Demotische Inschriften und Papyri*, 42-46 no. 50059, 52-53 no. 50062.

¹⁹ See e.g. Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 70-75 nos. 3.21-22.

for some self-aggrandizement on Udjahorresnet's part, it is plausible that local officials such as he would have played an important role in the integration of the new Persian rulers.

Aside from a general continuity in pharaonic ideology and occasional collaboration with local elites, however, it is equally clear that Cambyses' conquest of Egypt brought fundamental changes to Egyptian society. Simply put, Egypt became reduced to a province of a far-flung empire that was centered on Iran. This process of provincialization included, among other things, the installation of a Persian satrap as head of the country, the presence of imperial garrisons at various sites in Egypt, and the redirection of people and precious goods to the east. The first two elements of this process are visible in Egyptian documents from the reign of Darius I onwards.²⁰ The third element is already reflected in cuneiform documents from the reign of Cambyses. On 31 December 524 BC, for example, a Babylonian named Iddin-Nabû sold a slave and her three-month-old daughter in Babylon. The resulting sale document identified the slave as an "Egyptian" from "the plunder of his bow" (Camb. 334, l. 4).²¹ The tablet implies that Iddin-Nabû had participated in Cambyses' conquest of Egypt, returned to Babylonia ca. two years after the invasion, and reaped the benefits by selling an Egyptian woman whom he had seized during the war. Though unique in its evocative detail, the text does not stand alone. In the years that followed 526 BC groups of Egyptian extraction pop up in the private documents of Borsippean families, and in the administrative documents of the Ebabbar temple at Sippar.²² During the reign of Darius I such migration continued. The documents of the Persepolis Fortification Archive show that groups of Egyptian laborers – some of which numbered in the hundreds – travelled through southwestern Iran in the early fifth century BC.

²⁰ The first satrap of Egypt known from Egyptian documents is Pherendates, who is attested in the second half of the reign of Darius I; see e.g. Martin, "Demotic Texts," 289-95 C1-3. According to Herodotus, a satrap called Aryandes had been installed by Cambyses but was executed by Darius I (Herodotus, *Histories* 4.166). The first Aramaic documents from Elephantine, which document the best-known garrison of Achaemenid Egypt, also date to the reign of Darius I; see e.g. Porten and Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents*, 2:118-19 B5.1, 103-5 B4.2. A late fifth century BC letter claims that some of the Judeans had already lived on the island before the reign of Cambyses; see *ibid.*, 1: 68-71 A4.7, and compare Herodotus, *Histories* 2.30.

²¹ For an edition of the text, see Strassmaier, *Inschriften von Cambyses*, 190-91 no. 334, and Peiser, *Texte juristischen und geschäftlichen Inhalts*, 292 no. XII. The text is also known from two duplicates; see Pinches, *Inscribed Babylonian Tablets*, 73-76 no. 17.

²² For a group of Egyptian Carians at Borsippa, see Waerzeggers, "Carians of Borsippa," 1-22. For Egyptians at Sippar, see Strassmaier, *Inschriften von Cambyses*, 176-77 no. 313, and Hackl and Jursa, "Egyptians in Babylonia," 158-60. For further comments, see 2.5.2-2.5.3.

Many of these groups were probably put to work on royal construction sites.²³ The texts are a vivid reminder that Udjahorresnet's autobiography shows us only one side of a complicated process, in which different groups of Egyptians would have experienced the Persian conquest in fundamentally different ways.

Indeed, that there were some groups in Egyptian society that chose a very different relationship with the Persian imperial regime than Udjahorresnet had done is clear from the decades that followed Cambyses' conquest: the history of Persian-Period Egypt was characterized by a series of rebellions. In the present study, "rebellion" is defined as armed resistance, which is aimed at the overthrow of an established government, and which is waged by the subjects of said government. The term will be used interchangeably with "uprising" and "revolt." Etymologically speaking, the latter may be understood as a "turning back" to a specific political order rather than a "war against" one.²⁴ In the case of Achaemenid Egypt these concepts appear to be conjoined: the episodes of armed resistance against Persian rule largely resulted in the (short-lived) establishment of native kings who adopted the pharaonic traditions that had been current under the Saite Dynasty.²⁵ Such rebellions and associated "rebel kings" left their traces in a number of different sources. Greco-Roman historians describe some of the episodes, for example, and refer to a handful as ἀπόστασις.²⁶ The latter is commonly translated as "rebellion" or "revolt"; it carries the connotation of a "defection" or "departure from" a previous order.²⁷ At times, Greco-Roman accounts include descriptions of battles between imperial and rebel forces, and an emphasis on the number of soldiers who died as a result of them.²⁸ Egyptian sources, by contrast, do not provide us with narratives of the rebellions, but with contemporary letters and contracts that sometimes refer to periods of violent unrest, and to non-Persian kings who ruled parts of Egypt.²⁹ When such references concern the same time

²³ See e.g. Wasmuth, "Egyptians in Persia," 134-36, Wasmuth, *Ägypto-persische Herrscher- und Herrschaftspräsentation*, 76-84, Henkelman, "Anhang," 273-363, and section 2.5.3.

²⁴ See e.g. Richardson, "Fields of Rebellion," xx n. 11.

²⁵ One may contrast this with the Babylonian rebellions of the Persian Period, at least one of which might have been aimed at usurping the universal kingship of the Persians, rather than the reestablishment of local Babylonian rule – though the evidence is admittedly scarce; see Beaulieu, "An Episode in the Reign of the Babylonian Pretender," 17-18.

²⁶ The word is recorded in different verbal forms; see Rottpeter, "Initiatoren und Träger," 10, and 2.2.1-2.2.2.

²⁷ Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 218-19.

²⁸ This is the case in descriptions of the rebellion of Inaros; see e.g. 2.2.2.

²⁹ For an elaborate overview of these sources, see 2.4.

period, and/or can be combined with non-Egyptian sources that more explicitly speak of a period of political resistance, we can be reasonably certain that we are dealing with a rebellion.³⁰ At present, the following Egyptian rebellions can be identified in the historical record. The first occurred in ca. 521 BC, five years after the Persians had invaded the Nile Valley. The rebellion followed Cambyses' death in the first half of 522 BC, and the succession struggle which his death engendered in Iran. The result was that at least a part of Egypt was reclaimed by an Egyptian man, who adopted the trappings of a traditional pharaoh. This man is known today as Petubastis Seheribre, or Petubastis IV.³¹ Though Egypt was eventually reconquered by Darius I, who succeeded Cambyses as king of the Persian Empire, a second rebellion broke out in ca. 487/86 BC, shortly before Darius I's death. It was defeated by Xerxes, Darius I's son and successor, in ca. 485/84 BC.³² A third rebellion followed in ca. 463/62 BC, at the start of the reign of Artaxerxes I. This rebellion took at least six years, and perhaps as much as ten years, to subdue.³³ In the decades that followed, parts of Egypt appear to have been claimed by a variety of Egyptian and Libyan rulers. In their case, it is unclear whether they were the leaders of additional rebellions, or the beneficiaries of a change in policy. It is possible that the Persian government began to allow the existence of (semi-)autonomous kings in the Delta to prevent further military conflict.³⁴ Regardless, a fourth rebellion broke out in ca. 404 BC: under the leadership of Amyrtaios II, Egypt successfully seceded from Persian rule, and remained independent for more than fifty years.³⁵ Even when Artaxerxes III reconquered Egypt

³⁰ For cases in which it is uncertain whether we are dealing with a rebellion, or with different phenomena – such as local kings whose rule was condoned by the Persian Empire, or episodes of (the threat of) violence which may not have been aimed at the overthrow of the government – , see e.g. 2.2.3, and 4.3.1.1. All sources for the Egyptian rebellions – which include, aside from Greco-Roman and Egyptian texts, Old Persian royal inscriptions, Greek inscriptions, Babylonian and Elamite sources, Achaemenid seals, and archaeological sources – are more elaborately discussed in Chapter 2.

³¹ For Petubastis Seheribre's rebellion, see Chapter 3. Note that another episode of early Egyptian resistance is sometimes associated with Psamtik III. It is doubtful whether the episode should be understood as a rebellion, however, let alone a historical one; see section 2.2.1.

³² See Chapter 4.

³³ See Lloyd, *Herodotus: Book II*, 1:38-43, and Kahn, "Inaros' Rebellion," 424-40.

³⁴ For a discussion of these kings, see 2.2.3. For a possible change in imperial policy, see e.g. Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 575-77, 596-97, and Hyland, "Aršāma, Egyptian Trade, and the Peloponnesian War," 253-54.

³⁵ See e.g. Lemaire, "La fin de la première période perse," 51-56, and Wojciechowska, *From Amyrtaeus to Ptolemy*, 22-72.

in ca. 343 BC – starting the so-called Thirty-First Dynasty or Second Persian Period (ca. 343 – 332 BC) – another rebel king undermined Persian authority.³⁶ Compared to the rest of the empire, the persistence and partial success of Egyptian resistance was quite exceptional.

The rebellions that plagued Persian Period Egypt from the sixth to the fourth century BC are well known among scholars of the Achaemenid Empire. Since the nineteenth century, histories of the Empire generally include a discussion of them, as do histories of Achaemenid Egypt.³⁷ These studies often emphasize that the rebellions were frequent and eventually successful. Nevertheless, despite the impact that the rebellions must have had on the Egyptian population and on the way in which the Persians governed the country, there are few studies which have analyzed them in depth. The primary concern of the studies that have been published thus far has been the publication of previously unpublished sources and the chronological reconstruction of specific episodes.³⁸ Studies which attempt to go beyond this – for example

³⁶ See e.g. Huss, “Der rätselhafte Pharao Chababash,” 97-112. The date of Artaxerxes III’s reconquest is traditionally given as 343 or 342 BC. For arguments that the conquest should be dated to 340/39 BC, see Depuydt, “New Date for the Second Persian Conquest,” 191-230. The thesis is rejected by Quack, “Zum Datum der persischen Eroberung,” 230 n. 7.

³⁷ For the rebellions in general histories, see e.g. Rawlinson, *Five Great Monarchies*, 396-97, 444-47, 472-74, 481-82, Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire*, 110-13, 228, 235, 303-4, 308-9, 312, 343, 373-74, 491-93, Cook, *Persian Empire*, 59-60, 99-100, 127-28, 130-31, 207, Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 115, 161, 409-10, 525, 573-77, 619, 717-18, and Waters, *Ancient Persia*, 72, 115-16, 159-60, 176, 189-90, 196. For the rebellions in histories of and introductions to Achaemenid Egypt, see e.g. Wiedemann, *Geschichte Aegyptens*, 211, 236-37, 245-61, Kienitz, *Die politische Geschichte Ägyptens*, 55, 60, 67-75, Lloyd, “Late Period,” 286-87, Ray, “Egypt 525 - 404 B.C.,” 261-62, 275-76, 283-84, Perdu, “Saites and Persians,” 150-53, Klotz, “Persian Period,” 4, 7-8, Sternberg-el Hotabi, *Ägypter und Perser*, 57-58, and Leahy, “Egypt in the Late Period,” 727-29.

³⁸ See e.g. Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 216-23, Cruz-Uribe, “Early Demotic Texts,” 59-66, and Kaper, “Petubastis IV,” 125-49 (rebellion of 522/21 BC); Cruz-Uribe, “On the Existence of Psammetichus IV,” 35-39, and Pestman, “Diospolis Parva Documents,” 145-55 (rebellion of 487/86 BC); and Sachau, *Aramäische Papyrus und Ostraka*, 1:128-30 no. 35, and Agut-Labordère and Chauveau, “Les ostraca de ‘Ayn Manâwir,” 1-4 (rebellion of 404 BC). Studies on the rebellion of 463/62, which is prominently described in Greco-Roman texts, and the rebellion of the Second Persian Period, for which multiple sources have been published since as early as 1851, are more numerous - and sometimes go beyond questions of chronology; see e.g. Libourel, “The Athenian Disaster,” 605-15, Bigwood, “Ctesias’ Account,” 1-25, Robinson, “Thucydidean Sieges,” 132-52, Chauveau, “Inarôs, prince des rebelles,” 39-46, Kahn, “Inaros’ Rebellion,” 424-40, and Quack, “Zur Datierung der Aršama-Dokumente,” 53-64 (rebellion of 463/62 BC); and Spalinger, “Reign of King Chababash,” 142-54, Ritner, “Khababash and the Satrap Stela,” 135-37, Huss, “Der rätselhafte Pharao Chababash,” 97-112, Burstein, “Prelude to Alexander,” 149-54, and Moje, “Zu den Namensschreibungen,” 55-62 (rebellion of Second Persian Period).

by analyzing the social context of the rebellions or their wider political context in more detail – are rare. The handful that exists, moreover, has engaged insufficiently with the Egyptian sources that are available for the periods of unrest.³⁹ Over the years, this lack of in-depth engagement has resulted in misinterpretations that continue to hamper our understanding of Egyptian resistance. The most important issues relate to chronology (“when”), geography (“where”), social context (“who”), and causes (“why”). It is often unclear how long the rebellions lasted, for example, which parts of the country they affected, who initiated and supported them, and why they were waged in the first place.

As long as the aforementioned issues are unresolved, the Egyptian rebellions will remain – to some extent – enigmatic episodes. This is regrettable for two reasons. The most obvious reason is that a comprehensive study of the Egyptian rebellions is indispensable for a proper understanding of Achaemenid Egypt: the latter suffered from the unrest every thirty years or so. Even if the rebellions did not affect the entire satrapy, their occurrence must have had a significant impact on Egypt’s general stability and governance. Another reason for studying the rebellions is their potential for understanding resistance in the Achaemenid Empire at large. As is well known, the political history of the Achaemenid Empire is traditionally based on ancient Greco-Roman texts.⁴⁰ This also applies to the rebellions that were waged against Persian rule. Though valuable, these texts were often written by men who lived beyond the borders of the Empire and who discussed events that had happened years, decades or even centuries before their lifetime. Both aspects have raised questions regarding their reliability.⁴¹ For the study of provincial resistance, the Egyptian rebellions are valuable case studies as they can be studied both on the basis of Greco-Roman texts and on the basis of local and contemporary sources.⁴² Because of this, we can gain a more nuanced understanding of the

³⁹ The studies in question are Briant, “Ethno-classe dominante,” 137-73, Rottpeter, “Initiatoren und Träger,” 9-49, and Ruzicka, *Trouble in the West*. For their limited engagement with Egyptian sources, see section 1.2 below.

⁴⁰ For an introduction to Greco-Roman texts that are relevant to the study of the Persian Empire, see Lenfant, *Les Perses vus par les Grecs*, 3-20, Brosius, “Greek Sources on Achaemenid Iran,” 658-68, and Bichler and Rollinger, “Greek and Latin Sources,” 169-85.

⁴¹ Criticism regarding the central role of Greco-Roman sources in reconstructions of the Persian Empire became especially vocal in the 1980s. See e.g. Kuhrt and Sancisi-Weerdenburg, “Introduction,” ix-xiii, and the discussions by Harrison, *Writing Ancient Persia*, 15-18, Colburn, “Orientalism, Postcolonialism, and the Achaemenid Empire,” 94-98, and McCaskie, “As on a Darkling Plain,” 151-58.

⁴² See above. The same observation applies to the Babylonian rebellions of 522-21 BC and 484 BC, which are likewise documented by contemporary sources; see e.g. Lorenz, *Nebukadnezar III/IV*, and Waerzeggers and Seire,

rebellions' origins and progress, which – ultimately – may help us understand similar problems in other parts of the Achaemenid Empire.

The present thesis aims to contribute to a better understanding of Egyptian resistance against Persian rule – and of provincial resistance against the Persian Empire in general – by providing a thorough study of the first two Egyptian rebellions. These rebellions began in ca. 521 BC, at the start of the reign of Darius I, and in ca. 487/86 BC, at the very end of Darius I's reign. The reasons for studying these two rebellions rather than the revolts of the mid-fifth century BC and those that occurred later are explained below. Before we discuss the aims and structure of the present thesis, however, it is important to take a step back and to review the status quaestionis of the study of the Egyptian rebellions in more detail.

1.2 The study of the Egyptian rebellions

In 2012, a book was published that surveyed the political history of Achaemenid Egypt. The book was called *Trouble in the West: Egypt and the Persian Empire (525 – 332 BCE)*, and was written by Stephen Ruzicka, a classically trained historian at the University of Carolina. At first sight, the Egyptian rebellions of the Persian Period appear to have been a primary concern of Ruzicka's study: the main topic of the book is the history of Egyptian-Persian conflict, from the revolts of the sixth and fifth centuries BC to the clashes between the Persian Empire and the independent Egyptians kings of the early fourth century BC. Ruzicka argues, in fact, that "Persia's primary concerns in the west" did not lie with the Greeks – as ancient Greek sources would have us believe – , but with the Egyptians.⁴³ However, as much as *Trouble in the West* highlights the rebellions of Persian Period Egypt, one cannot escape the impression that they are little more than illustrations for the book's larger thesis. Little is said about the exact reconstructions of individual revolts, and on which sources those reconstructions are based.⁴⁴

Xerxes and Babylonia. For other Persian Period revolts that might be reflected in contemporary sources, see Waters, *Survey of Neo-Elamite History*, 85 (an Elamite royal stela that might be attributed to Athamaita, a rebel king who is mentioned in the Bisitun inscription of Darius I), Hyland, "Achaemenid Messenger Service," 150-69 (Elamite tablets from the Persepolis Fortification Archive that reflect imperial travel between the Persian court and Sardis, which may have been connected to the Ionian revolt against Darius I), and Wiesehöfer, "Fourth Century Revolts against Persia," 101 (a Babylonian chronicle which records the arrival of Sidonian prisoners at Babylon and Susa, probably in the aftermath of the Sidonian revolt against Artaxerxes III).

⁴³ Ruzicka, *Trouble in the West*, xx.

⁴⁴ See e.g. *ibid.*, 23 (rebellion of 522/21 BC), 27-28 (rebellion of 487/86 BC).

As a result, how we know who initiated and supported the rebellions, which parts of the country they affected, and whether something can be said about their causes remains largely obscure.

Trouble in the West exemplifies a paradox that characterizes the study of the Egyptian rebellions more widely. As mentioned above, the rebellions are well known and frequently referred to in modern scholarship. It is acknowledged that the rebellions were recurrent, and even partially successful. On the other hand, the rebellions have enjoyed little study in their own right. To some extent, this paradox may be explained with reference to the limited information provided by Greco-Roman historiographical texts. The latter have long been used to reconstruct the political history of Achaemenid Egypt and of the Achaemenid Empire in general (see above). The primary focus of such texts, however, was the relationship between Greeks and Persians; events that affected other parts of the Persian-dominated world were occasionally mentioned, but rarely received the spotlight. In relation to the Egyptian rebellions, this means that some of the episodes are mentioned by Greco-Roman authors, but that the information provided on their origins, leaders, or geographical reach is generally scarce.⁴⁵ A typical example in this regard is the Egyptian rebellion of 487/86 BC. The rebellion is mentioned in the *Histories* of Herodotus, a late fifth century BC work that chronicles the history of the Greco-Persian Wars. The book claims that Egypt rebelled a few years after Darius I's failed campaign at Marathon. Darius I passed away before he could thwart the unrest; so it was Xerxes who eventually sent an army to Egypt and defeated the uprising. Nothing is said about the identity of those who initiated the rebellion, or the extent of its success in Egypt (Herodotus, *Histories* 7.1, 7.4-5, 7.7). By collecting references such as these, modern scholars have been able to reconstruct a rough timeline of the revolts that punctured Persian rule – but it is often impossible to provide details on the episodes.

The limited information provided by ancient Greco-Roman texts is, nevertheless, only a partial explanation for the scarcity of in-depth studies on Egyptian resistance. As is well known, the decipherment of hieroglyphs, demotic and cuneiform in the nineteenth century allowed scholars to study texts that were excavated from the former territories of the Persian Empire itself, and which were contemporary with the events discussed by Greco-Roman authors. Over the years, the ongoing excavations and publications of Egyptian sources have made Egypt one

⁴⁵ See the discussion in 2.2.

of the best-documented satrapies of the Persian Empire.⁴⁶ Though the majority of sources does not explicitly relate to rebellion, there is an important minority that does. As early as 1851, for example, a hieroglyphic inscription was found that mentioned the reign of a certain Khababash.⁴⁷ Subsequent finds indicated that Khababash had ruled parts of Egypt in the fourth century BC. He had probably led a rebellion in the Second Persian Period, during the reign of one of the last Persian kings. As this rebellion was not mentioned by Greek authors, the sources from Khababash's reign enlarged the list of Egyptian rebellions that were already known.⁴⁸ A more recent example consists of several temple blocks that were excavated in 2014. The inscriptions on the blocks indicate that they were made on behalf of Petubastis Seheribre.⁴⁹ The latter was identified as an Egyptian rebel king in the 1970s, who probably ruled (parts of) Egypt in 521 BC – at the start of the reign of Darius I.⁵⁰ Other finds that bear on this revolt consist of inscribed seals, demotic letters, and at least one Achaemenid royal inscription.⁵¹ Thus far, such sources have mostly been used to corroborate the existence of rebellions that were already known, and to refine their chronological reconstructions.⁵² Aside from this, they have received little sustained attention.

The limited role which sources from the reigns of rebel kings have played in studies of Egyptian resistance is evident when one looks at discussions regarding the rebellions' geographical

⁴⁶ For introductions to the textual and archaeological sources from Achaemenid Egypt, see e.g. Wuttmann and Marchand, "Égypte," 97-128, Vittmann, "Egyptian Sources," 155-62, and Wasmuth, "Egypt," 259-75. The Persian Period has received relatively little attention in Egyptology (see Colburn, *Archaeology of Empire*, 1-2), but this has been increasingly redressed in recent years: see e.g. Ruzicka, *Trouble in the West*, and Wojciechowska, *From Amyrtaeus to Ptolemy*, who survey the political history of Egypt in the sixth to fourth centuries BC, and Colburn, *Archaeology of Empire*, and Wasmuth, *Ägypto-persische Herrscher- und Herrschaftspräsentation*, who provide in-depth studies of contemporary texts and material remains from Achaemenid Egypt. One may also mention Qahéri, *Objets égyptiens*, who studies Egyptian sources that were excavated from the Persian heartland.

⁴⁷ Mariette, *Le Sérapeum de Memphis*, 54.

⁴⁸ See Huss, "Der rätselhafte Pharao Chababash," 97-99, Burstein, "Prelude to Alexander," 149-50, and Moje, "Zu den Namensschreibungen," 55-62.

⁴⁹ See Kaper, "Petubastis IV," 125-49.

⁵⁰ See Yoyotte, "Pétoubastis III.," 216-23.

⁵¹ See Chapter 3.

⁵² See e.g. Parker, "Darius and His Egyptian Campaign," 373-77, Pestman, "Diospolis Parva Documents," 145-55, Kahn, "Inaros' Rebellion," 424-40, and Agut-Labordère and Chauveau, "Les ostraca de 'Ayn Manâwir," 1-4. In all cases, Egyptian sources dated to Persian kings play an important – and perhaps even bigger role – than those that mention rebel kings.

reach. In 1953 Friedrich Kienitz argued that many of the Egyptian rebellions stemmed from the Delta. In particular, they would have been initiated by “libyschen Dynasten,” whose rule was confined to the north of the country.⁵³ Kienitz based his arguments on two elements. First, he observed that several sources from southern Egypt were dated to Persian kings at times that Greek sources indicated the existence of Egyptian rebellions. The conclusion was that Upper Egypt must have remained under Persian control during the periods of unrest.⁵⁴ Second, some of the rebellions were explicitly connected to the Delta by Greek authors. The best-known example is the revolt of Inaros in the mid-fifth century BC. The fundamental narrative of the revolt is provided by the Athenian historian Thucydides, who included it in his late fifth century BC history of the Peloponnesian War. Contrary to Greek descriptions of other Egyptian rebellions, the narrative is quite detailed: Thucydides tells us that Inaros was a Libyan man, and king of the Libyans who bordered on Egypt. His powerbase appears to have been Marea in the far west of the Egyptian Delta. From there, he began a rebellion against Persian rule at the beginning of the reign of Artaxerxes I, and – with the military assistance of Athens – managed to occupy parts of (northern) Egypt (Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War* 1.104, 1.109-110).⁵⁵ Kienitz assumed that other rebellions of the Persian Period would have been comparable. In the case of the 487/86 BC revolt, for example, he noted as follows: “Vermutlich haben sich die Dinge genau so wie 25 Jahre später abgespielt. Nicht die eigentlichen Ägypter, sondern die Libyer des Westdeltas haben den Aufstand unternommen und Unterägypten den Persern entrissen.”⁵⁶

At present, the idea that (most of) the Egyptian rebellions had their roots in the Delta – and that their leaders had a Libyan background – is widely accepted. It is repeated in numerous articles and books on Achaemenid Egypt, including in Ruzicka’s *Trouble in the West*: the latter consistently speaks of “Delta dynasts” when referring to the rebellions of the sixth to fourth

⁵³ See Kienitz, *Die politische Geschichte Ägyptens*, 67-75, esp. 73, 75.

⁵⁴ See *ibid.*, 67, 69.

⁵⁵ See *ibid.*, 69-72. The chronology which Thucydides provides for the revolt is not always clear-cut; see e.g. Kahn, “Inaros’ Rebellion,” 424-40, who prioritizes the chronology given by Diodorus of Sicily. See further section 2.2.2 below.

⁵⁶ See Kienitz, *Die politische Geschichte Ägyptens*, 67-68. A connection to the western Delta was also assumed for the “king of the Egyptians” of ca. 411 BC, who is briefly mentioned by Diodorus of Sicily, *Universal Library* 13.46.6 (see Kienitz, *Die politische Geschichte Ägyptens*, 73).

centuries BC.⁵⁷ In part, this emphasis on the Delta is justified. Based on what we know of the second half of the fifth century BC and the fourth century BC, the north of Egypt was an important theatre of political conflict. Greek sources that claim a connection between the Delta and some of the rebel kings suggest as much. Aside from Inaros, for example, Thucydides briefly mentions that a certain Amyrtaios was “king in the marshes” in the mid-fifth century BC, which is generally understood as a reference to the Delta (Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War* 1.112). In addition, both Greek and Egyptian texts show that the independent kings of the early fourth century BC all came from Delta towns – just like the Saite Dynasty had originated in the Delta town of Sais.⁵⁸ What has been little recognized, however, is that the role of the Delta is much less clear in the late sixth and early fifth century BC. As mentioned above, Herodotus does not reveal the geographical origins of the rebellion of 487/86 BC. Similar information is lacking on the rebellion of 521 BC.⁵⁹ More importantly, contemporary sources from Egypt show that both these and later rebellions did affect the southern part of the country. This was already evident in 1907, when a papyrus from Thebes was published that was dated to the first regnal year of Khababash – the rebel king of the Second Persian Period.⁶⁰ Sources that were published from the 1970s onwards have yielded further evidence: texts that are dated to the rebellions of 521 and 487/86 BC are now known from Meydum, Hou and the Dakhla Oasis;⁶¹ a demotic ostrakon shows that Inaros’ reign was recognized at ‘Ayn Manawir, a village in the Kharga Oasis;⁶² and the same site has yielded evidence for a king who ruled in ca. 400 BC,

⁵⁷ See e.g. Ruzicka, *Trouble in the West*, 23, 27-28, 29-33, 35-37. For similar statements, see Ray, “Egypt 525 - 404 B.C.,” 275-77, Briant, “Ethno-classe dominante,” 148-51, Rottpeter, “Initiatoren und Träger,” 24-28, Colburn, *Archaeology of Empire*, 246-47, and Leahy, “Egypt in the Late Period,” 727. The connection between the Delta and Libyans is partly based on geographical proximity – Libyans are known to have lived to the west of the Delta – , and partly on the political role that Libyans who had migrated to (northern) Egypt played in the centuries that preceded the Persian Empire. For an introduction to Egypt’s Libyan Period, see Naunton, “Libyans and Nubians,” 120-39. The power of Libyan chiefs in the Delta was curtailed in the early Saite Period; see Perdu, “Saites and Persians,” 141-42.

⁵⁸ See *ibid.*, 152-57, and Wojciechowska, *From Amyrtaeus to Ptolemy*, 22-72.

⁵⁹ See section 2.2.1.

⁶⁰ See Spiegelberg, *Der Papyrus Libbey*, 1-6.

⁶¹ See Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III.,” 216-23, Cruz-Uribe, “On the Existence of Psammetichus IV,” 35-39, Pestman, “Diospolis Parva Documents,” 145-55, Cruz-Uribe, “Early Demotic Texts,” 59-66, Vittmann, “Two Administrative Letters,” 433-50, and Kaper, “Petubastis IV,” 125-49.

⁶² See Chauveau, “Inarôs, prince des rebelles,” 39-46.

roundabout the time that Egypt seceded from Persian rule.⁶³ When Kienitz wrote his study on Persian Period Egypt, many of these sources had not yet been published. The continued emphasis on the Delta in more recent studies of Achaemenid Egypt shows, however, that the “new” Egyptian sources have received little attention outside of their initial publications.⁶⁴

The limited impact which contemporary Egyptian sources have had in modern discussions of Egyptian resistance is regrettable for multiple reasons. One reason is that the sources can change our understanding of the rebellions’ eventual success: they can show us which parts of the country were affected by the unrest, and whether the rebellions were confined to a specific region. In light of the aforementioned texts, for example, it should be clear that many of the rebellions did reach beyond the borders of the Delta – contrary to the *communis opinio*.⁶⁵ Second, contemporary Egyptian sources can provide us with a glimpse of the rebellions’ social background. When an Egyptian contract is dated to the reign of a rebel king, for example, it tells us that the contracting parties recognized his reign rather than that of a Persian king. It is therefore important to take a closer look at the individuals mentioned in the texts – even if we cannot be certain whether they were active supporters or merely “passive” bystanders, who happened to live in a region that changed from Persian to Egyptian hands.⁶⁶ Third, information about geographical reach and social context may eventually illuminate the rebellions’ causes.

⁶³ See Chauveau, “Les archives d’un temple,” 44-47, and Agut-Labordère and Chauveau, “Les ostraca de ‘Ayn Manâwir,” 1-4.

⁶⁴ This is especially clear in the case of Briant, “Ethno-classe dominante,” 137-73, and Rottpeter, “Initiatoren und Träger,” 9-49. Both studies are rare attempts at studying the Egyptian rebellions of the Persian Period in more detail. Nevertheless, the studies by Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III.,” 216-23, Cruz-Uribe, “On the Existence of Psammetichus IV,” 35-39, and Pestman, “Diospolis Parva Documents,” 145-55, which provided evidence for the rebel kings of 521 and 487/86 BC, were omitted by Briant, “Ethno-classe dominante,” 137-73. The study did recognize the existence of some sources that indicated unrest in southern Egypt, but it was argued that they may have referred to local affairs rather than nation-wide troubles. In addition, the true center of all organized political resistance was said to be the Delta (see *ibid.*, 140-47). Rottpeter, “Initiatoren und Träger,” 9-49, took the discussion one step further: he argued that the main agents of the rebellions were Greeks, who would have fueled unrest in Egypt for their own political ends, and Libyans who lived in regions to the west of the Nile Delta. By contrast, the Egyptians remained “grundsätzlich passiv” (see *ibid.*, 27). Southern Egyptian sources that could be attributed to the rebellions were said to be obscure or insignificant (see e.g. *ibid.*, 14, 16-17, 24-25 n. 73).

⁶⁵ Moreover, it has recently been argued that Petubastis Scheribre’s temple blocks from the Dakhla Oasis indicate that this rebel king had his powerbase in southern rather than northern Egypt; see Kaper, “Petubastis IV,” 125-49, and section 5.2.1.

⁶⁶ On the issue of political recognition in contracts and letters, see the discussions in 5.2.2.2 and 5.3.2.1.

At present, the causes of Egyptian resistance and the motives of the rebel leaders are a contested subject. The unrest has been variously connected to Egyptian xenophobia, periods of weakened Achaemenid control, self-interested opportunism on the part of Delta dynasts, and socioeconomic grievances. The latter may have been the result of excessive imperial taxation and the obligation to pay tribute to Persia.⁶⁷ Though all of these factors might have played a role at one point or another, little effort has been made to connect specific causes to the geographical and social context of individual revolts. The latter should arguably take pride of place: different groups in society will have had different reasons for supporting Egyptian secession. In other words, before we can ask why people resisted Persian rule, we need to ask *who* resisted Persian rule.

1.3 Outline of the present study

As mentioned above, the present thesis aims to contribute to a better understanding of resistance against Persian rule by providing a thorough study of the first two Egyptian rebellions. These rebellions began in ca. 521 BC, at the very start of the reign of Darius I, and in ca. 487/86 BC, at the end of the reign of the same king. The reason for studying these two rebellions rather than the ones that came after is twofold. First, of all the Egyptian rebellions against Persian rule the first two are among the least studied. In part, this is because Greek references to the rebellions are brief, while Egyptian sources that refer to the relevant rebel kings were only identified in the late twentieth and twenty-first century. Consequently, knowledge of later rebellions has sometimes colored their reconstruction. The rebellions are often assumed to have originated in and to have been confined to the Delta, for example, while sources that are contemporary with the episodes suggest otherwise (see above). A second reason for studying the first two Egyptian rebellions is their connection to political events in other parts of the Persian Empire. The rebellion of 521 BC was part of a large-scale crisis, in which multiple imperial provinces attempted to secede from Persian rule. Among them were Babylonia, Assyria, Media and Elam.⁶⁸ The political context of the 487/86 BC rebellion was less strained; but the rebellion's defeat in ca. 485/84 BC was followed by two rebellions in

⁶⁷ For the various causes that have been proposed, see e.g. Kienitz, 67-69, Ray, "Egypt 525 - 404 B.C.," 275-77, Briant, "Ethno-classe dominante," 138-43, Sternberg-el Hotabi, "Politische und sozio-ökonomische Strukturen," 162-66, and Rottpeter, "Initiatoren und Träger," 28-30.

⁶⁸ For an introduction to this crisis, see Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 135-141, and Chapter 3.

Babylonia.⁶⁹ The significance of this contemporaneity is bilateral. On the one hand, an in-depth study of the Egyptian rebellions can contribute to our understanding of near-contemporary events in other parts of the Persian Empire. On the other hand, the rebellions which broke out outside of Egypt provide comparative material for those inside Egypt. The rebellions in Babylonia are especially important in this regard. Aside from Egypt, Babylonia is one of the few imperial provinces that has yielded local and contemporary sources which can be used to study resistance.⁷⁰ In addition, the size and density of the Babylonian cuneiform corpus far outstrips that of the Egyptian sources.⁷¹ Comparing the two provinces can therefore open our eyes to gaps in the Egyptian record, and the extent to which these gaps have influenced our understanding of events. The potential for such comparison disappears after 484 BC, as Babylonia – unlike Egypt – did not rebel again.⁷²

In order to illuminate the “when,” “where,” “who,” and “why” of the first two Egyptian rebellions, the present thesis is structured as follows. First, **Chapter 2** provides an introduction to the variety of sources that can now be used to study Egyptian resistance. These sources range from Greco-Roman histories and Achaemenid royal inscriptions, to demotic contracts, Aramaic letters, and Achaemenid seals. The chapter also evaluates what kind of data each group of sources provides on the rebellions, and how different groups of sources compare to one another. Second, **Chapters 3 and 4** provide detailed chronological reconstructions of the rebellions of 521 and 487/86 BC. In the first case, an important aim is to argue for the historicity of the rebellion and its connection to the Egyptian king Petubastis Seheribre – both of which have sometimes been doubted. In the second case, the focus lies on the start date of the revolt.

⁶⁹ See Waerzeggers, “Babylonian Revolts against Xerxes,” 150-73.

⁷⁰ The Babylonian rebellions have been quite extensively studied in the past two decades; see e.g. Lorenz, *Nebukadnezar III/IV*, Beaulieu, “An Episode in the Reign of the Babylonian Pretender Nebuchadnezzar IV,” 17-26, and Bloch, “Contribution of Babylonian Tablets,” 1-14, on the unrest in 522-21 BC, and Waerzeggers, “Babylonian Revolts against Xerxes,” 150-73, Kessler, “Urukäische Familien versus babylonische Familien,” 237-62, Baker, “Babylon in 484 BC,” 100-16, and Waerzeggers and Seire, *Xerxes and Babylonia*, on the rebellions of 484 BC.

⁷¹ See section 2.5.2.

⁷² A possible reference to a later Babylonian rebellion occurs in the Uruk King List, which refers to a certain Nidin-Bēl, whose reign would have preceded Darius III; see Grayson, “Königslisten und Chroniken,” 97-98. The opinions are divided, however, on whether the entry refers to a historical Babylonian rebel king, whether the name is the throne name of a Persian king, or whether the entry is a scribal mistake. See e.g. van Dijk, “Die Inschriftenfunde,” 58, Stolper, “Mesopotamia,” 240, and Safaee, “A Local Revolt,” 51-56.

It argues that the rebellion began earlier than what is often believed, and that additional Egyptian documents are therefore relevant to the rebellion's reconstruction. The conclusions of these chapters lay the groundwork for **Chapter 5**. Chapter 5 studies the geography and social context of the first two rebellions, with particular attention for Egyptian texts that can be attributed to the relevant rebel kings. An important aim is to illuminate the rebellions' impact in the south, and whether they may have originated from southern rather than northern Egypt. Closely intertwined with this is the issue of social context, as sources which provide some insight into the "where" of the rebellions are often our primary evidence for the "who" as well. Finally, **Chapter 6** considers the causes of the rebellions and the motives of its leaders. Though an in-depth discussion of this issue lies beyond the scope of the present thesis, the conclusions of the preceding chapters suggest several avenues that are worthy of further exploration. For example, it is argued that the imperial response that followed the rebellion of 522/21 BC may have led to grievances among some inhabitants of southern Egypt – who subsequently supported the rebellion of 487/86 BC. In addition, the chapter reviews how the conclusions of the present thesis may be applied to the rebellions of the mid- to late fifth century BC, which – eventually – led to Egypt's secession from the Persian Empire in ca. 400 BC.

Chapter 2

The Sources: From Greco-Roman Narratives to Achaemenid Seals

2.1 Introduction

Almost two hundred years ago, the historian Franciscus Ley published a dissertation on Achaemenid Egypt in Latin. The book was called *Fata et conditio Aegypti sub imperio Persarum* (i.e. the fate and condition of Egypt under the Persian Empire). Though the book counted only seventy-six pages, *Fata et conditio* provided a narrative history of the Twenty-Seventh Dynasty that was quite detailed for its time. It included, among other things, an account of Cambyses' invasion of Egypt, descriptions of Egyptian resistance against Persian rule, a summary of Egypt's secession from the Persian Empire in ca. 400 BC, and a discussion of the wars between Egypt and Persia in the decades that followed.⁷³ In light of the wealth of information that *Fata et conditio* provided, it is interesting to observe that the book mentioned neither Egyptian nor Persian sources. Instead, Ley's history was based on a group of ancient Greco-Roman texts. These texts included the *Histories* of Herodotus, the *Peloponnesian War* by Thucydides, and the *Universal Library* of Diodorus of Sicily.⁷⁴ Such texts prompted Ley to conclude that the Egyptians had been the most treacherous and most seditious of all the peoples of the Persian Empire: "Etenim Aegyptii omnium populorum, quibus Persae imperabant, infidissimi ac seditiosissimi semper fuerunt."⁷⁵

As is well known, Ley's reliance on Greco-Roman texts for the historical reconstruction of Achaemenid Egypt was part of a long-standing tradition. The texts had been copied from antiquity to the Middle Ages, and eventually ended up in the hands of European scholars.⁷⁶ For the reconstruction of the Persian Empire, the Greco-Roman texts were particularly important

⁷³ See Ley, *Fata et conditio*, 9-10, 12-16, 20-28.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 16. I.e. "For the Egyptians were always the most treacherous and seditious of all the peoples that the Persians ruled."

⁷⁶ See e.g. Sancisi-Weerdenburg and Drijvers, *Roots of the European Tradition*, and Degen and Manning, "Western Europe," 1564-1608, and Dandamaev, "Eastern Europe," 1629-36. For Iranian scholarship on the Persian Empire, which followed a different trajectory, see e.g. Coloru, "Once Were Persians," 87-106, and Mousavi, "Iran," 1637-47.

as long as many of the languages and scripts that had been in use in ancient western Asia remained undeciphered. This was partly still the case when *Fata et conditio* was written: published in 1830, Ley wrote the book when the decipherment of Egyptian hieroglyphs, demotic and cuneiform was in its early stages, which largely precluded the use of local and contemporary sources for his reconstruction of Achaemenid Egypt.⁷⁷ It goes without saying that this is no longer an issue. After ca. two centuries of excavations and publications, the Persian Empire can be studied on the basis of Greco-Roman narratives as well as Old Persian, Elamite, Babylonian, hieroglyphic, demotic, Aramaic and a host of other texts – in addition to a rich variety of material culture.⁷⁸ This observation likewise applies to Achaemenid Egypt, and the rebellions that were waged there.

As discussed in Chapter 1, it is not always clear from modern studies that the rebellions of Persian-Period Egypt can be studied on the basis of a rich source base. Most studies have focused on the traditional Greco-Roman texts, while other sources that document the rebellions have been little used. One possible explanation for this phenomenon is the narrative quality of the Greco-Roman sources: some of the Egyptian rebellions are described from beginning to end, and include clear indications of their date, the battles that were fought between imperial and rebel forces, how the rebellions were defeated, and what happened in their aftermaths.⁷⁹ This stands in stark contrast with Egyptian sources, few of which provide us with clear-cut narratives of political events.⁸⁰ Instead, the relevance of Egyptian sources to the study of the Egyptian rebellions primarily lies in their date formulae, which sometimes refer to non-Persian kings who ruled parts of Egypt, and in occasional references to (violent) unrest.⁸¹ Nevertheless,

⁷⁷ The decipherment of Egyptian hieroglyphs had only been accomplished in 1824, after which the process of publishing ancient Egyptian sources slowly took off; see Pope, *Story of Decipherment*, 76-84. The decipherment of demotic and cuneiform was accomplished at slightly later dates: demotic was deciphered around 1830 (Ray, *Rosetta Stone*, 46); Old Persian cuneiform was largely deciphered by 1839 (Pope, *Story of Decipherment*, 106-10); the decipherment of Akkadian cuneiform was considered a *fait accompli* in 1857 (ibid., 114-117); while Elamite was not fully understood until ca. 1890 (ibid., 117).

⁷⁸ For an introduction to the sources of the Persian Empire, see e.g. Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, and the overviews collected in Jacobs and Rollinger, *Achaemenid Persian Empire*, 1:75-332.

⁷⁹ This is most clearly the case for Inaros' revolt (see 2.2.2); but see also 2.2.1, on the rebellions of the 520s and 480s BC.

⁸⁰ Partial exceptions are the autobiography of Udjahorresnet (see 2.4.1.2), and several Egypto-Persian monuments from the reign of Darius I (see 2.3.3.1).

⁸¹ See 2.4.1.2 and 2.4.2.

the prominent use of Greco-Roman texts instead of contemporary sources from the Persian Empire itself is surprising in light of the debate on Hellenocentrism and (proto-)Orientalism in Achaemenid Studies. Among other things, this debate has highlighted that Greco-Roman authors often described events that happened decades or even centuries before their lifetime; and that the authors in question were mostly men who lived outside of the Achaemenid Empire, in polities that were sometimes at war with the Persians. These observations have raised questions about the reliability of the narratives, ranging from simple historical errors to more profound misrepresentations of events that may have been colored by negative prejudices against the Persians and their subjects.⁸² Of course, questions regarding reliability can likewise be raised in relation to non-Greco-Roman sources. It is undeniable, for example, that the royal inscriptions of the Persian kings represented reality in a way that favored the image of the monarch and the Empire as a whole, as did Persian art.⁸³ The historical value of all sources therefore needs to be carefully weighed.

Whether a particular ancient source provides us with reliable information on a specific event can only be assessed on a case-by-case basis. In part, such assessments rely on an evaluation of the source at hand: when it was produced, in what context, and by whom. For example, the *Histories* of Herodotus is a valuable source for modern studies of the Persian Empire because it was written by a contemporary of the Empire in the (late) fifth century BC, who, moreover, stemmed from Caria, a region that fell occasionally under Persian control. Though many stories in the *Histories* do not reflect historical reality – one thinks, for example, of a story about an Egyptian pharaoh who became blind because he had offended the gods, after which he cured his eyesight with the urine of a faithful woman (Herodotus, *Histories* 2.111) – , it is plausible that his work did reflect the kinds of stories that circulated in the second half of the fifth century BC, among Greeks, Persians, Egyptians, and other groups whom Herodotus identified as his informants. In addition, some of these stories clearly concerned historical political events, several of which had taken place within living memory of Herodotus' contemporaries. Xerxes'

⁸² The debate on Hellenocentrism and (proto-)Orientalism in Achaemenid studies took off in the 1970s and '80s; for discussions of the debate and its consequences regarding the use of Greco-Roman sources, see e.g. Kuhrt and Sancisi-Weerdenburg, "Introduction," ix-xiii, Harrison, *Writing Ancient Persia*, 15-18, Colburn, "Orientalism, Postcolonialism, and the Achaemenid Empire," 94-98, and McCaskie, "'As on a Darkling Plain,'" 151-58.

⁸³ See e.g. 2.3 and 2.5.4, and the more elaborate discussion of the Bisitun inscription in 3.2.

invasion of Greece is the most notable example.⁸⁴ The historical value of other works can be more difficult to assess. The *Stratagems* of Polyaeus, for example, was written by a Bythian author in the second century AD, on the basis of older sources that cannot always be identified. Because ca. seven centuries separated Polyaeus from the Persian Empire, the reliability of some of his stories on the sixth to fourth centuries BC can be seriously questioned.⁸⁵ Having said that, a crucial aspect in the assessment of a source's historical value is not only the context of its production but also the existence of other sources – preferably from different contexts – that can be connected to the same people, phenomena and events. The existence of Persian, Egyptian and Babylonian sources that point to an Egyptian rebellion in the 520s BC renders it more likely, for example, that a story in the *Stratagems* of Polyaeus about an Egyptian rebellion in Darius I's early reign was not merely the stuff of fantasy.⁸⁶ This brings us back to the importance of a diverse source base, which, after ca. two centuries of excavation, decipherment, and publication, is now most certainly available for the Egyptian rebellions of the Persian Period.

To redress to overemphasis on Greco-Roman texts in modern studies of Persian-Period Egyptian resistance, the present chapter provides a detailed overview of all of the relevant sources that are currently at our disposal. The sources have been divided into four sections: Greco-Roman texts (2.2.), Persian (royal) sources (2.3), Egyptian sources (2.4), and miscellaneous sources (2.5). The latter include Greek inscriptions, cuneiform tablets from Babylonia and Persia, and Achaemenid seals. A primary aim of the chapter is to evaluate each corpus' "horizon of information." In other words, what do Persian sources tell us about the Egyptian rebellions that Greek sources do not, and vice versa? And what kind of information

⁸⁴ Scholarship on Herodotus is vast. For a succinct introduction to the author and his work, see Lenfant, *Les Perses vus par les Grecs*, 214-27. For more detailed studies, one can consult Bakker, de Jong, and van Wees, *Brill's Companion to Herodotus*, Dewald and Marincola, *Cambridge Companion to Herodotus*, Rollinger, Truschneegg, and Bichler, *Herodot und das Persische Weltreich*, and Harrison and Irwin, *Interpreting Herodotus*. Though Herodotus' reliability and actual use of (non-Greek) sources has often been questioned – most famously by Fehling, *Die Quellenangaben bei Herodot* –, there is plenty of evidence that the historian consulted epigraphic and oral sources from both within and outside of the Greek world; see e.g. West, "Herodotus' Epigraphical Interests," 278-305, Moyer, "Herodotus and an Egyptian Mirage," 70-90, Ryholt, *Petese Stories II*, 31-46, and Thonemann, "Croesus and the Oracles," 152-67.

⁸⁵ For an introduction to Polyaeus and his work, see Lenfant, *Les Perses vus par les Grecs*, 339-41, and Brodersen, *Polyainos, Strategika*, 7-18.

⁸⁶ For the passage in question and a discussion of how it connects to other sources, see 2.2.1 and 3.4.1.

may one expect from hieroglyphic, demotic and Aramaic texts? In the end, these discussions will facilitate comparison between the different corpora. They will also allow one to more easily assess whether a particular rebellion is documented by one or multiple sources, and whether the rebellions as a whole shared certain characteristics. The latter issues will be revisited in the conclusion to the present chapter.

2.2 Greco-Roman texts

In the sixth to fourth centuries BC the Greek world and the Achaemenid Empire were intimately connected to one another. According to Herodotus, this connection had begun in the mid-sixth century BC, when Cyrus defeated the Lydian Empire of Croesus. The latter included a series of Greek city-states on its western coast, which became the first Greek settlements that fell within the orbit of the Persian Empire (see e.g. Herodotus, *Histories* 1.141-176).⁸⁷ In the decades that followed Cyrus' reign, the encroachment of the Empire on and near Greek lands continued gradually. The Greek islands of Samos, Lesbos and Chios were incorporated in the late sixth century BC, and Macedonia and Thrace were invaded shortly thereafter.⁸⁸ In 490 and 480 BC, Darius I and Xerxes even invaded the Greek mainland.⁸⁹ Though the Greeks were the eventual victors in the so-called "Greco-Persian Wars" – victories which would be celebrated for centuries to come – the Persian Empire continued to play a major role in Mediterranean politics in the late fifth and fourth centuries BC. In the decades that followed Xerxes' reign, for example, the Persians regained control of some of the Greek possessions that they had lost in the aftermath of 480/79 BC, and – when it suited them – fueled conflicts between Greek city-states by supporting one faction over another.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ For the Greek city-states of western Anatolia, see e.g. Greaves, "Greeks in Western Anatolia," 500-514, and Meyer, "Satraps of Western Anatolia," 90-92. For Cyrus' conquest, see Sams, "Anatolia," 614-15, and Meyer, "Satraps of Western Anatolia," 93.

⁸⁸ See e.g. Young, "Consolidation of the Empire," 67-70, Zahrnt, "Macedonia," 639-40, and Boteva-Boyanova, "Thrace," 649-50.

⁸⁹ The literature on the invasions is vast. For introductions, see e.g. Young, "Consolidation of the Empire," 67-72, 75-76, Hammond, "Expedition of Datis and Artaphernes," 491-517, Hammond, "Expedition of Xerxes," 518-90, Rollinger and Degen, "Establishment of the Achaemenid Empire," 430-38, and Meier, "Greek World," 627-32.

⁹⁰ See e.g. Hyland, *Persian Interventions*, 1-3, Dusinberre, "Asia Minor," 601, and Meier, "Greek World," 632-34.

It was within the context of the fifth to fourth centuries BC – after Xerxes had invaded Greece, and while the Persian Empire was still a political power to be reckoned with – that men from different regions of the Greek world began to write histories, tragedies, poems, philosophical treatises and political pamphlets that engaged with the Persian Empire in various degrees.⁹¹ As mentioned above, some of these texts have been preserved in their entirety. A prime example is the *Histories* of Herodotus, which is often considered to be the first Greek “history” which has been preserved. The book chronicles the rise of the Persian Empire in the sixth century BC, and the development of hostilities between Greeks and Persians in the early fifth century BC. Due to the wealth of stories that it provides, the *Histories* has long been a crucial text in reconstructions of the (early) Achaemenid Empire.⁹² Other texts that have been preserved in their entirety include the *Peloponnesian War* by Thucydides, which provides a history of the late fifth century BC war between Sparta and Athens, and the *Education of Cyrus* by Xenophon, an idealized biography of Cyrus the Great.⁹³ Some works, by contrast, are known only from “fragments,” e.g. from summaries and quotes in books from later authors. The *Persica* by Ctesias, for example, chronicles the history of the Persian Empire down to ca. 398/97 BC, but is mainly known from snippets in the works of Nicolaus of Damascus (first century BC), Diodorus of Sicily (first century BC), Plutarch (first century AD), and Photius (ninth century AD).⁹⁴

Though there were important differences between the aforementioned authors, it is fair to say that a primary focus of their work – and, to a large extent, that of the Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine authors who built on the Greek textual tradition – was the relationship between Greeks and Persians. The Greek mainland, the Greek communities of western Anatolia, and the islands of the eastern Mediterranean were of particular interest to them. Other regions, many of which fell under Persian rule, received less attention. This observation is particularly true for regions that lay east of the Zagros mountains, the political history of which is therefore more difficult to reconstruct than that of the Empire’s western border.⁹⁵ Having said that, of the regions that received only peripheral attention in Greek texts, Egypt was a relatively

⁹¹ For an introduction to these texts, see e.g. Lenfant, *Les Perses vus par les Grecs*, 3-20, Brosius, “Greek Sources on Achaemenid Iran,” 658-68, and Bichler and Rollinger, “Greek and Latin Sources,” 169-85.

⁹² For scholarship on Herodotus, see n. 84 above.

⁹³ See e.g. Lenfant, *Les Perses vus par les Grecs*, 390-93, 406-7.

⁹⁴ See e.g. Lenfant, *Les Perses vus par les Grecs*, 96-107, and Stronk, *Ctesias’ Persian History*, 60-150.

⁹⁵ See e.g. Lenfant, *Les Perses vus par les Grecs*, 11-14, and Brosius, “Greek Sources on Achaemenid Iran,” 659.

prominent topic. Greek authors occasionally referred to troubles in the Egyptian Delta and Nile Valley, to renewed Persian invasions of north Africa, and to the occasional involvement of Greek soldiers in Egypto-Persian conflicts. Such references ranged from a few sentences to descriptions of several paragraphs.⁹⁶ The present section provides an overview of those references that (may) relate to Egyptian rebellions – from unrest in the late sixth century BC to Egypt’s secession in ca. 400 BC.

2.2.1 Early resistance (late sixth to early fifth century BC)

The earliest episodes of Egyptian resistance are known from a handful of paragraphs in the works of three different authors: the *Histories* of Herodotus, *On Rhetoric* by Aristotle, and the *Stratagems* by Polyaeus. The historicity of some of the episodes is difficult to assess. The first that should be mentioned is connected to Psamtik III, the last king of the Saite Dynasty. In Book Three of the *Histories*, Herodotus describes that Psamtik’s armies were defeated by Cambyses, and that he was captured in Memphis. After testing Psamtik’s character, the Persian king decided to let him live. At some point, however, Psamtik meddled in political affairs: he “plotted evil” and was “caught raising a revolt among the Egyptians.” When his plans were discovered, Psamtik drank bull’s blood, and died on the spot (*Histories* 3.10-15). The episode is sometimes mentioned in introductions to Achaemenid Egypt.⁹⁷ It is probably best, however, to exclude the episode from the list of Egyptian rebellions proper. The words used to describe Psamtik’s acts are *πολυπρηγμονέειν*, i.e. to “meddle (in state affairs),” and *μηχανώμενος*, i.e.

⁹⁶ Much has been written about the prominent role of Egypt in Greek texts; see e.g. Burstein, “Images of Egypt,” 591-604, Vasunia, *Gift of the Nile*, Hartog, “Greeks as Egyptologists,” 211-28, and Moyer, “Egyptian History,” 1-12. Note, however, that such texts say relatively little about Persian Period Egypt (see e.g. Vasunia, *Gift of the Nile*, 7). This is especially clear in the case of the *Histories* of Herodotus: the book is famous for its elaborate Egyptian logos, but the latter’s account of Egyptian history ends rather than begins with Cambyses’ conquest (see *Histories* 2.1-182, 3.1-37). The information that Herodotus does provide on Persian Period Egypt has recently been examined by Tuplin, “Dogs That Do Not (Always) Bark,” 99-123.

⁹⁷ See e.g. Perdu, “Saites and Persians,” 149, and Klotz, “Persian Period,” 2. At times, scholars have described the episode as a rebellion, which would have resulted in a second period of (short-lived) rule by Psamtik III. Contemporary evidence for such a rebellion is lacking, however: the demotic papyri that have been attributed to Psamtik’s second period of rule by e.g. Griffith, *Catalogue of the Demotic Papyri*, 24 no. 40, and Pestman, *Les papyrus démotiques de Tsenhor*, 1:131 n. 3, have now been redated; see Pestman, “Diospolis Parva Documents,” 145-48, and Chauveau, “Les archives d’un temple,” 45-47.

to “contrive” or “devise” something.⁹⁸ Psamtik is subsequently said to have been “caught” in the act of “raising a revolt among the Egyptians” (ἀπιστὰς γὰρ Αἰγυπτίους ἦλω). It is therefore unclear whether Herodotus believed that a rebellion had actually broken out, or whether Psamtik was planning some kind of conspiracy and was seized before he managed to put it in motion.

The second episode of resistance that is known from the *Histories* is complicated by a similar ambiguity. In Book Four, the historian says that Aryandes, whom Cambyses had installed as satrap over Egypt, was executed by Darius I. He was put to death on the charge of insurrection (ἐπανίστατο). However, Herodotus indicates that Aryandes’ real fault had been the minting of silver coins, which were as pure as Darius’ coins were gold (*Histories* 4.166). The story has sometimes been connected to a passage in the *Stratagems* by Polyaeus (second century AD).⁹⁹ The latter states that the Egyptians rebelled (ἀποστάντων) because of the cruelty of Aryandes, and that Darius had to invade the country. The Persian king won back the support of the Egyptians by showing piety towards the Apis bull (*Stratagems* 7.11.7). *On Rhetoric* by Aristotle, written in the fourth century BC, complements these accounts to some degree. It states that both Darius I and Xerxes had conquered Egypt before they invaded Greece (*On Rhetoric* 2.20.3, 1393a32-b4). The reference implies that two separate Egyptian rebellions had existed: one which was thwarted by Xerxes (see below), and one which was thwarted by his father. The latter must have predated 490 BC, which is the year of Darius I’s failed campaign at Marathon (see below).¹⁰⁰ Though the passages of Herodotus, Polyaeus and Aristotle are difficult to reconcile with one another, they suggest that one or multiple Egyptian uprisings occurred in the late sixth to early fifth century BC.

The third episode of Egyptian resistance that is known from the *Histories* brings us on firmer ground. In Book Seven Herodotus writes that Darius I made preparations for a full-scale invasion of Greece after a Persian contingent had been defeated by the Athenians at Marathon. The preparations for the invasion took at least three years. In the fourth year, the Egyptians rebelled (Αἰγύπτιοι (...) ἀπέστησαν ἀπὸ Περσέων; *Histories* 7.1). The unambiguous phrasing shows that Herodotus considered the episode to be a genuine rebellion on the part of the inhabitants of Egypt. Shortly after the rebellion, Darius I is said to have passed away. It was

⁹⁸ Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 1442, 1131.

⁹⁹ See e.g. Wiedemann, *Geschichte Aegyptens*, 235-37, Maspero, *Les empires*, 684-85, and the discussion in 3.4.1.

¹⁰⁰ See e.g. Hammond, “Expedition of Datis and Artaphernes,” 506-17.

therefore Xerxes who sent an army to Egypt, and defeated the uprising. In addition, Xerxes installed a new satrap over the country, and “laid Egypt under a much harder slavery than in the time of Darius.” When these affairs were taken care of, Xerxes continued his father’s preparations for the invasion of the Greek mainland (*Histories* 7.4, 7.7). As mentioned above, *On Rhetoric* by Aristotle echoes Herodotus’ account by stating that Xerxes had invaded Egypt before he invaded Greece (*On Rhetoric* 2.20.3, 1393a32-b4). Herodotus’ account allows us to date the episode to ca. 487/86 – 485/84 BC.¹⁰¹

2.2.2 *The rebellion of Inaros (mid-fifth century BC)*

Ca. two decades after the rebellion of 487/86 BC had been defeated, a new one broke out at the start of the reign of Artaxerxes I. Of all the Egyptian rebellions from the Persian Period, this one is the best known. The fundamental narrative is provided by the *Peloponnesian War* of Thucydides. As mentioned above, the *Peloponnesian War* is primarily focused on the war between Athens and Sparta that began in 431 BC. The first chapter of the book, however, discusses the causes of the conflict, and attempts to reconstruct the rise of Athens as an imperial power in the ca. fifty years that preceded the war’s outbreak. This narrative, known as the Pentakontaetia, mainly consists of summaries of Athenian military expeditions in the Mediterranean (see Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War* 1.89-117). Within this framework, Thucydides provides us with the following story: somewhere in the first few years of Artaxerxes I’s reign, Inaros, son of a man called Psamtik, and king of the Libyans who dwelt near Egypt, caused Egypt to rebel (ἀπέστησεν) against Persian rule. Inaros’ original base of operations was Marea, a town in the western Delta. Shortly thereafter, Inaros requested the assistance of the Athenians, who happened to be engaged with an expedition on Cyprus. Upon Inaros’ request, the Athenians – and several of their unnamed allies – diverted the two hundred ships which they were using to Egypt, made themselves masters of the Nile, and occupied two-thirds of Memphis. The remaining one-third consisted of the city’s “White Wall,” a fortress in which the Persians and those Egyptians who had not joined the rebellion had taken refuge (Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War* 1.104). After an unspecified amount of time, Artaxerxes I decided to respond to the unrest in Egypt by sending an army under the leadership of Megabyzus. This army defeated the Egyptians, expelled the Greeks from Memphis, and forced the latter to withdraw to the island of Prosopitis. The siege of Prosopitis lasted a year and a

¹⁰¹ On Herodotus chronology for the rebellion, see 4.2.

half, before the Persians finally managed to capture the island. (ibid. 1.109). With the Persian capture of Prosopitis, Greek involvement in the rebellion was effectively ended. The involvement had lasted six years in total. Some of the Greek soldiers managed to escape the country via Libya and Cyrene, but most had perished. As for Inaros, he was betrayed, captured, and crucified (ibid. 1.110).

Aside from the *Peloponnesian War* of Thucydides, the rebellion of Inaros is known from several other works. These works complement – and sometimes contradict – Thucydides’ account. For example, the *Histories* of Herodotus tells us that the bones of Persian soldiers who had fallen during Inaros’ rebellion could still be seen on a battlefield near Papremis (*Histories* 3.12), and that Achaemenes – a brother of Xerxes, who had been installed as satrap of Egypt after the previous rebellion – was killed (ibid. 7.7). In addition, the *Persica* of Ctesias notes that the Athenians had sent forty rather than two hundred ships to Egypt (*Persica* F14 36), and that Inaros was killed only after the Persian queen Amestris had spent years trying to convince the king that this would be the best course of action (ibid. F14 38-39).¹⁰² It should be clear that these references are much more detailed than the allusions to unrest in the late sixth and early fifth century BC (see above). This contrast may be the result of two things. First, the rebellions in the reigns of Darius I and Xerxes seem to have unfolded without the assistance of Greek city-states, while such involvement is well-documented for the rebellion of Inaros.¹⁰³ Second, the first rebellions had happened several decades before the earliest Greek historical works were written, while Inaros’ rebellion fell within living memory of both Herodotus and Thucydides. The Greek historians, in other words, may have been significantly better informed about – and perhaps also more interested in – the Egyptian rebellion of the mid-fifth century BC, than the unrest of the early fifth and late sixth century BC.

2.2.3 (Semi-)autonomous kings (mid- to late fifth century BC)

The exact impact which Inaros’ rebellion had on Persian governance of Egypt is unclear. Several Greek references suggest, however, that (parts of) the country remained unstable. First, it seems that an Egyptian man by the name of Amyrtaios, who may have been prominently involved in Inaros’ rebellion, escaped Persian capture (see Herodotus, *Histories* 2.140, 3.15,

¹⁰² For other Greek references to Inaros, see e.g. Wallace, “Egyptian Expedition,” 253-54, and Kahn, “Inaros’ Rebellion,” 424-25.

¹⁰³ See also 2.5.1 below.

and Ctesias, *Persica* F14 36). According to Thucydides, Amyrtaios ruled in the marshes (Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War* 1.110), i.e. the Egyptian Delta. He continued to rule there in the years that followed Inaros' defeat. At some point, Amyrtaios even obtained the military assistance of Athens and its allies, who sent sixty ships to Egypt – presumably for a battle with the Persians (*Peloponnesian War* 1.112). Second, Herodotus states that the sons of Inaros and Amyrtaios – who were called Thannyras and Pausiris respectively – received a certain degree of autonomy from the Persians. The historian claims that this was a general Persian custom: “even though kings revolt from them, they give back to their sons the sovereign power” (Herodotus, *Histories* 3.15). The exploits of Thannyras and Pausiris are not otherwise mentioned. Third, three references suggest that one or multiple kings ruled (parts of) Egypt in the second half of the fifth century BC. Two of the references can be connected to a certain Psamtik, who is said to have sent grain to Athens in ca. 445 BC (Philochorus, *FGrH* 328 F 119; Plutarch, *Pericles* 37). The third reference suggests that an anonymous king of Egypt threatened Phoenicia in ca. 411 BC (Diodorus of Sicily, *Universal Library* 13.46.6). What their connection was – if any – to Inaros, Amyrtaios, Thannyras, and Pausiris is unclear.

As should be clear from the preceding summary, our understanding of the men who are identified as “king” (βασιλεύς) of (parts of) Egypt in the second half of the fifth century BC is incomplete. The Greek works which refer to them omit information about their rise to power and their exact relationship to the Persian government. In part, this lack of detail may have been the result of the chronological and thematic limits of various Greek historical works. The main narrative of Herodotus' *Histories*, for example, ends with the Persian retreat from Greece in 479 BC, while the last historical event referred to in the book dates to ca. 430 BC.¹⁰⁴ It was not Herodotus' objective to provide a full description of political events in the decades that followed Inaros' rebellion – let alone of the role that Egyptian (rebel) kings may have played in those events. In addition, the narrative of Ctesias's *Persica*, which ends in 398/97 BC, might have included references to late fifth century BC problems in Egypt; but as only parts of its narrative are known through the summaries and quotes of later authors this is difficult to verify.¹⁰⁵ Despite this obstacle, the various references described above suggest that parts of Egypt may have been ruled by (semi-)autonomous pharaohs in the years that followed Inaros'

¹⁰⁴ The last securely dateable event in the *Histories* is the execution of two Spartan envoys that had been sent to Persia (Herodotus, *Histories* 7.137); see Evans, “Herodotus' Publication Date,” 145-46.

¹⁰⁵ See Llewellyn-Jones and Robson, *Ctesias' History of Persia*, 90. The end-date of Ctesias' narrative is provided by Diodorus, *Historical Library* 14.46.

rebellion. It is possible that their rule was condoned by the Persian government: other regions of the Empire are known to have been ruled by local kings, who were subordinate to – and paid taxes and tribute to – the Great King in Persia.¹⁰⁶ At the same time, the references suggest that the Egyptian kings drew their own plans: they undermined Persian authority by fostering an independent relationship with Athens on the one hand, and by attempting to expand their rule into territories beyond the Egyptian border on the other.

2.2.4 Egypt's secession (ca. 400 BC)

In line with the limited information that Greek authors provide on the kings of the second half of the fifth century BC, they reveal little about Egypt's secession from the Persian Empire in ca. 400 BC. Our primary information stems from the *History of Egypt* by Manetho. The latter was an Egyptian priest, who wrote a Greek history of his country in the third century BC. Like the *Persica* of Ctesias, the work is only known from citations and summaries by later authors.¹⁰⁷ The fragments suggest that the majority of Manetho's work consisted of king lists, which he had divided into separate dynasties. Manetho's Twenty-Seventh Dynasty consisted of Persian kings (from Cambyses to Darius II, i.e. from ca. 526 to 405/4 BC); the Twenty-Eighth Dynasty which followed Darius II's reign consisted of one Egyptian king, "Amyrtaios of Sais," who would have ruled six years (*History of Egypt* Fr. 70-72).¹⁰⁸ Scholars generally assume that this Amyrtaios – apparently a later namesake of the Amyrtaios who had ruled "the marshes" in the mid-fifth century BC – was the leader of a rebellion in the early reign of Artaxerxes II (ca. 405/4 – 359/58 BC).¹⁰⁹ This rebellion eventually ensured Egypt's secession from Persian rule for several decades. Though the start date of the rebellion is unclear, it is possible that Amyrtaios II benefitted from a political event that is described in detail by the *Persica* of Ctesias and the *Anabasis* of Xenophon: in ca. 401 BC, a war broke out between Cyrus II the Younger and his brother Artaxerxes II, both of whom claimed the Persian throne. After a fierce

¹⁰⁶ For the hypothesis that the Egyptian kings were condoned by the Persians (as already suggested by Herodotus, *Histories* 3.15), see e.g. Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 575-77, 596-97, and Hyland, "Aršāma, Egyptian Trade, and the Peloponnesian War," 253-54.

¹⁰⁷ For an introduction to Manetho and his work, see Verbrugge and Wickersham, *Berosos and Manetho*, 95-120.

¹⁰⁸ See Waddell, *Manetho*, 174-79.

¹⁰⁹ See e.g. Perdu, "Saites and Persians," 152, and Klotz, "Persian Period," 8.

battle at Cunaxa, Artaxerxes won the war.¹¹⁰ Shortly thereafter, Xenophon suggests that Artaxerxes was angry with the Egyptians and that Egypt needed to be reconquered (*Anabasis* 2.1.14, 2.5.13). The only Greek reference to an Egyptian king who may have ruled in ca. 400 BC, however, stems from the *Universal Library* of Diodorus of Sicily. Contrary to Manetho, this first century BC account states that a ruler called Psamtik received a Persian satrap in Egypt shortly after the war between Cyrus and Artaxerxes (*Universal Library* 14.35). This is the last reference to the existence of a rebellion and/or rebel king in Achaemenid Egypt that can be found in Greek histories.¹¹¹

2.3 Persian royal sources

In the early summer of 1836, a lieutenant from the British East India Company made regular trips to mount Bisitun, a mountain in the province of Kermanshah, western Iran. The lieutenant, whose name was Henry Creswicke Rawlinson, was twenty-six years old at the time. He had been stationed in Kermanshah to raise and train Kurdish troops for Bahram Mirza, the governor of the province, and a brother of the recently crowned Muhammad Shah. Rawlinson's visits to Bisitun, however, were not connected to the military duties with which he was charged. They were prompted by a fascination for a monumental inscription that was cut into the rock face of the mount, more than sixty meters above ground level: the monument consisted of a relief, which depicted a crowned man and several bound figures that stood before him, surrounded by ancient cuneiform writing. As would become clear later, the inscription was written in three different languages – Old Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian – , and had been created at the behest of Darius I (r. 522 – 486 BC) to commemorate his accession to the throne. Rawlinson, captivated by the idea of unlocking the secret to the as yet undeciphered cuneiform scripts,

¹¹⁰ See e.g. Lee, "Cyrus the Younger," 103-21. Whether the Egyptian rebellion preceded or postdated the war is uncertain. Amyrtaios II's reign probably began in ca. 404 BC – as Manetho suggests – , but he was only recognized as king in southern Egypt in ca. 400 BC (see e.g. Ruzicka, *Trouble in the West*, 37, and Quack, "Egypt," 560-61). It is possible that he started out as (semi-)autonomous king, who eventually expanded his rule in Egypt. It has also been suggested that Cyrus II may have benefitted from Amyrtaios' rebellion, rather than the other way around; see Lee, "Cyrus the Younger," 103-4.

¹¹¹ Greek texts do refer to the Persian reconquest of Egypt in ca. 343 BC, and at several failed attempts at reconquest that preceded it; see e.g. McKechnie, "Greek Wars," 27-45. For the existence of an additional Egyptian rebel king in the Second Persian Period – which is mentioned neither by Manetho nor by Greek histories – , see 2.4 below.

spent his spare time in Iran copying and studying the signs. After extensive work, he made his translations of the Old Persian version of the Bisitun inscription public in the late 1830s and 1840s.¹¹²

Though Rawlinson was neither the first European nor the only one who had attempted to translate the inscriptions of the Persian kings, his work on the Bisitun inscription occupies a special place in the history of scholarship on the Persian Empire. By and large, this is due to the fact that the Bisitun inscription is the longest Persian royal text that has been preserved. Neither Darius I himself, nor his predecessors and successors, ever left an inscription behind that was as elaborate as the one near Kermanshah.¹¹³ The significance of this is twofold. First, when Rawlinson published his translations of the Bisitun inscription, they provided scholars with a rich array of previously unknown words in Old Persian. This would be key in deciphering the scripts and languages of the Elamite and Babylonian versions of the inscription, the understanding of which was still largely lacking.¹¹⁴ Second, the text provided scholars with the longest narrative that was written from the perspective of a Persian king. The Bisitun inscription therefore was – and still is – a crucial text for historians of the Persian Empire who wish to go beyond the narratives of Greco-Roman historians to write a more “imperialy centered” history of the Persian state. Incidentally, as more than half of the text consists of descriptions of revolts that were waged against Darius’ reign, it is a significant source for the study of rebellion in the Persian Period as well. Because of its importance, the following section provides a short summary of the Bisitun inscription. In addition, it discusses the unique position of the inscription within the corpus of Persian royal inscriptions at large, and provides an overview of (possible) references to Egyptian rebellions in both it and a number of other Persian royal sources.

¹¹² For a detailed overview of Rawlinson’s time in western Iran, see Adkins, *Empires of the Plain*, 30-43, 58-85. For a description of the Bisitun monument, see *ibid.*, 74-76. It should be noted that the decipherment of Old Persian cuneiform was a gradual and collective process; for Rawlinson’s role in it, as well as that of other European scholars, see Pope, *Story of Decipherment*, 85-110, and Tavernier, “Old Persian,” 640-44.

¹¹³ For a general discussion of Persian royal inscriptions, see below.

¹¹⁴ See e.g. Pope, *Story of Decipherment*, 106-10, 113-17.

2.3.1 *The Bisitun monument*

The Old Persian, Elamite and Babylonian versions of the Bisitun inscription, as well as the accompanying relief, were inscribed on the rocks of mount Bisitun between ca. 521 and 518 BC. The inscription essentially tells the story of Darius I's rise to power in the summer of 522 BC, and of several military campaigns that were waged from 522 to ca. 519/18 BC.¹¹⁵ For simplicity's sake, the story can be divided into three parts. The first part of the inscription focuses on Darius' accession. After a lengthy genealogy, the inscription states that Cambyses, Darius' predecessor and distant relative, had killed his brother Bardiya in secret. Cambyses then went to Egypt, which – it is implied – he conquered at the time. After that, a man called Gaumata began a rebellion in Persia, and claimed to be Bardiya. Gaumata was supported by Persians, Medes, and a host of other peoples, many of whom apparently believed his claim. Though several people knew of Gaumata's true identity, only Darius and six other men dared to act. They killed Gaumata in a fortress in Media. Cambyses, meanwhile, had died in unknown circumstances, so Darius was granted the kingship of the Persian Empire. The second part of the Bisitun inscription describes events that followed Darius' accession to the throne. In particular, it describes a series of rebellions (Old Persian *hamiçiya-*) that were waged against Darius' reign, and the manner in which the Persian king managed to defeat them. First, the inscription claims that people in Elam and Babylonia rebelled against Darius once Gaumata had been executed. Darius sent an army to Elam, and personally led a force against Babylonia. While Darius was in Babylon, additional rebellions occurred in Persia, Media, Assyria, Egypt, Parthia, Margiana, Sattagydia, and Scythia. Some of these rebellions are described in detail in the inscription, including the dates and locations of battles, numbers of captured prisoners, and methods of execution. Others, including the rebellion in Egypt, receive no further comment. The general message is, however, that Darius managed to defeat the rebellions within his first year on the throne. The third part of the inscription was added at a later date. It provides a description of two military campaigns which Darius fought in his second and third years of rule: one was prompted by a rebellion in Elam; the other, which was waged against the Scythians, was apparently initiated by Darius himself. Finally, the relief that accompanies the

¹¹⁵ See Bae, "Comparative Studies," 16-30, for the history of the inscription's engraving, and *ibid.*, 76-236, for an edition of the Old Persian, Elamite, and Akkadian versions of the text, which exhibit minor differences among one another. See Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 141-57 no. 5.1, for a convenient translation of the Old Persian text. A more elaborate summary and discussion of the inscription is provided in Chapter 3.



Figure 2. Part of Darius I’s trilingual inscriptions and relief at mount Bisitun. (Photo from https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/dc/Bisotun_Iran_Relief_Achamenid_Period.JPG)

inscriptions at mount Bisitun provides a visual “summary” of Darius’ victories. It depicts Darius as a crowned monarch, trampling a man beneath his feet, and standing in front of nine figures whose hands are bound behind their backs and whose necks are tied together with rope. Short cuneiform labels identify the prisoners with Gaumata and with the other (rebel) kings whom Darius described as having defeated. A figure in a winged disk, which hovers above the scene, grants Darius a ring, which is generally understood as a symbol of power.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ For a detailed discussion of the relief’s iconography, see Root, *King and Kingship*, 182-226, and Rollinger, “Relief at Bisitun,” 5-51. For the cuneiform labels, see Bae, “Comparative Studies,” 227-36. In the years that followed the inscription’s creation the text was disseminated through various media: see the discussion in 3.3.

2.3.2 Other Persian royal inscriptions

Within the larger tradition of royal inscriptions in ancient western Asia, the Bisitun inscription is not exceptionally remarkable. The kings of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, for example, made accounts of their military campaigns that were filled with similar details, such as descriptions of rebellion, capture of prisoners of war, destruction of cities, and methods of execution. Monumental reliefs sometimes accompanied these inscriptions, and provided visual testimony of the wars which the Assyrians fought with their subjects and neighbors.¹¹⁷ Within the corpus of Persian royal inscriptions, however, the Bisitun monument can be said to be unique. As mentioned above, neither Cyrus and Cambyses, nor Xerxes and his successors have left inscriptions behind that rival the length and historical detail of the Bisitun inscription. In fact, the majority of the Persian royal inscriptions – as well as Persian monumental art – avoids historical narrative altogether.¹¹⁸ To appreciate this aspect of the Persian royal corpus, it is important to take a brief look at the inscriptions of Cyrus and Cambyses on the one hand, and those of Darius I and his successors on the other.

2.3.2.1 The royal inscriptions of Cyrus and Cambyses

At present, ca. seven royal inscriptions can be attributed to the reign of Cyrus. The inscriptions stem from Babylonia and were written in the Babylonian language.¹¹⁹ Among them, the so-called Cyrus Cylinder is by far the best known. It was probably found in the area of the Esagil in Babylon, or in one of the city's walls. The text is comparable to the Bisitun inscription in that it describes a specific political event: in short, the text claims that Marduk, the chief deity of Esagil, had ordered Cyrus to march to Babylonia; Cyrus then took Babylon without a fight, and showed himself to be a righteous king by e.g. allowing displaced peoples to return to their homelands, and by strengthening the city wall Imgur-Enlil. Most scholars assume that the

¹¹⁷ See e.g. Bagg, "Where is the Public," 58-60, 62-65, and Baker, "I Burnt, Razed, (and) Destroyed," 48-54.

¹¹⁸ For the ahistoricism of Persian royal inscriptions and art, see e.g. Root, *King and Kingship*, 182, Sancisi-Weerdenburg, "Persian Kings and History," 93-96, 110, and Rollinger, "Thinking and Writing about History," 195-202.

¹¹⁹ The authorship of several inscriptions from Pasargadae is debated: the inscriptions claim that they were made by Cyrus, but most scholars assume that they were created by Darius I; see e.g. Stronach, "Old Persian Cuneiform Script," 195-203, and Rossi, "Inscriptions of the Achaemenids," 77-78.

cylinder was created shortly after the Babylonian conquest to legitimate Cyrus' reign.¹²⁰ The remainder of Cyrus' inscriptions are much shorter than the cylinder. They consist of ca. six bricks, which would have been placed in buildings in Ur and Uruk, and which are stamped with inscriptions of one to two lines each.¹²¹ What ties the cylinder and the bricks together is that they extoll Cyrus with a mixture of Babylonian and non-Babylonian titles: Cyrus is celebrated as the "king of Babylon" and "king of Sumer and Akkad," but also as the "king of Anshan" – an ancient city in southwestern Iran – , and as the descendant of a long line of Anshanite kings.¹²² It seems, in short, that the Persian conqueror chose to model his inscriptions directly on Mesopotamian precursors, while (subtly) adapting those traditions to his own needs.¹²³

A similar observation can be made regarding the inscriptions of Cyrus' son. Though no Babylonian inscription has been attributed to Cambyses, the king is known from two royal texts in Egypt. Both are written in hieroglyphs and are connected to the burial of an Apis bull in Memphis. The inscriptions claim that Cambyses prepared a proper burial for the holy animal, and they extoll the king in traditional pharaonic terms as "king of Upper and Lower Egypt," and "son of Re."¹²⁴ Like his father, therefore, Cambyses chose to follow the prevailing

¹²⁰ Literature on the Cyrus Cylinder is vast. For editions and translations of the text, see e.g. Schaudig, *Die Inschriften Nabonids*, 550-56, Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 70-74, and Schaudig, "Text of the Cyrus Cylinder," 16-25. For discussions of the text, see e.g. Kuhrt, "Cyrus Cylinder," 83-97, van der Spek, "Cyrus the Great," 233-64, Schaudig, "Magnanimous Heart of Cyrus," 67-91, and Pongratz-Leisten, "Ich bin ein Babylonier," 92-105. The exact find spot of the text is unknown; see Taylor, "Cyrus Cylinder: Discovery," 35-68.

¹²¹ For an overview of the bricks, see Waters, "Cyrus Rising," 36-39, and Waerzeggers, "Silence as Propaganda." It is possible, though uncertain, that a cylinder from Ur should also be attributed to Cyrus' reign; see *ibid.*

¹²² The significance of the title "king of Anshan" is debated; see e.g. Potts, "Cyrus the Great," 7-28, Waters, "Cyrus Rising," 28-32, Stronach, "Cyrus, Anshan, and Assyria," 46-52, and Schaudig, "Magnanimous Heart of Cyrus," 84-88.

¹²³ See Kuhrt, "Cyrus Cylinder," 88-93, van der Spek, "Cyrus the Great," 253-55, Waters, "Cyrus Rising," 33-37, Schaudig, "Magnanimous Heart of Cyrus," 68-84, Pongratz-Leisten, "Ich bin ein Babylonier," 93-94, for the Cyrus Cylinder as a typical Mesopotamian royal inscription, which was based on both Neo-Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian traditions. Waerzeggers, "Silence as Propaganda," highlights the cylinder's and the bricks' divergence from those traditions.

¹²⁴ For an edition of the texts, see Posener, *La première domination perse*, 30-36 nos. 3-4; for an English translation, see Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 122-24 nos. 4.12-13. Whether other texts from Cambyses' reign - such as a sculptural fragment with the beginning of the king's name that was found in the palace of Apries at Memphis (Petrie, *Palace of Apries*, 11 no. 31) - were the result of royal initiative as well is unclear.

traditions of a region that he had recently conquered. There is no hint, in this case, that the texts were influenced by Persian royal ideology.

2.3.2.2 The royal inscriptions of Darius I and later Persian kings

At present, more than fifty royal inscriptions can be attributed to the reign of Darius I.¹²⁵ As is well known, the inscriptions are quite different from those of his predecessors. They are associated with several innovations, which would eventually become the standard for Persian royal inscriptions in general. Four of these innovations can be highlighted here. First, many of Darius' royal inscriptions were left behind in southwestern Iran, specifically in Persia, Elam and Media.¹²⁶ Other inscriptions were left behind in Egypt, and – to a lesser extent – in Babylonia and Phanagoria.¹²⁷ Compared to the inscriptions of Cyrus and Cambyses, which were left behind in single provinces, this was both a significant geographical expansion and indicative of a gradual shift in focus (i.e. from province to imperial center). Second, many of Darius' inscriptions were not written in one but in three different languages: Old Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian. A handful included Egyptian as well. The use of Old Persian is especially noteworthy as it had not been a written language before Darius acceded to the throne.¹²⁸ Third, though Darius' inscriptions built on Near Eastern precedents, their

¹²⁵ The number is based on the inscriptions listed by Lecoq, *Les inscriptions de la Perse*, 187-249, and Schmitt, *Die altpersischen Inschriften*, 9-18. The number is artificial, however, as some of the texts that are counted as one inscription consist of multiple versions (e.g. in Elamite and Babylonian), while some texts that are counted as individual inscriptions consist of captions that one might attribute to other, larger inscription (e.g. labels that identify different figures in the Bisitun inscription). Omitted by the authors are texts that are written only in Egyptian or Babylonian, and the recently published Old Persian inscription from Phanagoria (see below).

¹²⁶ See Lecoq, *Les inscriptions de la Perse*, 187-247, and Schmitt, *Die altpersischen Inschriften*, 9-17, 36-148 (DB, DE, DH, DN, DM, DP, DS).

¹²⁷ See Lecoq, *Les inscriptions de la Perse*, 246-48, Schmitt, *Die altpersischen Inschriften*, 10, 17-18, 99, 146-51 (DK, DSab, DZ), and Vittmann, "Ägypten zur Zeit der Perserherrschaft," 382-86 (Egyptian inscriptions); Voigtlander, *Bisitun Inscription*, 63-66, and Seidl, "Ein Monument Darius' I.," 101-14 (Babylonian inscription); and Shavarebi, "An Inscription of Darius I," 1-15 (Phanagorian inscription). An inscription by Xerxes states that Darius intended to leave an inscription behind in Armenia as well; see Lecoq, *Les inscriptions de la Perse*, 263-64 (XV). The authenticity of an inscription in Romania is more dubious; see Schmitt, *Die altpersischen Inschriften*, 10 (DG).

¹²⁸ For a list of trilingual and quadrilingual inscriptions from Darius' reign, see Finn, "Gods, Kings, Men," 254-57. For the use of Old Persian, see e.g. Stronach, "Old Persian Cuneiform Script," 195-203, and Rossi, "Inscriptions of the Achaemenids," 77-78.

terminology was distinctly different from that used by Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian kings. It was also different from Cyrus' adaptation of Mesopotamian traditions in the Cyrus Cylinder. The standard titles used by Darius were not "king of Babylon" or "king of Anshan," for example, but "great king" and "king of kings."¹²⁹ Fourth, they consistently extolled Auramazda – a deity which had never appeared in royal inscriptions before – as the king's supreme god.¹³⁰

Many of the novelties which Darius introduced in his royal inscriptions were already visible in the inscription on mount Bisitun. Engraved in a mountain in Media, the Bisitun inscription was the Empire's first inscription in Iran. It was also the Empire's first trilingual inscription, the first text that used Old Persian, the first that used a new set of imperial titles, and the first that extolled Auramazda. In short, the Bisitun inscription laid the foundation for all the elements that we now consider as typical for "Persian" or "Achaemenid" royal inscriptions. The only exception to this rule was its level of historical detail. After ca. 518 BC, explicit descriptions of military campaigns or of other political events began to be avoided in Darius' *res gestae*. The main focus instead fell on building activities on the one hand and on the Empire's size and diversity on the other.¹³¹ An inscription on a tablet from Susa is typical in this regard: it states that Darius, "great king, king of kings, king of lands," built a palace "with the protection of Auramazda"; what follows is a long list of materials that were used for the construction of the palace, as well as a list of provinces from which the materials were brought to Persia; the inscription concludes that everything was "brought from afar" and that Darius "organised it (...) thanks to the protection of Auramazda."¹³² The monumental art of the imperial cities reflected the same general focus: statues and palace reliefs did not depict the king's military

¹²⁹ See e.g. Wiesehöfer, "King of Kings," 55.

¹³⁰ On the significance of Auramazda, see e.g. de Jong, "Religion of the Achaemenid Rulers," 1203-4, and Henkelman, "Heartland Pantheon," 1224-27.

¹³¹ For a detailed discussion of this development – which already began, in some form, with the addition on Darius' second and third years of rule in the Bisitun inscription – , see Sancisi-Weerdenburg, "Persian Kings and History," 91-112, and Rollinger, "Thinking and Writing about History," 196-202.

¹³² See Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 497 11.13 ii b (DSaa).

endeavors, but focused on mythical animals, enthroned or worshipping monarchs, and the large number of ethnic peoples that made up the Persian Empire instead.¹³³

By and large, the royal inscriptions that were created after the Bisitun monument were mimicked by Darius' successors. The inscriptions created by Xerxes and the Persian kings that succeeded him included, in other words, elaborate Persian titles, praise for Auramazda, references to the size of the Empire, and the occasional comment on construction works. Most of them were written in Old Persian, Elamite, or Babylonian, and were left behind in Persia, Elam, or Media. The vast majority did not, however, include descriptions of rebellion, military victories, or political events of any other kind.¹³⁴

2.3.3 References to Egyptian rebellions

It goes without saying that the ahistoricism of the majority of the Persian royal inscriptions is an obstacle for historians of the Persian Empire. Simply put, it robs scholars of a "Persian" or "imperial" perspective on a wide range of political events. This observation applies to the rebellions of Persian Period Egypt as well as, for example, to the Greco-Persian wars. The issue is further exacerbated by the fact that the archives of the Persian court, which will have included royal correspondence on a variety of political matters, have not been preserved.¹³⁵ Having said that, there is a small handful of Persian royal sources that forms an exception to the general rule. The Bisitun inscription is of course the most prominent exception. It provides us with an extensive royal account of court conspiracy, of provincial resistance, and of military campaigns that resulted in Persian victories. It also includes a reference to an Egyptian revolt that broke out in 522/21 BC. As this is the earliest Egyptian revolt for which sufficient evidence exists, it

¹³³ See e.g. Root, *King and Kingship*, 309-11. This is not to say that the military aspect of the Empire was entirely avoided in monumental art; see e.g. Tuplin, "War and Peace," 36, who emphasizes the number of soldiers that are portrayed on the walls of Persepolis.

¹³⁴ For editions of the royal inscriptions of Darius' successors, see Lecoq, *Les inscriptions de la Perse*, 250-76, and Schmitt, *Die altpersischen Inschriften*, 151-99.

¹³⁵ For the significance of this loss, compare e.g. Radner, "An Imperial Communication Network," 64-93, with Kuhrt, "State Communications," 112-40. Note that histories or chronicles which were written by Persian scribes - if they ever existed - have not been preserved either. For possible references to their existence, see e.g. Llewellyn-Jones and Robson, *Ctesias' History of Persia*, 58-61. What has been preserved are two large administrative archives from Persepolis; for the relevance as well as limits of these archives to the study of Persian Period Egypt, see 2.5.3 below.

is elaborately discussed in Chapter 3. Other references to rebellion might occur in several stelae from Darius' reign, in an inscription from Xerxes' reign, and, more indirectly, on a handful of coins that have been attributed to Artaxerxes III. As they provide us with possible glimpses of an imperial perspective on resistance, they are briefly discussed below.

2.3.3.1 The canal stelae

The so-called “canal stelae” are a series of monumental stelae from the reign of Darius I. They were found in the nineteenth and early twentieth century at different sites in northeastern Egypt. It seems that they were originally erected along an ancient canal that was dug through the Wadi Tumilat, and which was meant to connect the Delta to the Red Sea. Some of the stelae were inscribed with Egyptian hieroglyphs, some with Old Persian, Elamite and Babylonian cuneiform, and at least two were inscribed with all four languages.¹³⁶ Regrettably, the hieroglyphic texts, which seem to have provided a detailed account of Darius' decision to dig the canal, have only been preserved in fragments.¹³⁷ The cuneiform versions are in a better state of preservation. They extoll Auramazda, provide Darius' list of titles, and give the following brief statement:

Darius I, *Canal stelae* (DZc)

“King Darius proclaims: I am a Persian; from Persia, I seized Egypt. I ordered this canal to be dug, from a river called Nile, which flows in Egypt, to the sea which goes to Persia. So this canal was dug as I had ordered, and ships went from Egypt through this canal to Persia, as was my desire.” (Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 485-86 11.6)¹³⁸

¹³⁶ Both the exact number of stelae and their original appearance are difficult to reconstruct as some are merely known from fragments. For recent discussions of the stelae – including translations of the texts – , see Wasmuth, *Ägypto-persische Herrscher- und Herrschaftspräsentation*, 125-56, and Mahlich, *Der Kanalbau*. For the significance of the canal – and the extent to which it was used in antiquity – , compare Tuplin, “Darius' Suez Canal,” 270-78, with Klotz, “Darius I and the Sabaeans,” 274-76 and Colburn, *Archaeology of Empire*, 13-15.

¹³⁷ See Posener, *La première domination perse*, 48-87 nos. 8-10, Klotz, “Darius I and the Sabaeans,” 277-80, and Wasmuth, *Ägypto-persische Herrscher- und Herrschaftspräsentation*, 134-48.

¹³⁸ For a more detailed discussion of the cuneiform texts, see Wasmuth, *Ägypto-persische Herrscher- und Herrschaftspräsentation*, 148-56.

Though the main topic of the stelae is evidently the canal and not a military campaign, it is noteworthy that the text attributes the “seizure” of Egypt to Darius (Old Persian *grab-*). As has been previously noted, this statement ignores Cambyses’ conquest of the country.¹³⁹ The omission may be interpreted in multiple ways. One possibility is that the statement should be taken literally: Darius had (re)conquered Egypt, after – we must assume – a rebellion had broken out in the country.¹⁴⁰ That such a rebellion had occurred during Darius’ reign is clear from the Bisitun inscription. In this case, the canal stelae may be interpreted as a type of victory monument, which celebrated Darius’ hold on Egypt and which, at the same time, commemorated the digging of a canal that would connect the country more closely to Persia.¹⁴¹ Another possibility is that the statement in the stelae had less to do with reality and more with an attempt to downplay the significance of the reign of Cambyses, Darius’ predecessor. That this may have played a role is suggested by the Bisitun inscription, which is distinctly vague about Cambyses’ conquest of Egypt: the Old Persian and Elamite versions of the inscription simply state that Cambyses “went to” Egypt after he had killed Bardiya; the Babylonian version adds that he went “with troops,” but omits a reference to an outright invasion.¹⁴² This lack of specificity may have allowed Darius to claim the conquest of Egypt for himself. Third and finally, it is possible that the text on the stelae was the result of both elements: the Egyptian rebellion that broke out within only a few years of Cambyses’ invasion may have provided Darius with an easy means to sidestep his predecessor’s conquest and to claim the annexation of the country for himself. In the absence of historical details which could help us contextualize Darius’ “seizure” of Egypt, all three possibilities should remain in consideration.¹⁴³

2.3.3.2 The “Daiva” inscription

The so-called “Daiva” inscription is a royal inscription from the reign of Xerxes. The text is known from three Old Persian versions, and one Elamite and Babylonian version, each of

¹³⁹ See e.g. Lecoq, *Les inscriptions de la Perse*, 248.

¹⁴⁰ See e.g. Oppert, *Le peuple et la langue des Mèdes*, 170, and Posener, *La première domination perse*, 180.

¹⁴¹ The monumental Egypto-Persian statue of Darius I, the cuneiform inscriptions of which emphasize that it was made “so that whoever sees it in time to come will know that the Persian man holds Egypt” (Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 478 11.2), might be viewed in the same light.

¹⁴² See Bae, “Comparative Studies,” 88-91.

¹⁴³ The date of the stelae’s creation, which is sometimes placed in the early fifth century BC, remains difficult to ascertain; see e.g. Tuplin, “Darius’ Suez Canal,” 249-55.

which was found on a separate stone tablet. Though the assumption is that the tablets were originally buried in the foundations of royal buildings, they were found in secondary contexts: four stones were found in the “garrison quarters” at Persepolis in 1935; and one was found at Pasargadae in 1963, where it had functioned as a “makeshift drain-cover” within the citadel.¹⁴⁴ The text of the inscriptions begins with a standard praise to Auramazda, and a proclamation of Xerxes’ titles and genealogy. It then provides us with a list of thirty lands over which Xerxes ruled. What follows can be quoted in full:

Xerxes, *Daiva inscription* (XPh)

“Xerxes the king proclaims: When I became king, there is among those countries which (are) inscribed above (one, which) was in turmoil. Afterwards Auramazda brought me aid; by the favour of Auramazda I defeated that country and put it in its proper place.

And among those countries there were (some) where formerly the *daivas* had been worshipped.¹⁴⁵ Afterwards by the favour of Auramazda I destroyed that place of the *daivas*, and I gave orders: ‘The *daivas* shall not be worshipped any longer!’ Wherever formerly the *daivas* have been worshipped, there I worshipped Auramazda at the proper time and with the proper ceremony.

And there was something else, that had been done wrong, that too I put right. That which I have done, all that I have done by the favour of Auramazda. Auramazda brought me aid, until I had done the work.” (Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 304-5 7.88)¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ On the inscriptions from Persepolis, see Kent, “Daiva-Inscription of Xerxes,” 292, Schmidt, *Treasury of Persepolis*, 11-12, and Schmidt, *Persepolis*, 1:209. An additional fragment of the Elamite inscription was later found by Ali Sami; see Cameron, “‘Daiva’ Inscription of Xerxes,” 470-71. On the inscription found at Pasargadae, see Stronach, “Excavations at Pasargadae,” 19-20. Note that these studies contradict Mousavi, *Persepolis*, 25, and Mousavi, “Visual Display and Written Record,” 73-75, who states that five – rather than four – Daiva inscriptions were found at Persepolis.

¹⁴⁵ For the meaning of “daiva”, see Herrenschildt and Kellens, “Daiva,” 599-602. The exact meaning in Old Persian is unclear, but it seems to have referred to gods, possibly with a negative connotation – e.g. “demonic” gods.

¹⁴⁶ For editions of the inscription, see Lecoq, *Les inscriptions de la Perse*, 256-58, and Schmitt, *Die altpersischen Inschriften*, 164-69.

The text ends with an encouragement to worship Auramazda and to his respect his law. In addition, it asks the god to protect Xerxes, his family, and his kingdom from harm.

Ever since its publication, the Daiva inscription has featured prominently in discussions of Xerxes' reign. Due to the lack of historical details, however, interpretations of the text have varied considerably. The interpretations may be divided into two different camps. First, some scholars have connected the "turmoil" (Old Persian *yaud-*) at the start of Xerxes' reign and the destruction of the sanctuary of the "daiva" to specific political events. Egypt, for example, has been suggested as a possible candidate for the country which Xerxes "put in its proper place," as Herodotus states that the country was in rebellion when Xerxes acceded to the throne.¹⁴⁷ Other events which have been connected to the inscription include the Babylonian rebellions of 484 BC and Xerxes' invasion of Greece in 480 BC.¹⁴⁸ By contrast, since at least the 1990s scholars have tended to highlight the lack of historical detail in the inscription. It has been argued that the text should be divorced from a specific historical referent, and that it should be read as a "timeless" statement on Xerxes' duties as king instead.¹⁴⁹ It is important to observe that the two interpretations are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The inscription may have been created as the result of one or more historical episodes – including the 487/86 – 485/84 BC rebellion in Egypt – , but kept deliberately vague so that the text could refer to both past and future events. The general message was, in any case, that the Persian king would succeed in all his endeavors with the help of his supreme deity.

2.3.3.3 Achaemenid coins

For the sake of completeness, one should mention that a series of Persian Period coins exists that may be interpreted as a type of royal propaganda. The coins can be divided into four groups: one group consists of six staters, which show an enthroned Achaemenid ruler with an Egyptian double crown on one side, and a lion on the other; a second group consists of two

¹⁴⁷ See e.g. Hignett, *Xerxes' Invasion of Greece*, 89 n. 5, and Nyberg, *Die Religionen des alten Iran*, 365-66. The suggestion has recently been taken up by Tuplin, "Dogs That Do Not (Always) Bark," 111, though with reservations. For a discussion of the Egyptian rebellion that Xerxes defeated, see 2.2.1 above and Chapter 4.

¹⁴⁸ See e.g. Nyberg, *Die Religionen des alten Iran*, 365-66, Hartmann, "Zur neuen Inschrift des Xerxes," 158-60, and Lévy, "L'inscription triomphale de Xerxès," 117-22.

¹⁴⁹ See e.g. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, "Persian Kings and History," 96-98, 109-10, Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 550-53, Henkelman, *Other Gods Who Are*, 9-10, and Waters, *Ancient Persia*, 118-19.

obols, which show an enthroned Achaemenid ruler whose crown cannot be identified on one side, and the portrait of a beardless man with an Egyptian double crown on the other; a third group consists of two hemiobols, which show the portrait of a beardless man on one side and that of a bearded man on the other, both of whom wear an Egyptian double crown; and the fourth group consists of at least twenty-three tetradrachms, which depict a portrait of Athena on one side, an owl on the other, and which bear a demotic inscription that can be read as “Artaxerxes pharaoh (l.p.h.).”¹⁵⁰ Though none of the coins bear an exact date, modern scholars have often attributed them to the reign of Artaxerxes III.¹⁵¹ This date can be supported by two different arguments. First, some of the coins can be associated with larger hoards, the deposition of which has been dated to the (mid-)fourth century BC. A tetradrachm with the name of Artaxerxes, for example, appears to have come from a coin hoard that was found in Iraq. Some of the issues in the hoard bear inscriptions of Sabaces and Mazaces, who were satraps of Egypt shortly before Alexander’s conquest. The last issues of the hoard can be dated to Mazaeus, who was satrap of Cilicia in the mid-fourth century BC and Alexander’s governor of Babylonia from ca. 331 to 328 BC.¹⁵² Second, some of the images on the coins look very similar to those on other fourth century BC specimens. For example, the image of an enthroned ruler – though without the Egyptian double crown – is known from several coins that bear Mazaeus’ name. In addition, both the Mazaeus coins and the coins of group one described

¹⁵⁰ See Kovacs, “Two Persian Pharaonic Portraits,” 56 nos. 1-2, and Wasmuth, *Ägypto-persische Herrscher- und Herrschaftspräsentation*, 201-4 (group one); Kovacs, “Two Persian Pharaonic Portraits,” 57 no. 3 (group two); *ibid.*, 57 no. 4 (group three); Mørkholm, “A Coin of Artaxerxes II,” 1-4, Vleeming, *Some Coins of Artaxerxes*, 1-4, van Alfen, ““Owls’ from the 1989 Syria Hoard,” 24-27, and Anderson and van Alfen, “A Fourth Century BCE Hoard,” 163-64 (group four). Note that Quack, *Review of Ägypto-persische Herrscher- und Herrschaftspräsentation*, 162, prefers to interpret the “ruler” on the coins of group one as a deity. Note also that some of the inscriptions in group four - a few of which include Aramaic - are virtually illegible; see Vleeming, *Some Coins of Artaxerxes*, 4, and Anderson and van Alfen, “A Fourth Century BCE Hoard,” 164.

¹⁵¹ See Mørkholm, “A Coin of Artaxerxes II,” 2-3, Vleeming, *Some Coins of Artaxerxes*, 1-2, Kovacs, “Two Persian Pharaonic Portraits,” 58-59, Anderson and van Alfen, “A Fourth Century BCE Hoard,” 163, and Wasmuth, *Ägypto-persische Herrscher- und Herrschaftspräsentation*, 204-5.

¹⁵² See Mørkholm, “A Coin of Artaxerxes II,” 1-2. See also van Alfen, ““Owls’ from the 1989 Syria Hoard,” 1-2, and Anderson and van Alfen, “A Fourth Century BCE Hoard,” 155-56, for the mid-fourth century BC date of two hoards that were allegedly found in Syria, and which included Artaxerxes coins.



Figure 3. A Persian Period stater with the figure of an enthroned ruler who wears the Egyptian double crown. (Photo from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Artaxerxes_III_as_Pharaos.jpg)

above bear an Aramaic inscription that reads “Lord of Tarsus.”¹⁵³ If (some of) the coins of groups one to four can indeed be attributed to Artaxerxes III, it is possible that they should be interpreted as a type of victory coinage. After all, Artaxerxes III was the king who reconquered Egypt in ca. 343 BC, after it had been independent from the Persian Empire for several decades. The widely circulating artefacts – which featured Achaemenid rulers with Egyptian crowns and titles – could therefore have been created to celebrate the renewed Achaemenid hold on Egypt.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ See Anderson and van Alfen, “A Fourth Century BCE Hoard,” 158-60, and Wasmuth, *Ägypto-persische Herrscher- und Herrschaftspräsentation*, 203-5. Whether the Aramaic inscription should be read as a reference to the deity Baal of Tarsus, or as a reference to Achaemenid authority over Tarsus, is unclear.

¹⁵⁴ See e.g. Wasmuth, “Political Memory,” 228-30, and Wasmuth, *Ägypto-persische Herrscher- und Herrschaftspräsentation*, 205, who interprets the coins of group one in this way (an interpretation not accepted by Quack, *Review of Ägypto-persische Herrscher- und Herrschaftspräsentation*, 162). In addition, Kovacs, “Two Persian Pharaonic Portraits,” 59, has entertained the possibility that the coins of group two and three may have served to introduce Artaxerxes IV as crown prince, and that they served to highlight Achaemenid rule of Egypt even if – or perhaps precisely because – an Egyptian rebellion was threatening Persian authority at the time. On this rebellion, which was led by a pharaoh called Khababash, see below.

2.4 Egyptian sources

In the winter of 1851, Auguste Mariette, an Egyptologist who was connected to the Louvre Museum, discovered a series of subterranean chambers at Saqqara. The chambers were part of the Saqqara Serapeum, a building where the Apis bulls – animals that were considered to be divine in Egypt – were buried in antiquity. The discovery of the complex was truly remarkable: thousands of objects were found, from minor works of art to monumental granite sarcophagi, many of which were inscribed with the names and titles of pharaohs under whose reigns the animals had passed away.¹⁵⁵ Though the majority of these pharaohs was already known to scholars, a handful had not been previously identified. Among them was a certain “Khebasch,” whose name was written on a small black granite sarcophagus. “Qu’est-ce que le roi Khebasch,” Mariette wondered, “dont le nom se révèle ici pour la première fois? Y eut-il donc à Memphis un roi (...) dont l’histoire n’a jamais entendu parler?”¹⁵⁶ It took ca. twenty years before Mariette’s question could be answered. A second inscription that mentioned the enigmatic ruler, known as the Satrap Stele, was found in 1870. This inscription allowed scholars to identify Khebash – presently known as Khababash – as a rebel king who had been contemporary with the Persian Empire.¹⁵⁷ He was the first such king to be identified in Egyptian sources.

Today, the reign of pharaoh Khababash, which has been dated to the Second Persian Period of Egypt, is attested by at least seven Egyptian texts. Aside from the Apis sarcophagus and the Satrap Stele, Khababash’s name has been identified in the date formula of a demotic papyrus from Thebes, in an inscription on a sling bullet from the Apries palace at Memphis, and in minor hieroglyphic texts that were inscribed on a vase, a scarab, and a faience amulet.¹⁵⁸ It is important to observe that most of these artefacts were probably created during Khababash’s

¹⁵⁵ See e.g. Mariette, *Choix de monuments*, 8-11, Mariette, *Le Sérapeum de Memphis*, 1-84, and Vercoutter, *Textes biographiques*, ix. For a critical examination of Mariette’s discovery, see Málek, “Who Was the First,” 65-72.

¹⁵⁶ Mariette, *Le Sérapeum de Memphis*, 54. For an edition of the inscription, see Gunn, “Inscribed Sarcophagi,” 86-87.

¹⁵⁷ For a recent translation of the Satrap Stele, see Schäfer, *Makedonische Pharaonen*, 31-38. Note that some scholars have mistakenly attributed the discovery of pharaoh Khababash to the Satrap Stele rather than the Apis sarcophagus; see e.g. Burstein, “Prelude to Alexander,” 149, and Wojciechowska, *From Amyrtaeus to Ptolemy*, 75-76.

¹⁵⁸ For an overview of the sources, see Huss, “Der rätselhafte Pharao Chababash,” 97-98, and Moje, “Zu den Namensschreibungen,” 55-62. Whether Khababash is mentioned on a Napatan stele is less certain; see Huss, “Der rätselhafte Pharao Chababash,” 98-99.

reign. The only exception is the Satrap Stele, which was written during the reign of Alexander IV, and which refers back to things that had happened in the Persian Period.¹⁵⁹ That most of the Egyptian sources which refer to Khababash were contemporary with his reign is typical: unlike Greco-Roman and Persian sources, which generally provide us with references to rebellions after they had ended, the majority of the Egyptian sources at our disposal were created while the rebellions were in progress.¹⁶⁰ For simplicity's sake, one can divide these sources into two groups: one group consists of hieroglyphic texts; the second group consists of texts that were written in demotic and Aramaic.¹⁶¹ An important third group consists of uninscribed material remains. The following paragraphs provide an introduction to each and discuss their potential contribution to the study of Egyptian resistance.

2.4.1 Hieroglyphic sources

Some of the best-known hieroglyphic sources from Persian Period Egypt are the Apis inscriptions from Cambyses' reign and the inscribed statue of Udjahorresnet. As discussed

¹⁵⁹ For a discussion of the "Persian" portion of the stele, see e.g. Ladynin, "'Adversary Ḥšryš(š)," 87-113, Schäfer, "Persian Foes," 143-52, and Schäfer, *Makedonische Pharaonen*, 195-96. Whether the stele refers to Xerxes or a later Persian king remains a point of discussion. The idea that Xerxes was mentioned prompted some early scholars to connect Khababash to the revolt of the 480s BC; see e.g. Birch, "On a Hieroglyphic Tablet," 22-25, and Mariette, *Monuments divers*, 1:3. In 1907, however, Khababash' reign was re-dated to the fourth century BC on the basis of two papyri from Thebes; see Spiegelberg, *Der Papyrus Libbey*, 1-6.

¹⁶⁰ Egyptian texts which refer back to events in the Persian Period – rare as they are – generally leave resistance to Persian rule unmentioned. The Satrap Stele is an exception (see above), as are several Persian Period Aramaic texts (see 2.4.2.2 below). In addition, the Demotic Chronicle and the *History of Egypt* by Manetho, both of which were written in the third century BC, implicitly refer to rebellion because they mention Amyrtaios II, whose successful revolt in ca. 400 BC resulted in Dynasty 28. It is nevertheless telling that neither Manetho nor the Demotic Chronicle identify Amyrtaios as a rebel: he is simply portrayed as a pharaoh who ruled after the Persian kings of Dynasty 27. For translations of the texts, see Quack, "The So-Called Demotic Chronicle," 27-34, and Waddell, *Manetho*, 174-79 (Fr. 70-72). Note that the practice of omitting Persian Period rebellions is paralleled by king lists and histories from Hellenistic Babylonia, which refer back to the Persian Period without mentioning the revolts of 522-21 and 484 BC; see Waerzeggers, "Babylonian Kingship," 203-4.

¹⁶¹ Excluded from the following section are texts written in hieratic, Greek, Phoenician, and Carian; their Persian Period numbers are negligible in comparison with the other textual groups, and – more importantly – none of them refer to rebellion. For some Persian Period hieratic texts, see e.g. Vleeming, *Demotic Graffiti*, 426 no. 2154, 433 no. 2179, 438 no. 2197, 471 no. 2281. For Greeks, Phoenicians and Carians in Egypt, see Vittmann, *Ägypten und die Fremden*, 44-83, 155-235

above, the Apis inscriptions commemorate the burial of an Apis bull under the auspices of the Persian king; the statue provides us with the autobiography of a high court official who experienced the transfer from Saite to Persian rule.¹⁶² The sources are emblematic for the corpus of Egyptian hieroglyphic texts in general: on the one hand, the corpus consists of texts that were created at the behest of the pharaoh, and which were inscribed on stelae, statues, naoi, and temple walls; on the other hand, the corpus includes private texts, which were often created by or for high-placed officials, and which were written on statues, seals, tomb walls, and rock faces. The majority of these inscriptions are focused on one of two things: they either record religious matters, such as the worship of specific deities, or the names, titles, and genealogy of the people on whose behalf the texts were written. The inscriptions only rarely consist of what might be called narrative or historical texts. The following pages provide a brief introduction to both categories and discuss how they are chronologically and geographically distributed.¹⁶³

2.4.1.1 Royal inscriptions

The majority of the royal inscriptions from Achaemenid Egypt was created in the first decades of Persian rule. Some examples have already been discussed: Cambyses, who ruled Egypt for ca. four years, is known from two Apis inscriptions that were found in the Saqqara Serapeum. Other royal inscriptions from his reign have not been preserved.¹⁶⁴ Darius I, whose reign lasted ca. thirty-six years, can be connected to a series of stelae that were set up along the Wadi Tumilat in northeastern Egypt. The latter were inscribed with a combination of hieroglyphic and cuneiform texts.¹⁶⁵ The name of Darius I has also been identified in a number of monolingual hieroglyphic inscriptions that were excavated at different sites throughout the country: the sources consist of a temple block from Busiris, an Apis inscription from Saqqara, two wooden naoi, one of which was found at Hermopolis, part of an inscribed pillar from Karnak, a temple block from Elkab, and several temple inscriptions from the Kharga and

¹⁶² See 1.1 and 2.3.2.1.

¹⁶³ For an overview of Persian Period hieroglyphic sources, both of royal and private nature, see Vittmann, “Ägypten zur Zeit der Perserherrschaft,” 373-429. Some sources which defy easy categorization – i.e. minor hieroglyphic texts that were inscribed on scarabs, vases, and religious paraphernalia – are mentioned in the footnotes of the following pages.

¹⁶⁴ See 2.3.2.1.

¹⁶⁵ See 2.3.3.1 above.

Dakhla Oases.¹⁶⁶ This relatively large number of inscriptions stands in stark contrast with Darius' successors: neither Xerxes nor later Persian kings appear to have left hieroglyphic inscriptions behind in the Nile Valley.¹⁶⁷ Their attention was instead directed at Persia, Elam, and Media, the political triangle that formed the heart of the Persian Empire.¹⁶⁸

As mentioned above, most of the royal inscriptions from Achaemenid Egypt do not comment on political events. In this they are similar to the inscriptions from the center of the Achaemenid Empire. The canal stelae from the reign of Darius I, which provide an account of the digging of a large canal that was meant to connect the Delta to the Red Sea, are a rare exception.¹⁶⁹ Instead, the relevance of the royal inscriptions to the study of the Egyptian rebellions lies in two other factors. One factor is that some of the inscriptions include date formulae and can be connected to specific archaeological sites. This allows one to reconstruct when a particular region in Egypt fell under the authority of the Persian government, rather than that of a rebel king. For example, a royal epitaph from the Saqqara Serapeum dates to 13 Epeiph of year four of Darius I, which indicates that Memphis fell under Persian rule in November 518 BC – not long after the events described by the Bisitun inscription.¹⁷⁰ A second factor is that some of the royal inscriptions hail non-Persian pharaohs. The above-mentioned Apis inscription from the reign of Khababash is one example. Another example is Petubastis Seheribre, whose reign can

¹⁶⁶ See Traunecker, "Un document nouveau," 209-13, and Vittmann, "Ägypten zur Zeit der Perserherrschaft," 385-86. For Darius' possible attestation in the Dakhla Oasis, see Kaper, "Dakhleh Oasis in the Late Period," 171-72. Note that Darius' well-known royal statue from Susa, inscribed with both hieroglyphs and cuneiform, may originally have been erected in Egypt as well; see Vittmann, "Ägypten zur Zeit der Perserherrschaft," 384, and Wasmuth, *Ägypto-persische Herrscher- und Herrschaftspräsentation*, 102. For minor hieroglyphic inscriptions from Darius' reign, see the references in Vittmann, "Ägypten zur Zeit der Perserherrschaft," 385-88.

¹⁶⁷ A handful of royal inscriptions which mention "Darius" are sometimes attributed to Darius II, but their date remains a point of discussion; see Vittmann, "Ägypten zur Zeit der Perserherrschaft," 401-3. The only hieroglyphic inscriptions that can be attributed to Darius I's successors with certainty are a series of minor inscriptions on vases, which were found throughout the Empire; see *ibid.*, 395, 398 for further references. In addition, it should be noted that a bronze object, allegedly found at Faqous, bears a short Old Persian inscription from the reign of Xerxes; see Michaélidis, "Quelques objets inédits," 95-96. A similar Old Persian inscription mentions Darius, presumably Darius I; see *ibid.*, 91-93, and Schmitt, *Die altpersischen Inschriften*, 10, 99 (DKa). Both objects are currently part of the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden.

¹⁶⁸ See Lecoq, *Les inscriptions de la Perse*, 250-76, and Schmitt, *Die altpersischen Inschriften*, 151-99.

¹⁶⁹ See 2.3.3.1 above.

¹⁷⁰ See Posener, *La première domination perse*, 36-41, no. 5. The significance of this inscription is further discussed in Chapter 3.

be dated to the early years of Persian rule, and who is elaborately discussed in Chapter 3. His name is attested by several inscribed temple blocks that were found in the Dakhla Oasis, and by a wooden naos of unknown provenance.¹⁷¹ It is important to observe that such non-Persian royal inscriptions are often difficult to date with precision. Their attribution to the Persian Period – and hence the identification of the relevant kings as Egyptian rebel kings – is based on the archaeological context, artistic style, and paleography of the hieroglyphic inscriptions on the one hand, and on the evidence of demotic papyri on the other.¹⁷² When a plausible date has been established, however, the inscriptions can provide us with important evidence. They may illuminate the geographical reach of the rebellion, and – if the texts include references to regnal years – the rebellion’s duration. In addition, the royal inscriptions provide us with a glimpse of the rebel kings’ royal ideology, such as the type of pharaonic titles that were claimed, and the kind of throne names that were adopted.

2.4.1.2 Private inscriptions

At present, hieroglyphic inscriptions that were made on behalf of private parties are our main sources for the elite of Egyptian society. High-placed officials and priests – such as city governors, naval commanders, god’s fathers, court physicians, high priests and overseers of royal construction works – are attested by monumental tombs, for example, that were inscribed with their name(s) and title(s). Other sources include a wide range of grave goods, stelae that were dedicated to specific deities, statues that were erected in the courtyards of temples, inscribed sealings that were once attached to papyri, and the occasional rock graffito.¹⁷³ At times, such sources allow us to reconstruct the career of specific officials in some detail. The best-known example of the Persian Period is Udjahorresnet. The latter’s inscribed statue – which may have been erected in the temple of Neith at Sais during the reign of Darius I – provides a detailed autobiography. The official is also known from (fragments of) several other statues, and from a tomb at Abusir, which housed, among other things, a large limestone sarcophagus. The inscriptions on the objects indicate that Udjahorresnet had begun his career

¹⁷¹ See Kaper, “Petubastis IV,” 127-37 (temple blocks), and Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 216 no. 1, 220, pl. 19 c (naos). Like Khababash, Seheribre is also mentioned on a scarab; see *ibid.*, 216 no. 2.

¹⁷² For demotic papyri that refer to rebel kings, see 2.4.2.1 below.

¹⁷³ For an overview of priests and officials in the Persian Period, see Vittmann, “Rupture and Continuity,” 89-121, and Vittmann, “Ägypten zur Zeit der Perserherrschaft,” 377-81, 388-93, 396, 398, 405-9.

Figure 4. The inscribed statue of Udjahorresnet. (Photo from <https://www.museivaticani.va/content/museivaticani/en/collezioni/musei/museo-gregoriano-egizio/sala-i--reperti-epigrafici/naoforo-vaticano.html>)



during the reign of Amasis II, and that his primary offices had been “overseer of foreign mercenaries” and “overseer of royal *kbnwt*-vessels,” i.e. ships – possibly warships – that were primarily used in the Mediterranean Sea. After Cambyses’ conquest, Udjahorresnet’s titles were replaced with an altogether different one: the Persian king assigned to him the office of “chief physician,” which Udjahorresnet continued to hold during the reign of Darius I. It was in this capacity that he visited the Persian court in Elam, before being sent back to Egypt.¹⁷⁴

In some ways, the private hieroglyphic inscriptions from Persian Period Egypt are similar to the royal inscriptions discussed above. Many of the inscriptions have been dated to the first decades of Persian rule, for example, in particular to the reign of Darius I. Private inscriptions from the reigns of Xerxes and his successors do exist but are relatively rare.¹⁷⁵ In addition, most of the inscriptions do not refer to political events; the passages on Udjahorresnet’s statue which refer to Cambyses’ conquest of Egypt are an exception.¹⁷⁶ Instead, the relevance of

¹⁷⁴ For the inscriptions on the statue – which mention the visit to Elam – , see Posener, *La première domination perse*, 1-26 no. 1, and Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 117-22 no. 4.11; for the (fragments of) other statues, see Wasmuth, “Statues of Udjahorresnet,” 195-219; for the tomb, see Bareš, *Shaft Tomb of Udjahorresnet*, esp. 45-78. The exact meaning of the title “overseer of royal *kbnwt*-vessels” is debated; compare e.g. Lloyd, “Triremes and the Saïte Navy,” 268-79, with Darnell, “*Kbn.wt* Vessels,” 67-89. For recent studies on Udjahorresnet, see Wasmuth and Creasman, “Udjahorresnet and His World.”

¹⁷⁵ See e.g. Vittmann, “Rupture and Continuity,” 89-121, and Vittmann, “Ägypten zur Zeit der Perserherrschaft,” 377-81, 388-93, 396, 398, 405-9. Note that the alleged scarcity of private monuments from the Persian Period has been challenged recently, primarily by Colburn, *Archaeology of Empire*, 131-45. The latter argues that many of the Egyptian private statues lack precise date indicators. The majority of them have nevertheless been assigned to the Saite Period on the one hand and to the period of the Native Dynasties on the other; virtually none have been assigned to the Persian Period, because scholars have long assumed that the periods of Persian rule would have been times of oppression and disruption. As Colburn has observed, this argument is largely circular: one assumes that the Persian Period would have been marked by a dearth of sources, so little is attributed to it; this then reinforces the idea that the Persian Period was indeed marked by a dearth of sources. In other words, more artefacts may have been created under Persian rule than has thus far been acknowledged. Though Colburn’s criticism is warranted, the fact remains that very little can be dated to the Persian Period with certainty. Artefacts that can be dated to the Saite period, based on e.g. a king’s cartouches and prosopography, outnumber the Persian Period examples by a significant degree; compare Vittmann, “Ägypten zur Zeit der Perserherrschaft,” 377-81, 388-93, 396, 398, 405-9 (tens of objects), with the Saite Period private inscriptions listed by Jansen-Winkel, *Die 26. Dynastie*, v-xxxvi (hundreds of objects, excluding the long list of artefacts that are dated to the “26. Dynastie insgesamt” but not to a specific king).

¹⁷⁶ See e.g. Schütze, “Originality of Udjahorresnet’s Biographical Inscriptions,” 166-67. Note that several private inscriptions from the fourth century BC refer to “foreigners” and “Asiatics,” which provide us with a rare – though

private inscriptions to the study of the Egyptian rebellions primarily lies in the names of kings that are occasionally mentioned within the texts. This can be illustrated with reference to a number of rock inscriptions from the Wadi Hammamat. During the reign of Darius I, ca. fifteen inscriptions were left behind on the rocks of the wadi by an “overseer of works” called Khnemibre. Most of them record Khnemibre’s name, title(s), and the date of his visit.¹⁷⁷ Later inscriptions from the same site were left behind by Persian governors, and are dated to the late reign of Darius I, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes I.¹⁷⁸ As some of the inscriptions were left behind during periods of rebellion, their date formulae – all of which hail Persian kings – have been used as evidence for continued Persian control of southern Egypt.¹⁷⁹ At the same time, a handful of sources have been preserved that mention non-Persian pharaohs. Two inscribed sealings feature the throne name of Petubastis Seheribre, for example, in conjunction with the titles and names of two Egyptian officials. One of them was found in connection to demotic papyri.¹⁸⁰ More enigmatic is a private statue that was excavated at Mit Rahina. It appears to have been created under a pharaoh who was called “Psamtik Amasis.”¹⁸¹ A sistrum handle of unknown provenance is inscribed with the same royal names.¹⁸² Regrettably, the latter sources cannot be dated with precision; it is possible that they should be attributed to the reign of Psamtik IV, who ruled parts of Egypt in the 480s BC, or to the reign of Psamtik V, who ruled parts of Egypt in ca. 400 BC.¹⁸³ Theoretically, such inscriptions can provide us with a glimpse of the rebellions’ geographical reach, and of the identity of some of the rebel kings’ supporters.

vague – Egyptian perspective on contemporary Egyptian-Persian relations; see Klotz, “Two Studies,” 136-54, and Vittmann, “Ägypten zur Zeit der Perserherrschaft,” 405-9.

¹⁷⁷ See Posener, *La première domination perse*, 88-92 nos. 11-12, 98-116 nos. 14-23, Goyon, *Nouvelles inscriptions rupestres*, 117 no. 108, Fanfoni and Israel, “Documenti achemenidi,” 77-78, and 4.3.1.2.

¹⁷⁸ See Posener, *La première domination perse*, 117- 29 nos. 24-34, and Goyon, *Nouvelles inscriptions rupestres*, 118-20 no. 109.

¹⁷⁹ See 4.3.

¹⁸⁰ See Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 217 nos. 3-4, and Chapter 3.

¹⁸¹ Jansen-Winkeln, *Die 26. Dynastie*, 584-85 no. 9.

¹⁸² See Gauthier, “Un roi Amasis-Psammétique,” 187-90, and Jansen-Winkeln, *Die 26. Dynastie*, 583 no. 4.

¹⁸³ For Psamtik V, see 2.4.2.1 below. The suggestion that the hieroglyphic sources should be attributed to Psamtik III strikes me as unlikely, *pace* Jansen-Winkeln, *Die 26. Dynastie*, 583-85 nos. 4 and 9. The sistrum handle explicitly identifies “Amasis” as Psamtik’s throne name, while the throne name of Psamtik III was Ankhkaenra. That a scarab with the royal names “Psamtik Nebkaenra” should be attributed to Psamtik III is more plausible; nb would then have been a scribal mistake for anx. Compare Kienitz, *Die politische Geschichte Ägyptens*, 233, with Jansen-Winkeln, *Die 26. Dynastie*, 584 no. 8.

2.4.2. Texts written in demotic and Aramaic

Generally speaking, texts written in demotic – the common Egyptian script at the time – and Aramaic – the *lingua franca* of the Achaemenid Empire – are of a different nature than texts written in Egyptian hieroglyphs. As should be evident from the discussion above, the latter largely consist of texts that were inscribed on stone, metal or wood, and which were left behind by people who had the means to create such artefacts. The demotic and Aramaic texts, however, mostly consist of archival texts, which were written on papyrus, leather or potsherds.¹⁸⁴ Examples of archival texts include marriage contracts, records of temple income, and private letters to far-away family members. In the case of Persian Period Egypt, the vast majority of such texts can be connected to families, many of which belonged to the so-called “middle class” of Egyptian society. These were people of moderate to considerable means, who could own e.g. houses, fields and livestock, but who were not sufficiently wealthy or politically powerful to be part of the country’s elite.¹⁸⁵ By contrast, the archives of high officials such as Udjahorresnet are largely lost. The same observation applies to the archives of the Achaemenid state apparatus and of Egyptian temple institutions – though some texts give us a glimpse of what these archives may have looked like.¹⁸⁶ The following section provides an introduction

¹⁸⁴ A large body of demotic and Aramaic texts that were inscribed on e.g. stone exists as well, but comparatively few of them can be dated to the Persian Period. For examples, see e.g. Vleeming, *Some Coins of Artaxerxes*, xxix-xxx, Vleeming, *Demotic Graffiti*, xlviii-li, and Porten and Yardeni, *Aramaic Documents*, 4:224-98. In addition, a small handful of literary texts has been preserved as well. This two fifth century BC Aramaic papyri from Elephantine, which record versions of the story of Ahiqar and of the Bisitun inscription of Darius I (see Porten and Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents*, 3: 23-53 C1.1, 59-71 C2); and two fragmentary Aramaic papyri from Saqqara, which record stories with an Egyptian background on the one hand, and (possibly) a second version of the Bisitun inscription on the other (see Porten, “Prophecy of Hor bar Punesh,” 427-66, and Quack, *Die demotische und gräko-ägyptische Literatur*, 78-80; Segal, *Aramaic Texts*, 85 no. 62, and Wesselius, Review of *The Bisitun Inscription*, 443). The Aramaic rock graffito at Sheikh Fadl, a part of which appears to preserve an early version of the later Inaros Cycle, used to be dated to the fifth century BC (see e.g. Holm, “Sheikh Fadl Inscription,” 193-224), but has been redated to the fourth century BC (see Köhler et al, “Preliminary Report,” 79-81). The Aramaic-Demotic P. Amherst 63, of uncertain provenance, might also be dated to the fourth century BC (see Holm, “Nanay and Her Lover,” 3 n. 12). In addition, a group of demotic literary texts from Saqqara are probably to be dated to the fourth century BC, though one or two might be earlier (see Smith and Tait, *Saqqâra Demotic Papyri*, ix-xi, 192-195, nos. 24-25). Their fragmentary state makes it difficult to reconstruct the stories that they once recorded.

¹⁸⁵ See e.g. Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 10.

¹⁸⁶ See e.g. Hughes, “So-Called Pherendates Correspondence,” 75-86, Chauveau, “Les archives démotiques,” 1-19, Taylor, “Bodleian Letters,” 21-49, and Smith, Martin, and Tuplin, “Egyptian Documents,” 287-99.

to the archival texts that are presently at our disposal, divided by language. In addition, it discusses their chronological and geographical distribution, and their relevance to the reconstruction of Egyptian rebellions.

2.4.2.1 Demotic archival texts

According to information collected in the online database Trismegistos, ca. 742 demotic archival texts can be dated to the period between the invasion of Cambyses (ca. 526 BC) and the conquest of Alexander the Great (ca. 332 BC).¹⁸⁷ More than 300 of these texts can be dated to the periods of Persian rule: at least 296 demotic texts stem from the First Persian Period (ca. 526 – 400 BC), and ca. 6 texts can be dated to the Second Persian Period (ca. 343 – 332 BC). In terms of geographical distribution, it is important to observe that the Persian Period texts have been found at roughly twelve different sites. The sites range from Memphis in the north to Elephantine in the south, and many have yielded between one to twenty texts each.¹⁸⁸ An

¹⁸⁷ This number is based on the amount of demotic texts written on papyri, leather or potsherds that are dated to 526 - 332 BC by the online database Trismegistos. For the period from 800 BC to 800 AD, Trismegistos' coverage of demotic papyrology and epigraphy is "almost 100%"; see "Coverage for Egypt and the Nile Valley," Trismegistos, KU Leuven, accessed December 8, 2021, https://www.trismegistos.org/about_coverage.php. Nevertheless, the numbers presented here should be understood as approximations. First, the numbers are based on "strict" searches in the database, which only yield texts that fall exactly within one's chosen time span. A "not strict" search would increase the number of demotic texts from 742 to 1366; see "How a date search works," Trismegistos, KU Leuven, accessed December 8, 2021, https://www.trismegistos.org/calendar/calendar_howsearchworks.php. Second, there is some noise in the data. An example are the ostraca from Ayn Manawir: some of the ostraca are listed twice in Trismegistos, once under their inventory number and once under their provisional excavation number. As a result, the database lists 506 ostraca, while only 460 have been published. For the latter number, see Agut-Labordère, "Ostraca de 'Ayn Manâwir," Achemenet, CNRS, accessed December 10, 2021, <http://www.achemenet.com/fr/tree/?/sites-archeologiques/ayn-manawir/la-documentation-demotique>. Third, the number includes a small handful of demotic literary texts (see n. 184 above).

¹⁸⁸ Persian Period demotic texts have been published in a wide variety of articles, monographs, and edited volumes. For an overview of texts which bear exact date formulae, see Thissen, "Chronologie der frühdemotischen Papyri," 113-17, 120-21, and Depauw, *A Chronological Survey*, 9-10, 27. For studies of individual archives, see e.g. Shore, "Swapping Property as Asyut," 200-206, Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, Pestman, *Les papyrus démotiques de Tsenhor*, Vittmann, *Der demotische Papyrus Rylands 9*, Farid, "An Unpublished Early Demotic Family Archive," 185-205, and Ebeid, "The Unknown Hormerti," 113-29. The area around Memphis and the island of Elephantine occupy a special position: hundreds of demotic texts have been found at each site; however, due in part to their

important exception is the site of Ayn Manawir. Since excavation of this small village in the Kharga Oasis began in 1994, more than 460 demotic ostraca have been found among the ruins of its buildings. Some record contracts which regulated a person's right to irrigate land, an issue of particular importance in the largely barren landscape of the Western Desert; others record the sale of (parts of) buildings, and the collection of taxes on behalf of local temples.¹⁸⁹ As the ostraca date from the early reign of Xerxes to year twelve of Nectanebo II, they make up more than 50% of the demotic texts from the period between 526 to 332 BC. In addition, as more than 150 ostraca can be dated to the First Persian Period, the texts from Ayn Manawir make up about 50% of the Persian Period demotic corpus as well.¹⁹⁰

Like the hieroglyphic inscriptions discussed above, the demotic texts from Persian Period Egypt rarely refer to rebellion – at least not in such explicit terms. A demotic letter from Elephantine, written in October 486 BC, might be the only exception. The letter was written by an Egyptian man called Khnumemakhet, who noted that there were “men who rebel” (*rmtw nty bks*) on an unspecified mountain. Khnumemakhet feared that the men might ambush a transport of grain for which he was responsible, so he asked his Persian superior for armed reinforcements.¹⁹¹ The rebellious men, who are often identified as “brigands” by modern scholars, might be connected to the revolt of 487/86 BC, which broke out in the months before the letter was written.¹⁹² Aside from this document, the primary value of demotic archival texts lies in their date formulae. The vast majority are dated to Persian kings, but a handful are dated to the early regnal years of non-Persian pharaohs. As some of these texts are part of larger

fragmentary state and in part to incomplete publication it is unclear how many of them were written during periods of Persian rule. See e.g. Smith and Tait, *Saqqâra Demotic Papyri*, ix-x, Smith and Martin, “Demotic Papyri,” 23-78, Martin, Smith, and Davies, “Demotic Letters,” 123-47, Ray, *Demotic Ostraca*, and Quack, *Review of Demotic Ostraca*, 110-11 (Memphis); Zauzich, *Ägyptische Handschriften*, Zauzich, *Papyri von der Insel Elephantine*, Martin, “Demotic Texts,” 277-385, and Müller, “Among the Priests of Elephantine,” 222-25 (Elephantine).

¹⁸⁹ See e.g. Agut-Labordère, “Qu'est-ce qu'un 'jour d'eau,'" 195-201, Chauveau, “Les archives démotiques,” 1-19, and Agut-Labordère, “Les prélèvements en orge,” 71-79.

¹⁹⁰ For the date range of the ostraca, see Chauveau, “Inarôs,” 39-40. A single ostrakon dates to the reign of Amasis; see *ibid.*, 40. Note that the number of 150 ostraca is based on Trismegistos; this group includes texts that lack exact date formulae but which can be dated to the fifth century BC on the basis of e.g. prosopography. For a list of 95 First Persian Period texts from Ayn Manawir that bear exact date formulae, see Agut-Labordère, “Administering Egypt,” 691-93.

¹⁹¹ For an edition of the text, see Spiegelberg, *Die demotischen Papyri Loeb*, 1-7 no. 1, pls. 1-2. An English translation - with several important adjustments - is provided by Martin, “Demotic Texts,” 296-97 C4.

¹⁹² See Chapter 4.

archives, the reigns of the relevant pharaohs can be dated with much better precision than would be possible on the basis of hieroglyphic inscriptions. Several ostraca from the archives at Ayn Manawir are a good example. At present, three texts have been identified that are dated to the fifth and sixth regnal year of a pharaoh called Psamtik.¹⁹³ The date range of the Ayn Manawir corpus (see above) renders an identification with one of the three Psamtiks of the Saite Dynasty unlikely. In addition, some of the individuals who are mentioned in the Psamtik texts also feature in texts that were written in the late First Persian Period on the one hand and in the period of the Native Dynasties on the other. As a result, this previously unknown pharaoh – who is presently known as Psamtik V – can be dated to about 400 BC. He is probably identical with the “king Psamtik” who is briefly mentioned by Diodorus of Sicily, and who is said to have ruled Egypt shortly after Artaxerxes II’s defeat of Cyrus the Younger (Diodorus of Sicily, *Universal Library*, 14.35).¹⁹⁴ Other rebel kings that have been identified in demotic archival

¹⁹³ See Chauveau, “Les archives d’un temple,” 44-47, and Agut-Labordère and Chauveau, “Les ostraca de ‘Ayn Manâwir,” 1-4. A fourth text from Ayn Manawir is also dated to Psamtik, but the regnal year is lost; see Chauveau and Agut-Labordère, “Ostracon d’Ayn Manâwir 6833,” Achemenet, CNRS, accessed December 11, 2021, <http://www.achemenet.com/fr/item/?/2078061=Demotic%20ostraca&1570269=%20Psammétique-Amyrtée&l=a&c=1&t=1.4/1/24/1/1575130>. A fifth text - P. Berlin 13571, a demotic papyrus excavated at Elephantine - might be connected to the same king, but as it has no clear archival context its exact date remains uncertain; compare Chauveau, “Les archives d’un temple,” 44-45, and Agut-Labordère and Chauveau, “Les ostraca de ‘Ayn Manâwir,” 1-4, with Erichsen, “Zwei frühdemotische Urkunden,” 271-86, especially 274 and 277, Zauzich, *Ägyptische Handschriften*, 24-25 no. 41, Pestman, *Les papyrus démotiques de Tsenhor*, 1:131 n. 3, and Jansen-Winkel, *Die 26. Dynastie*, 585.

¹⁹⁴ See Chauveau, “Les archives d’un temple,” 44-47, and Agut-Labordère and Chauveau, “Les ostraca de ‘Ayn Manâwir,” 1-4. For the prosopographical connections among the texts, one can use the “anthroponymes cités” function on the ostraca published on the website of Achemenet. For example, “Harsiésé fils d’Ounamenheb et de Neskhonsou,” who is principal party in one of the texts from Psamtik V’s reign, also appears in a text from year 14 of Darius II (410 BC) and in year two of (the first period of rule of) Achoris (392 BC); see Chauveau and Agut-Labordère, “Ostracon d’Ayn Manâwir 4161,” Achemenet, CNRS, accessed December 11, 2021, <http://www.achemenet.com/fr/item/?/2078061=Demotic%20ostraca&1570269=%20Psammétique-Amyrtée&l=a&c=1&t=1.4/1/24/1/1572180>, *ibid.*, “Ostracon d’Ayn Manâwir 5486,” Achemenet, CNRS, accessed December 11, 2021, <http://www.achemenet.com/fr/item/?/2078061=Ostraca%20demotiques&1570204==Harsi%C3%A9s%C3%A9%20fils%20d%27Ounamenheb%20et%20de%20Neskhonsou&l=a&c=1&t=1.4/1/24/1/1573464>, and *ibid.*, “Ostracon d’Ayn Manâwir 5488,” Achemenet, CNRS, accessed December 11, 2021, <http://www.achemenet.com/fr/item/?/2078061=Ostraca%20demotiques&1570204==Harsi%C3%A9s%C3%A9%20fils%20d%27Ounamenheb%20et%20de%20Neskhonsou&l=a&c=1&t=1.4/1/24/1/1573488>. It is important to observe that Psamtik V is commonly identified with Amyrtaios II, whose fifth regnal year is attested in an

texts include a different pharaoh called Psamtik – known as Psamtik IV – , whose second regnal year is mentioned in three papyri from Hou, and who can be connected to the rebellion of 487/86 BC; the famous Inaros, whose second regnal year is mentioned in an ostrakon from Ayn Manawir; and Khababash, the rebel king of the Second Persian Period, whose first regnal year is mentioned in a papyrus from Thebes.¹⁹⁵ Aside from issues of chronology, the texts that are dated to their reigns provide us with a glimpse of the rebellions’ geographical spread on the one hand, and of which communities in Egypt ended up recognizing local rulers at the expense of Persian emperors on the other.

2.4.2.2 Aramaic archival texts

According to Trismegistos, the number of Aramaic archival texts that can be dated to the period between 526 BC and 332 BC stands at ca. 706.¹⁹⁶ This is only slightly less than the number of

Aramaic text from Elephantine; see Chauveau, “Les archives d’un temple,” 45-47, and Agut-Labordère and Chauveau, “Les ostraca de ‘Ayn Manâwir,” 2-4. However, this identification requires one to assume that Amyrtaios adopted the name “Psamtik,” that people at Ayn Manawir used this throne name rather than Amyrtaios’ birth name in their date formulae - which is contrary to demotic practice -, while people at Elephantine and the later Egyptian historian Manetho chose to refer to the king’s birth name. To assume that Psamtik V and Amyrtaios II were two separate kings, whose rule may have overlapped, seems simpler. This can be compared with the Babylonian rebellions of 484 BC, which are connected to two different rebel kings (see Waerzeggers, “Babylonian Revolts against Xerxes,” 150-56), and the rebellion of Inaros, who is intimately associated with king Amyrtaios I (see Herodotus, *Histories* 3.15, Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, 1.110, 1.112, and Ctesias, *Persica* F14 36).

¹⁹⁵ See Pestman, “Diospolis Parva Documents,” 145-55, Chauveau, “Inarôs,” 39-46, and Spiegelberg, *Der Papyrus Libbey*. 1-6. Petubastis Seheribre is connected to three demotic papyri as well, two of which mention a regnal year one. The texts are letters, however, and omit the name of the ruling pharaoh – a standard practice. For the connection between the papyri and the king, see Chapter 3. It is interesting to note that Inaros, unlike the others, is not called “pharaoh” but “chief of the Bacales” (*p3 wr n n3 Bkn.w*), a Libyan tribe whose origins lay near Cyrene; see Winnicki, “Der libysche Stamm der Bakaler,” 135-37.

¹⁹⁶ As with the demotic texts discussed above, the numbers presented in this section should be understood as approximations which are based on strict searches in the Trismegistos database. For the period from 800 BC to 800 AD, Trismegistos’ coverage of Aramaic papyrology and epigraphy is “ca. 95%”; see “Coverage for Egypt and the Nile Valley,” Trismegistos, KU Leuven, accessed December 8, 2021, https://www.trismegistos.org/about_coverage.php. That the numbers are approximate is especially true for the area around Memphis: at least 200 pieces of Aramaic papyri have been found in the Sacred Animal Necropolis at Saqqara, for example, many of which were probably written under Persian rule, but their fragmentary state often

demotic texts discussed above (i.e. 742). Both the chronological and geographical distribution of the texts is quite different, however. In contrast to the demotic corpus, ca. 697 Aramaic texts – 98.7% of the total corpus – can be dated to the First Persian Period (ca. 526 – 400 BC). No Aramaic texts have been dated to the Second Persian Period (ca. 343 – 332 BC). In addition, the texts have been found at roughly four different sites: Memphis (ca. 69 texts), Oxyrynchos (2 texts), Hermopolis (8 texts), and Elephantine (ca. 574 texts). A handful are of unknown or uncertain provenance.¹⁹⁷ The limited distribution of the texts aptly reflects the status of Aramaic in Egypt: the language was primarily used by foreign minorities on the one hand, and by the government of the Achaemenid Empire on the other.¹⁹⁸ The close connection between Aramaic, foreign minorities, and the Achaemenid government in Egypt is especially visible at the island of Elephantine. The island, located just north of the first cataract, dominates the Aramaic textual corpus from Persian Period Egypt (82.3%). As is well known, both it and the town of Syene, which lay on the eastern shore of the Nile, housed a large community of non-Egyptian families. The majority can be identified as “Judeans” or “Aramaeans,” i.e. Aramaic-speaking peoples who originally stemmed from the Levant.¹⁹⁹ Some of them appear to have migrated to Egypt in the seventh to sixth centuries BC.²⁰⁰ During the fifth century BC, many of them served as soldiers for the Achaemenid government. The hundreds of Aramaic papyri and ostraca that were excavated at Elephantine document their lives, as well as their apparent disappearance around 400 BC, when Egypt became independent.²⁰¹ Similar military

excludes exact dating; see Segal, *Aramaic Texts*, 3-4. Note also that the number includes a small handful of Aramaic literary texts; see n. 184 above.

¹⁹⁷ The primary publication of the vast majority of Aramaic texts from Egypt is Porten and Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents*.

¹⁹⁸ For the role of Aramaic in the Achaemenid Empire, see Gzella, “Aramaic Sources,” 117-31; for Aramaic in Egypt, see Vittmann, *Ägypten und die Fremden*, 84-119.

¹⁹⁹ On the difference between Judean and Jewish, see e.g. Becking, *Identity in Persian Egypt*, 18-20. At Elephantine, people called Judean are sometimes called Aramaean as well; see *ibid.*, 19-20, 54-55, and van der Toorn, “Ethnicity at Elephantine,” 147-64. For other ethnic communities at Elephantine-Syene, see Becking, *Identity in Persian Egypt*, 54-77.

²⁰⁰ See Kahn, “Date of the Arrival of the Judeans,” 139-64.

²⁰¹ See e.g. Porten, *Archives from Elephantine*, 8-19, and Becking, *Identity in Persian Egypt*, 20-23. For the end of the Aramaic archives from Elephantine – and what might have happened to the archive holders – , see *ibid.*, 163-68.

communities were located in other parts of the country, notably at Memphis, and at several fortresses in the Delta.²⁰²

In keeping with the specific social background of the Aramaic texts, their relevance to the study of the Egyptian rebellions is somewhat different from that of the demotic texts discussed above. The vast majority of Aramaic texts is dated to Persian kings, for example. The only exception is a papyrus from Elephantine, which is dated to 23 Phamenoth of regnal year five of Amyrtaios II (i.e. 21 June, 400 BC).²⁰³ This date fell shortly before Egypt's successful secession from the Persian Empire.²⁰⁴ During other periods of rebellion, the community at Elephantine appears to have remained loyal to the Achaemenid government.²⁰⁵ In addition, there are several Aramaic texts that explicitly refer to rebellion in Egypt, and more vaguely to unrest or troubles that may have been connected to them. The references can be divided into two groups. The first group consists of two letters from Elephantine. One of them states that Egyptian "detachments" (*dgl**n*) had rebelled (*mrdw*) at some point in the past, while the Judeans who wrote the letter had not left their posts. The claim precedes the description of a larger conflict between the Judeans and the Egyptian priests of Khnum, which began in ca. 410 BC.²⁰⁶ A second letter mentions things that should be given to rebels (*lmdy*') in a fragmentary context; other pieces of the text mention people who were killed, groups of soldiers, and a fortress.²⁰⁷ The second group of references stems from a collection of letters of unknown provenance. The majority were sent by Arsames,

²⁰² See e.g. Kaplan, "Cross-Cultural Contacts among Mercenary Communities," 1-10. For the garrison at Memphis, see Colburn, *Archaeology of Empire*, 38-50. For fortresses in the Delta, see below.

²⁰³ Porten and Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents*, 2:114-15 B4.6. Amyrtaios II is additionally mentioned in an Aramaic letter from ca. 399 BC, which appears to record his demise and the subsequent accession of pharaoh Nepherites; see *ibid.*, 1:46-47 A3.9.

²⁰⁴ An ostrakon from Ayn Manawir dates to Mesore of year five of Artaxerxes II (i.e. October/November 400 BC), so at least some people in Egypt still recognized the Persian king in the months that followed the Amyrtaios document from Elephantine; see Agut-Labordère and Chauveau, "Les ostraca de 'Ayn Manâwir," 3-4.

²⁰⁵ See 4.3.1.1 and 4.3.3 for a discussion of several Elephantine texts that were dated to Persian kings during periods of rebellion. In addition, a late fifth century BC Aramaic letter specifically states that the Judeans of Elephantine had not left their posts during a period of rebellion, while the Egyptians did; see below.

²⁰⁶ See Porten and Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents*, 1:62-64 A4.5, and Tuplin, "Bodleian Letters," 121. The claim that the Judeans had not left their posts while the Egyptians did was probably meant to highlight the Judeans' loyalty to the Achaemenid government, in an attempt to increase the chances that the latter would side with the Judeans in the present conflict. For a study of the conflict, see e.g. Rohrmoser, *Götter, Tempel und Kult*, 240-90, and Tuplin, "Fall and Rise of the Elephantine Temple," 344-72.

²⁰⁷ See Porten and Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents*, 1:90-91 A5.5, and Tuplin, "Bodleian Letters," 121.

a member of the Persian royal family who served as satrap of Egypt in the second half of the fifth century BC.²⁰⁸ The letters are important for the study of Achaemenid Egypt – and the Achaemenid Empire as a whole – , as sources that can be connected to such high-ranking imperial officials are few and far between. Having said that, the letters mainly concern issues that were connected to Arsames’ domains in Egypt, rather than official matters of state.²⁰⁹ Among them, three refer to rebellion or disturbances: one letter states that thirteen of Arsames’ slaves had been unable to get into a fortress “when Egypt rebelled (*mrđt*) and the (armed) force was garrisoned.” The men were subsequently seized by “the wicked [I]n[h]arou,” and had been detained ever since. Arsames asked a Persian colleague of his to release them, so that they could perform their work as usual.²¹⁰ Another letter urges Nakhthor, the steward of Arsames’ domains in Egypt, to be diligent in “the disturbances (?)” (*šwzy*), and to guard Arsames’ personnel and goods. A previous steward of Arsames had done this adequately “when the Egyptians rebelled” (*mrđw*).²¹¹ A third mentions that an Egyptian called Petosiri, a servant of Arsames, had lost his father and the latter’s entire household during “unrest (?)” (*ywz*) in Egypt. He had asked Arsames to be reinstated as heir of the land which his father had owned – a wish which his master granted.²¹² As none of the letters are dated or mention the dates of the events to which they refer, it is difficult to connect the “unrest” (*ywz*), “disturbances” (*šwzy*), and the time when the Egyptians “rebelled” (*mrđt*, *mrđw*) to events that are known from other sources.²¹³ The letter which mentions “[I]n[h]arou” is a possible exception, as it may refer to

²⁰⁸ Three recently published volumes are dedicated to Arsames’ career and the sources that can be connected to him: see Tuplin and Ma, *Aršāma and His World*. For a study of Arsames’ career, based on both Egyptian and non-Egyptian sources, see Tuplin, “Aršāma: Prince and Satrap,” 3-72; on the acquisition history of the Aramaic letters, see Allen, “Bodleian Achaemenid Aramaic Letters,” 13-15; and for a translation of the letters, see Taylor, “Bodleian Letters,” 21-49.

²⁰⁹ For a study of estates held by high-ranking Persians – including Arsames – , see Henkelman, “Precarious Gifts,” 13-66. It is important to observe that such estates could be fortified and guarded, and become significant nodes in political conflict; see *ibid.*

²¹⁰ See Taylor, “Bodleian Letters,” 30-31, and Porten and Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents*, 1:110-11 A6.7. To which fortress the letter refers is unclear.

²¹¹ See Taylor, “Bodleian Letters,” 36-37, and Porten and Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents*, 1:116-17 A6.10.

²¹² See Taylor, “Bodleian Letters,” 38-39, and Porten and Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents*, 1:118-19 A6.11.

²¹³ See Tuplin, “Bodleian Letters,” 120-23, and Tuplin, “Aršāma: Prince and Satrap,” 64-72. The issue of connecting various signs of trouble and unrest to Egyptian rebellions is further discussed in Chapter 4.

the mid-fifth century BC rebel Inaros.²¹⁴ The letters do give us a glimpse, however, of the impact that such rebellions could have in Egypt: some people were killed, some were seized, some lost their possessions, while others managed to find a semblance of safety in fortresses that were guarded by soldiers who had remained loyal to the imperial regime.

2.4.3 *Archaeological sources*

Since the nineteenth century, numerous tombs, temples, palaces, fortresses and houses that were built in or used during the sixth to fourth centuries BC have been excavated in the Egyptian Delta, Nile Valley, and oases of the Western Desert.²¹⁵ Some examples include Naukratis, a harbor town with a significant Greek population in the northern Delta, Memphis, which featured a palace with significant Persian Period remains, and the Kharga Oasis, where several temple sites bear traces of the sixth to fourth centuries BC.²¹⁶ For the study of Achaemenid Egypt, the material remains of these sites are an important complement to the textual corpus discussed above.²¹⁷ Having said that, it is difficult – in the absence of a specific textual reference to rebellion – to associate certain items, buildings, or archaeological layers with relatively short periods of unrest. At present, there are only two phenomena which scholars have sometimes connected to the rebellions of the sixth to fourth centuries BC. One is the construction of fortifications in and on both sides of the Sinai desert; the other is the presence of a destruction layer at a single site in northeastern Egypt. As the two issues are closely intertwined, the following section discusses them in tandem.

2.4.3.1 Fortifications and destruction in northeastern Egypt

Traditionally, the eastern region of the Delta and the northern part of the Sinai desert formed an important Egyptian frontier zone. Especially from the New Kingdom onwards, the region

²¹⁴ See e.g. Quack, “Zur Datierung der Aršama-Dokumente,” 53-64. Tuplin expresses reservations about the identification: see Tuplin, “Bodleian Letters,” 127, and *ibid.*, “Aršama: Prince and Satrap,” 18-19, 62-72.

²¹⁵ For an overview of Persian Period archaeological sites in Egypt, see Wuttmann and Marchand, “Égypte,” 97-128.

²¹⁶ See e.g. Villing et al., *Naukratis: Greeks in Egypt*, Petrie, *Palace of Apries*, Lopes and Braga, “Apries Palace,” 247-58, and Colburn, “Pioneers of the Western Desert,” 86-114.

²¹⁷ See Colburn, *Archaeology of Empire*, for a recent study of Achaemenid Egypt that prioritizes material remains.

was dotted by fortresses and fortified towns, which served as a line of defense against invasions from western Asia, and as launching points for Egyptian military campaigns in the Levant.²¹⁸ In the Saite to Persian Periods, such border sites included Tell Qedwa and Tell el-Herr (possibly Migdol) near the Mediterranean coast, Tell Dafana (Daphnae) on the Pelusiac branch of the Nile, and Tell Maskhuta (possibly Pithom) in the Wadi Tumilat, near the ancient canal that led to the Red Sea.²¹⁹ Tell Dafana is probably the best-known site. According to Herodotus, it was one of three sites that were established by Psamtik I to guard the borders of Egypt: “Elephantine facing Ethiopia” was the southern watchpost, “Marea facing Libya” was the northwestern one, and “Daphnae of Pelusium facing Arabia and Assyria” was the northeastern one (*Histories* 2.30). Like Elephantine, Daphnae was still in use in the Persian Period.²²⁰ Though Daphnae has yielded only few texts in comparison with Elephantine, excavations have revealed that it was a classical Egyptian temple town. It included a fortified sanctuary, possibly an armory, and it housed a mixed Egyptian and non-Egyptian population.²²¹ Contrary to the importance attributed to Daphnae by Herodotus, however, it seems that the town was not the most important northeastern frontier site in the mid-first millennium BC. This role was reserved for

²¹⁸ See e.g. Hoffmeier and Moshier, “Highway out of Egypt,” 485-510, esp. 495-505.

²¹⁹ See e.g. Valbelle and Defernez, “Les sites de la frontière égypto-palestinienne,” 93-100, Defernez, “Le Sinaï et l’Empire perse,” 67-74, Smoláriková, *Saite Forts in Egypt*, 45-99, and Pétigny, “Des étrangers,” 14-24. Other sites were probably inhabited in the Saite to Persian Periods as well, but the few material remains that are presently known makes it difficult to ascertain the extent of their settlement and/or fortifications; see e.g. Lupo and Kohen, *Tell el-Ghaba III*, 7-9, el-Maksoud and Valbelle, “Tell Héboua-Tjarou,” 3, 39, Rzepka et al., “From Hyksos Tombs to Late Period Tower Houses,” 72-78, and Stanley, Bernasconi, and Jorstad, “Pelusium,” 452-53.

²²⁰ For other (possible) fortresses and garrisons in Saite to Persian Period Egypt, see Smoláriková, *Saite Forts in Egypt*, 45-99, Kaplan, “Cross-Cultural Contacts,” 4-10, and Tuplin, “Military Environment,” 302-20. Unfortunately, the role of Marea remains obscure. According to Herodotus, the Persians maintained the garrisons at Elephantine and Daphnae (*Histories* 2.30.3) – which suggests, by virtue of its omission, that the garrison at Marea disappeared. Yet, Thucydides claims that Inaros launched his rebellion from Marea in the mid-fifth century BC (*Peloponnesian War* 1.104), which suggests that the site retained some of its importance. The site should probably be identified with Egyptian *ḥꜣst Ṭmḥw*, “desert region of the *Ṭmḥw*-Libyans.” The latter is mentioned in several Late Period texts, including an Aramaic stele from year four of Xerxes; see Vittmann, *Ägypten und die Fremden*, 14-15, 106-10. It is debated with which archaeological site Marea should be identified, however; see e.g. Lloyd, *Herodotus: Book II*, 2:87-88. So far, the earliest remains from the site which modern archaeologists have labeled “Marea” in northern Hawwariya date to third century BC; see Derda, Gwiazda, Misiewicz, and Malkowski, “Marea/Northern Hawwariya,” 124.

²²¹ See Leclère and Spencer, *Tell Dafana Reconsidered*, esp. 1-40, 135-36.

Tell el-Herr in the fifth century BC, and for several other sites in and near the Sinai desert in the fourth century BC.

First, Tell el-Herr, located ca. 25 km northeast of modern El-Qantara, was founded in the first half of the fifth century BC. The site was dominated by a quadrilinear fortress, the walls of which measured ca. 125 m in length. They included corner bastions and intermediate bastions on all sides.²²² The fortress was quite similar to that of Tell Qedwa, located a few kilometers to the north. This earlier fortress was founded in the late seventh century BC, but destroyed by “a violent conflagration” in the late sixth century BC. The destruction has been connected to Cambyses’ invasion of Egypt: according to Herodotus, the Persian king met the army of Psamtik III near Pelusium (*Histories* 3.10-11), which fits with the area in which Tell Qedwa was located. Thus far, no material remains have been identified that point to a re-occupation of the site in the Persian Period.²²³ Because the oldest ceramics from Tell el-Herr, Tell Qedwa’s successor site, mainly date from the second quarter of the fifth century BC, some scholars have suggested that the construction of the new fortress did not follow directly on Cambyses’ invasion of Egypt; instead, it may have been prompted by the Egyptian rebellion of 487/86 BC. The threat that such rebellions posed could have encouraged the Persian government to invest more heavily in their military infrastructure.²²⁴

²²² See e.g. Valbelle, “Les garnisons de Migdol,” 799-811, and Valbelle, “First Persian Period Fortress,” 12-14. For the houses located within the fortress, and for an imposing structure identified as the governor’s palace, see Marchi, *L’habitat dans les forteresses de Migdol*, and Defernez, Nogara, and Valbelle, *Un palais oriental*. The fortress is now commonly identified with Migdol, an Egyptian frontier site that features in the Hebrew Bible, and which is mentioned in an early fifth century BC letter from Elephantine. See e.g. Oren, “Migdol,” 30-35, Hoffmeier, “Search for Migdol,” 4-6, Marchi, *L’habitat dans les forteresses de Migdol*, 6, and Porten and Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents*, 1:30-31 A3.3.

²²³ See Redford, “Report,” 45-57, Smoláriková, *Saite Forts*, 48-54, and Hussein and Alim, “Way(s) of Horus,” 1-13. According to Redford, the remains suggest that the construction of a new fortress was planned at Tell Qedwa after the first had been destroyed, but it appears not to have been finished/and or used (see Redford, “Report,” 57). Note that the old fortress may have been known as Migdol in the Saite Period, before the name came to be associated with the Persian Period fortress at Tell el-Herr (see Oren, “Migdol,” 30-35, Hoffmeier, “Search for Migdol,” 4-6).

²²⁴ See e.g. Defernez, “Le Sinaï,” 73, Valbelle, “Les garnisons de Migdol,” 799-800, and Defernez, *La céramique d’époque perse*, 476-78. A connection to Inaros’ revolt in 463/62 BC has also been entertained, though the earliest ceramics predate the end of that rebellion; see *ibid.*, 479-78.

Indeed, that the revolt of the 480s BC had some impact in the northeastern Delta is suggested by the remains of another frontier site: Tell el-Maskhuta. Like Tell Dafana, Tell el-Maskhuta was a partially fortified town that was resettled during the Saite Dynasty. It lay close to the ancient canal that led from the Pelusaic branch of the Nile to the Red Sea. A considerable number of its ceramics can be dated to the sixth to fifth centuries BC, indicating continued habitation from the Saite to Persian Period.²²⁵ In the early fifth century BC, however, some type of destructive event appears to have affected the site: modern excavations have revealed the remains of a stone-lined well, which appears to have been deliberately blocked up with fragments of pottery, animal bones, stable wastes, and earth. The pottery fragments suggest that the refuse was dumped shortly after 500 – 490 BC. Traces of a burn layer were found as well. In the words of John Holladay: “who, around that time, would go stopping up a strongly built, stone-lined well in the ‘suburb’ of the principal town in the region? Answer: probably someone who hated to local power structure, i.e., the Persian administration of Egypt, which lost power in a popular revolt during the last years of Darius the Great (ca. 487-486 B.C.). Conversely, the well might have been stopped up as a parting gesture by the Persian administration of the town as a final act before abandoning the site.”²²⁶ Though we cannot be sure about the motives that drove people to block up the well, a connection to political resistance is not unlikely.²²⁷

Second, it has long been recognized that the fourth century BC was marked by the development of fortifications at Egypt’s northeastern frontier on the one hand, and in Judah and Idumea – i.e. at the Persian Empire’s new southwestern frontier – on the other.²²⁸ On the Egyptian side,

²²⁵ See Holladay, *Tell el-Maskhuta*, 1-3, 19-27, 50-57, Holladay, “Maskhuta, Tell El-,” 432-36, and Paice, “Preliminary Analysis,” 316-32. For its identification with Pithom, see Collins, “Biblical Pithom,” 135-49.

²²⁶ See Holladay, *Tell el-Maskhuta*, 25-26. See also *ibid.*, 55-57, and Paice, “Preliminary Analysis,” 321, 323-26, 330.

²²⁷ It may be interesting to compare this to a late fifth century BC conflict between the Judeans of Elephantine and the Egyptian priests of Khnum (on which see Rohrmoser, *Götter, Tempel und Kult*, 240-90, and Tuplin, “Fall and Rise of the Elephantine Temple,” 344-72). One of the Aramaic letters that describes the conflict mentions that “[t]here is a well which was built with[in] the f[or]tress (which) did not lack water to give the garrison drink so that whenever they would be garrisoned (there) they would drink the water in [th]at well.” The priests of Khnum, in an act of defiance, “stopped up that well” (see Porten and Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents*, 1:62-63 A4.5).

²²⁸ In addition, the Native Dynasties saw the construction of “gigantic brick enclosure walls” at a variety of temple sites in Egypt; they were presumably intended as military defenses in the case of a Persian invasion. See e.g. Arnold, *Temples of the Last Pharaohs*, 93.

it stands to reason that the fortifications were meant to defend the country from Persian attempts at reconquest. The latter followed Egypt's successful secession from the Empire in ca. 400 BC. For example, after a short period of abandonment, the fortress at Tell el-Herr was rebuilt and resettled in the first half of the fourth century BC.²²⁹ It is also probable, though less clear, that Tell el-Farama (ancient Pelusium) was fortified, a settlement that lay a few kilometers north of Tell el-Herr.²³⁰ On the imperial side, one sees the appearance of fortified administrative centers at Lachish, Tell Jemmeh, Tel Haror, Tel Sera', Tel Ḥalif, Beth-Zur, Ramat Raḥel and 'En Gedi. The pottery remains suggest that all sites were built or began to be extensively populated in the early fourth century BC. Also noteworthy, though less clearly dated, are a series of fortresses in the Negev desert. Among them are Ḥorvat Rogem, Ḥorvat Ritma, Mesad Naḥal Haro'a, and Ḥorvat Mesora. The sites may have served to defend the region from Egyptian attacks on the one hand, and as launching points for Persian invasions of the Delta and Nile Valley on the other.²³¹ In the end, such Persian attempts at reconquest were successful, and ushered in the Second Persian Period of Egypt (ca. 343 – 332 BC). It is possible that the archaeologically attested abandonment of some of the Palestinian sites should be dated to this timespan; they had fulfilled their purpose, and hence lost their direct military relevance.²³²

²²⁹ See e.g. Valbelle, "Les garnisons de Migdol," 805-7, and Defernez, *La céramique d'époque perse*, 480-83. It is important to observe that the fortress at Tell el-Herr experienced two periods of (partial) destruction: one in the third quarter of the fifth century BC, and one in the first quarter of the fourth century BC. These phases have been connected to a variety of political events, but the dates preclude a solid connection to the Egyptian rebellions of the fifth century BC. See e.g. Defernez, *La céramique d'époque perse*, 478-79, Marchi, *L'habitat dans les forteresses de Migdol*, 6, and Valbelle, "Tell el-Herr," 25-26.

²³⁰ In texts from the Ptolemaic Period onwards, Pelusium is often mentioned as the northern border site of Egypt par excellence; see Pétigny, "Des étrangers," 14-24, 34-35. According to Diodorus of Sicily, the site was fortified during the Native Dynasties in response to Persian military threats (*Universal Library* 15.42, 16.46). At present, such fortifications have not been identified, though it is clear from pottery remains that the site was occupied in the fifth and especially in the fourth century BC; see Defernez, "Le Sinaï et l'Empire perse," 68-69, and Stanley, Bernasconi, and Jorstad, "Pelusium," 452-53.

²³¹ In the past, some of these fortifications were linked to the aftermath of Inaros' rebellion in the mid-fifth century BC; see e.g. Høglund, *Achaemenid Imperial Administration*, 165-205. For lower dates, see now Fantalkin and Tal, "Redating Lachish Level I," 167-97, and Fantalkin and Tal, "Judah and Its Neighbours," 133-68. In a similar vein, the minting of Yehud coins and stamp-seal impressions in the fourth century BC has now been linked to a transformation of the imperial administration of the province following Egypt's independence in ca. 400 BC; see *ibid.*, 148-53, and Lipschits and Vanderhooft, "Yehud Stamp Impressions," 75-94, esp. 86-90.

²³² See Fantalkin and Tal, "Judah and Its Neighbors," 169.

2.5 Miscellaneous

The Greek narrative texts, Persian royal inscriptions, and the textual and material remains from Achaemenid Egypt discussed above are our main sources for the study of the Egyptian rebellions. Together, they indicate when the rebellions began, how long they lasted, who supported them, which parts of Egypt were affected by them, and how the imperial government chose to respond. Other sources which allude to the rebellions – both from within and without the Achaemenid Empire – are comparatively scarce. Nevertheless, a handful of them does exist. This handful includes sources that refer to an Egyptian rebellion explicitly, as well as sources that can be used to study the rebellions in more indirect ways. For simplicity's sake, the sources are divided into the following groups: Greek inscriptions, Babylonian texts, Persepolitan texts, and Achaemenid seals. The following section provides an introduction to each.

2.5.1 Greek inscriptions

The literary, historical and philosophical texts which ancient Greek authors left to posterity are the best-known Greek texts from the period of the Persian Empire.²³³ The Greek population of the sixth to fourth century BC Mediterranean has also left a significant body of contemporary inscriptions behind, however. As in Egypt, such inscriptions could consist of private graffiti, funerary texts that were inscribed on tomb stones, and epigrams on a variety of monuments that were erected in the public spaces of temples. Other text genres, which were more peculiar to the world of the Greek poleis, consisted of a city's religious calendars, public decrees that stated a city's laws or which listed its political allies, and monuments that commemorated soldiers who had fallen during battle.²³⁴ Within this corpus, three inscriptions have thus far been identified that may be connected to Greek military involvement in Egyptian rebellions. In particular, all three have been associated with the rebellion of Inaros in the mid-fifth century BC. As the inscriptions provide us with an important complement to the Greek narrative texts discussed above, they deserve a closer look.

²³³ See 2.2 above.

²³⁴ For introductions to Greek inscriptions, see e.g. Bodel, *Epigraphic Evidence*, and Rhodes and Osborne, *Greek Historical Inscriptions*, xiii-xxv. A selection of inscriptions that bear on political history can be found in Meiggs and Lewis, *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions*, Rhodes and Osborne, *Greek Historical Inscriptions*, and Osborne and Rhodes, *Greek Historical Inscriptions*.

The best-known Greek inscription that can be connected to Inaros' rebellion is probably the "Nointel Marble," a marble stele which was found in the paving of a church at Athens in 1674. The stele, presently in the Louvre Museum, commemorates the death of soldiers who had belonged to the Athenian Erechtheid tribe. According to its heading, the soldiers had died "in the war, in Cyprus, in Eg[y]pt, in Phoenicia, at Halieis, on Aegina, and at Megara, in the same year."²³⁵ The remainder of the inscription consists of the soldiers' names, among whom featured at least two generals and 170 privates.²³⁶ As has long been observed, the inscription should probably be connected to the events described by Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War* 1.104-105. The latter mentions that the Athenians had been on campaign against Cyprus when Inaros requested their assistance in Egypt. In addition, it mentions that the Athenians had been involved in battles at Halieis, Aegina and Megara roundabout the same time. What exactly happened in Phoenicia – a region that is not mentioned by Thucydides – remains obscure.²³⁷ It is important to observe that the inscription may have been one of a series of ten stelae, each of which would have commemorated the fallen soldiers of a specific Athenian tribe.²³⁸ If so, Athens' losses in the mid-fifth century BC would have been considerable.

The other two Greek inscriptions that may be connected to Inaros' rebellion stem from the island of Samos. Both were found in secondary contexts, but were probably erected in the Heraion, i.e. in the large temple of Hera on the southern side of the island. The first inscription consists of an epigram that was inscribed on a marble base. The base would have originally supported a statue, and the epigram suggests that it honored a certain Hegesagores son of Zoilotes for seizing fifteen Phoenician ships during a battle between Greeks and Persians.²³⁹

²³⁵ Fornara, *Archaic Times*, 78-79 no. 78. For the Greek text, see Meiggs and Lewis, *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions*, 73-75 no. 33. The circumstances of its find are mentioned by Fröhner, *Les inscriptions grecques*, vi.

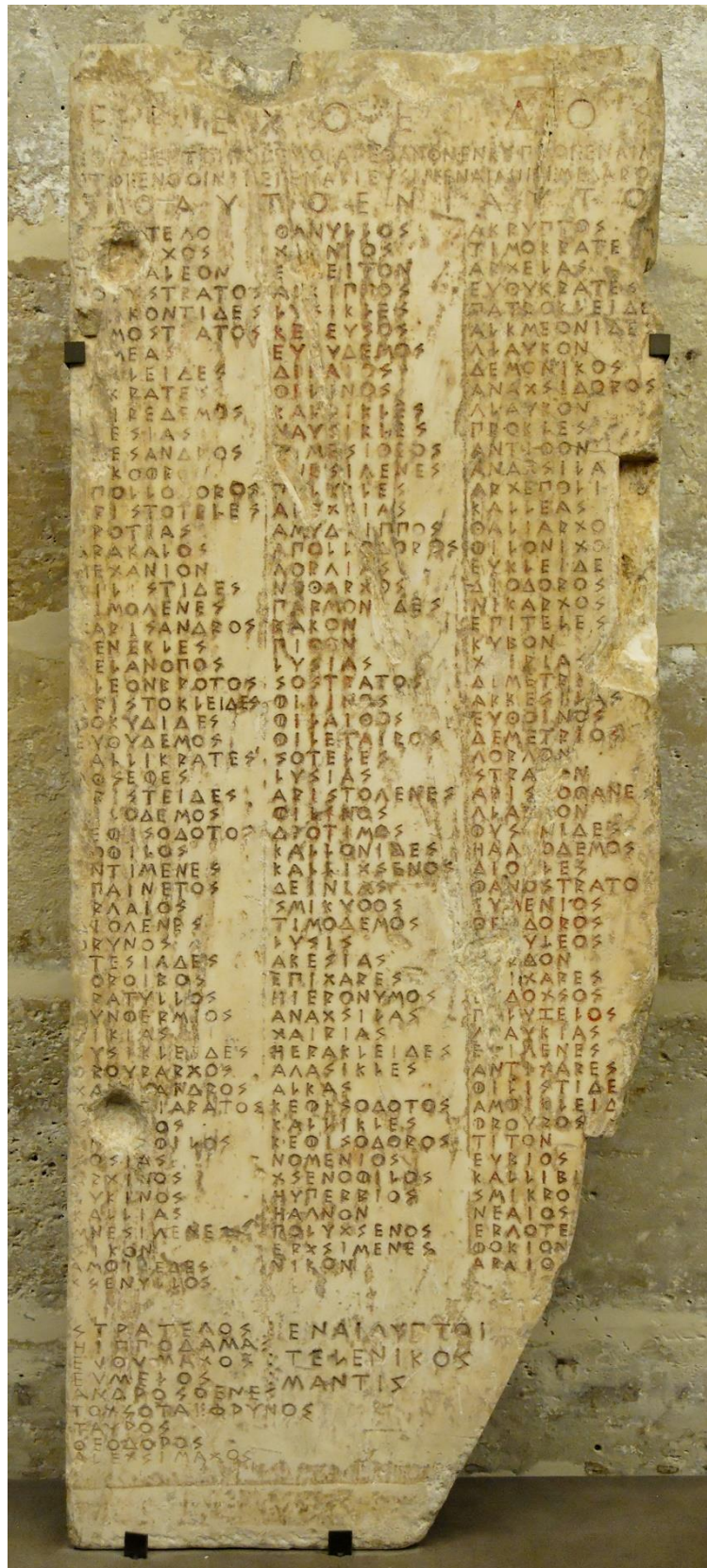
²³⁶ Tod, *Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions*, 43.

²³⁷ See e.g. Fröhner, *Les inscriptions grecques*, 212, Tod, *Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions*, 42, and Meiggs and Lewis, *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions*, 75. The exact date of these events – and hence the date of the inscription – is debated; they may be connected to ca. 459 BC; see Meiggs and Lewis, *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions*, 75, and Kahn, "Inaros' Rebellion," 426-27. For the possible role of Phoenicians during Inaros' rebellion, see below.

²³⁸ See Tod, *Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions*, 42, and Meiggs and Lewis, *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions*, 75.

²³⁹ See Peek, "Ein Seegefecht," 289-90, 292-95, Meiggs and Lewis, *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions*, 76-77 no. 34, Dunst, "Archaische Inschriften," 152-53 no. 23, and Fornara, *Archaic Times*, 78 no. 77.

Figure 5. A stele which commemorates soldiers of the Athenian Erechtheid tribe, some of whom had died while fighting in Egypt. (Photo from https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/27/War_memorial_Louvre_Ma_863.jpg)



Though the historical context of the battle is unclear, some scholars have suggested that it took place near Memphis: the city might be mentioned at the beginning of the epigram's second line ([Μέμ]φιος). If the reconstruction is accepted, it is plausible that the battle should be connected to the Greek war effort in Egypt following Inaros' request for assistance.²⁴⁰ This speculative interpretation gains some credibility when one looks at the second inscription from Samos. The latter is known from two marble fragments, both of which belonged to the base of a monument. The inscription on the fragments indicates that the monument honored a certain "Leokritos, son of Iphia[dos]," who had been awarded by "Inaros, son of Psammetichos, king of [the Egyptians]" for the naval assistance which Leokritos had provided him.²⁴¹ The inscription stands on a par with the demotic ostrakon from Ayn Manawir discussed above, which provides us with another explicit and contemporary reference to this Libyo-Egyptian ruler.²⁴² It is noteworthy that the inscription identifies Inaros as the son of a certain Psamtik, a filiation which is also mentioned by Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War* 1.104 and Herodotus, *Histories* 7.7. What is more, the inscription indicates that the Samians had been one of the "allies" that accompanied the Athenian troops to Egypt – a group which is usually left anonymous by Greek historians (see e.g. Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War* 1.104, 1.109, and Ctesias, *Persica* F14 36-38).

2.5.2 Babylonian texts

The satrapy of Babylonia, modern-day southern Iraq, is one of the best-documented regions of the Achaemenid Empire. Its textual corpus consists largely of cuneiform tablets, which document the activities of families, businesses, government officials, and temple institutions. In addition, a significant portion records literary texts, such as chronicles, myths, and omens.²⁴³

²⁴⁰ See Peek, "Ein Seegefecht," 295-302, and Meiggs and Lewis, *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions*, 76-77.

²⁴¹ See Dunst, "Archaische Inschriften," 153-55 no. 24. The inscription is briefly mentioned by Huss, *Ägypten in hellenistischer Zeit*, 37 n. 45, Chauveau, "Inarôs," 45 n. 16, and Holm, "Sheikh Fadl Inscription," 207 n. 61. Despite its significance, however, the inscription is often omitted; see e.g. Kahn, "Inaros' Rebellion," 424-40, who mentions only the Athenian casualty list, Ruzicka, *Trouble in the West*, 29-33, 240-41, who mentions only the first Samian inscription, and Rottpeter, "Initiatoren und Träger," 17-23, who omits all three.

²⁴² See 2.4.2.1. See also section 2.4.2.2 for the reference to "[I]n[h]arou" in the Arsames correspondence.

²⁴³ For a succinct introduction to the textual corpus from Achaemenid Babylonia, see Jursa, "Babylonian Sources," 101-16. For a detailed overview of Babylonian archives, see Jursa, *Neo-Babylonian Legal and Administrative*

In terms of chronological distribution, the majority of the Babylonian texts stems from archives and libraries that cover the transition from Neo-Babylonian to Persian rule. They are part of the so-called “long sixth century,” a period from the late seventh century BC to ca. 484 BC, which is exceptionally well documented.²⁴⁴ As publication is on-going, a reliable estimate of the total number of texts is not available. It is telling, however, that some of the “long sixth century” archives include hundreds or even thousands of tablets that can be dated to the Persian Period alone. The Persian part of the Ebabbar temple at Sippar, for example, contains at least 2500 texts – thereby eclipsing the entire corpus of archival texts from Achaemenid Egypt.²⁴⁵ A smaller number of tablets dates to the later Achaemenid period, though their number is still significant: about 1600 documents may be dated to the period from the later reign of Xerxes to Darius II; and about 400 might be dated to the fourth century BC.²⁴⁶

The contribution of the Babylonian cuneiform tablets to the study of the Egyptian rebellions is not as direct as the Greek inscription from Samos discussed above: none of the texts refer explicitly to Egyptian rebellions or to Egyptian rebel kings. Instead, the contribution of the texts is largely indirect, and touches upon three different domains. First, some of the tablets – especially those from temple archives – document the levy, equipment and payment of Babylonian soldiers. Some of these soldiers served in fortresses within Mesopotamia, while others would have participated in long-distance campaigns.²⁴⁷ An example of such a campaign is Cambyses’ invasion of Egypt in the early months of 526 BC. At present, tablets from the Eanna temple at Uruk, the Ebabbar temple at Sippar, and the Egibi archive from Babylon indicate that the Persian king resided in Babylonia from the middle of 528 BC onwards. In the next nine months he appears to have collected foodstuffs and to have mobilized troops while travelling from southern to northern Mesopotamia – and eventually, using the standard land

Documents; for libraries, see Clancier, *Les bibliothèques en Babylonie*. Aside from cuneiform tablets, a handful of Achaemenid royal inscriptions on stone and brick exists as well; see e.g. 2.3.2.1-2.3.2.2 above.

²⁴⁴ See Jursa, “Babylonian Sources,” 102. For a possible explanation of the wealth and nature of this corpus, see Waerzeggers, “Babylonian Revolts against Xerxes,” 150-73, and *ibid.*, “Network of Resistance,” 89-133.

²⁴⁵ Jursa, “Babylonian Sources,” 102-3, and compare the numbers given in 2.4.2.1-2.4.2.2. In addition, see Jursa, “Babylonian Sources,” 111, for the rough estimate that 8040 texts can be dated to the early Persian Period (ca. 539 – 484 BC) in total.

²⁴⁶ Jursa, “Babylonian Sources,” 112.

²⁴⁷ See Tolini, “La Babylonie et l’Iran,” 97-117, and MacGinnis, *Arrows of the Sun*, 39-44. MacGinnis’ suggestion that a tablet from the Ebabbar temple dated to year seven of Cambyses might relate to a “re-invasion of Egypt” by that king is not supported by other evidence; *pace ibid.*, 43.

route, to Egypt.²⁴⁸ It has been suggested that a similar campaign took place between 519 and 517 BC: several texts from the Ebabbar temple document the equipment and payment of military personnel in years three and four of Darius I. One of them records the payment of silver to horsemen who had returned from Egypt. The date suggests a connection to Darius I's invasion of the Nile Valley, which would have followed the Egyptian rebellion of 522/21 BC.²⁴⁹ As the tablets bear on the latter's end date, they are further discussed in Chapter 3.

Second, several Babylonian archives document the arrival of Egyptians in Mesopotamia during the sixth and fifth centuries BC. The social position of these groups varied considerably. It is clear, however, that at least some Egyptians joined Babylonian temple institutions as forced laborers, while others were sold as slaves to private parties.²⁵⁰ A particularly vivid example was mentioned in the Introduction: in December 524 BC a Babylonian man sold an enslaved woman and her three-month-old baby in Babylon. The document of sale identified the woman as an "Egyptian" from "the plunder of his bow."²⁵¹ She was probably taken captive during Cambyses' invasion of Egypt. It is possible that similar migrations of people – who were essentially war booty – followed the defeat of Egyptian rebellions. Such a context has been suggested for a tablet from Sippar, which documents the sale of an enslaved woman in January 484 BC. The woman bore an Egyptian name, and had an Egyptian text inscribed on her wrist. The date of sale may have fallen shortly after the end of the second Egyptian revolt (487/86 – 485/84 BC).²⁵² Texts such as this complement the Aramaic letters from Egypt discussed above: they show us a glimpse of the impact which the rebellions and the accompanying Persian invasions may have had on the Egyptian population.

²⁴⁸ See Joannès, "Conquérir l'Égypte," 201-16.

²⁴⁹ See Tolini, "La Babylonie et l'Iran," 246-47.

²⁵⁰ See e.g. Hackl and Jursa, "Egyptians in Babylonia," 158-61. For Egyptians of higher standing, see e.g. *ibid.*, 162-72, and Dandamaev, "Egyptians in Babylonia," 322-24. Note that the presence of Egyptians in Babylonia was not a novel phenomenon: some groups had already been settled there in the seventh and early sixth centuries BC, in part as a result of military campaigns on Egyptian soil; see e.g. Zadok, "Egyptians in Babylonia," 139-45, Dandamaev, "Egyptians in Babylonia," 321-22, Bongenaar and Haring, "Egyptians in Neo-Babylonian Sippar," 59-72, and Hackl and Jursa, "Egyptians in Babylonia," 157-59.

²⁵¹ See Strassmaier, *Inschriften von Cambyses*, 190-91 no. 334, and Peiser, *Texte juristischen und geschäftlichen Inhalts*, 292 no. XII. The text is also known from two duplicates; see Pinches, *Inscribed Babylonian Tablets*, 73-76 no. 17.

²⁵² See Stolper, "Inscribed in Egyptian," 138-43. The end date of the revolt is not as clear cut as Stolper suggests (*pace ibid.*, 143); for a discussion of the date, see Chapter 4.

A third and final way in which the Babylonian cuneiform corpus may contribute to the study of Egyptian rebellions relates to comparative history. As mentioned in the Introduction, some Babylonians rebelled against Persian rule during the Bisitun crisis (522 – 521 BC) and during Xerxes' second regnal year (484 BC). Like the Egyptian rebellions, the Babylonian episodes are mentioned by Greek historians (Herodotus, *Histories* 3.150-60; Ctesias, *Persica* F13 26). Our primary evidence, however, stems from Babylonian archival texts, the date formulae of which hail non-Persian kings. At present, ca. eighty-seven texts can be dated to the first two rebellions, and nineteen texts to the third and the fourth.²⁵³ Due to the size and density of the Babylonian corpus, the rebellions can be reconstructed in more detail than their Egyptian counterparts. The tablets indicate how chaotic the political situation in 522-21 BC was, for example, as some groups in Babylonian society recognized rebel kings while others recognized Darius I.²⁵⁴ They also show how the Empire responded in the rebellions' aftermath: some individuals appear to have been removed from their government and/or temple posts, while others were given the opportunity to replace them.²⁵⁵ This body of material can be compared with the Egyptian rebellions, and sometimes illuminates aspects of the Egyptian revolts that would otherwise have remained in the dark.

2.5.3 Persepolitan texts

Another sizeable text corpus from the Achaemenid Empire stems from the palace of Persepolis, one of the imperial capitals that was located in southwestern Iran. The corpus consists of two archives: the Persepolis Fortification Archive, which was found in the fortifications of the northeastern part of the Persepolis terrace, and the Persepolis Treasury Archive, which was

²⁵³ See Lorenz, *Nebukadnezar III/IV*, 87-88, Frahm and Jursa, *Neo-Babylonian Letters and Contracts*, 53-54, Pearce and Wunsch, *Documents of Judean Exiles*, 180-81, and Bloch, "Contribution of Babylonian Tablets," 3-4, for Babylonian texts dated to the first two rebel kings. The exact number of texts is uncertain, as it is sometimes difficult to differentiate between Nebuchadnezzar III and IV, i.e. the rebel kings, and Nebuchadnezzar II; see Lorenz, *Nebukadnezar III/IV*, 14-16, 31-35. See Waerzeggers, "Babylonian Revolts against Xerxes," 152-53, and Spar and Jursa, *Ebabbar Temple Archive*, 191-92 no. 140, for texts dated to the rebel kings of 484 BC. An additional (unpublished) tablet is part of the Böhl collection at Leiden (LB 1751).

²⁵⁴ See e.g. Bloch, "Contribution of Babylonian Tablets," 11-13.

²⁵⁵ See e.g. Waerzeggers, "Network of Resistance," 89-133, and Kessler, "Urukäische Familien versus babylonische Familien," 237-62.

found in the so-called Treasury building.²⁵⁶ As is true of the Babylonian corpus, the publication of a large part of the Persepolitan texts is still in the making. The following numbers are therefore approximate. The Fortification Archive consists of about 20.000 – 25.000 tablets and fragments, which may represent about 15.000 – 18.000 original documents. The vast majority were written in Elamite (70% or more), a few were written in Aramaic (ca. 5%), and a handful were written in other languages. So far, about 2400 of the Elamite texts have been published.²⁵⁷ The Treasury Archive is a comparatively small corpus: it consists of 746 tablets and fragments, all but one of which bear Elamite texts. 140 of them have been published.²⁵⁸ At present, the contribution of these archives to the study of the Egyptian rebellions is limited. This is the natural result of both their administrative and chronological scope. The Fortification Archive largely concerns the storage and distribution of foodstuffs, for example, which supported a variety of laborers, priests, officials, and courtiers in the area around Persepolis. The vast majority of texts dates between 509 to 493 BC, with particular concentrations in 500/499 and 499/98 BC (year twenty-two and twenty-three of Darius I).²⁵⁹ The later Treasury Archive is likewise focused on the area around Persepolis. It largely concerns payments in silver to workers and specialized craftsmen. The majority of texts are dated between 492 to 457 BC, with particular concentrations in 467/66 and 466/65 BC (year nineteen and twenty of

²⁵⁶ See Henkelman, “Administrative Realities,” 530-34. In addition, a group of about sixty sealings was found in the so-called Mountain Fortification, directly east of the Persepolis Terrace; see *ibid.*, 534-35. A few Elamite tablets that were found near Susa and Qandahar suggest that archives similar to those found at Persepolis existed at other centers as well; see *ibid.*, 531, and Henkelman, “Imperial Signature,” 84-86, 116-22, 151-52.

²⁵⁷ See Stolper, “Elamite Sources,” 92, and Azzoni, Dusinberre, Garrison, Henkelman, Jones, and Stolper, “Persepolis Administrative Archives,” <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/persepolis-admin-archive> (accessed 17 December 2021). Note that a sizeable minority consists of sealed but uninscribed tablets (ca. 20%); see *ibid.* For publications of some of the non-Elamite texts, see the references in *ibid.*, and Henkelman, “Administrative Realities,” 532-33. Some of the most recent additions are two tablets (possibly) written in demotic; see Azzoni, Chandler, Daly, Garrison, Johnson, and Muhs, “A Demotic Tablet or Two,” 1-31.

²⁵⁸ See Stolper, “Elamite Sources,” 92, and Azzoni, Dusinberre, Garrison, Henkelman, Jones, and Stolper, “Persepolis Administrative Archives,” <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/persepolis-admin-archive> (accessed 17 December 2021).

²⁵⁹ See Azzoni, Dusinberre, Garrison, Henkelman, Jones, and Stolper, “Persepolis Administrative Archives,” <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/persepolis-admin-archive> (accessed 17 December 2021). For the handful of texts that refer or date to regnal years outside of this timespan, see Stolper, “Chronological Boundaries.” The last mentioned regnal year is year thirty-five of Darius I (487/86 BC); see *ibid.*, no. 4. The earliest is year four of Darius I (518/17 BC); see Stolper, “Investigating Irregularities,” 761-62, 789-91 no. 6.

Xerxes).²⁶⁰ Having said that, with the steady publication of tablets in the last few decades, it is becoming increasingly clear that the archives from Persepolis touch upon a wide variety of issues that are pertinent to the study of the Achaemenid Empire as a whole. These issues range from religion and state-financed cults, to the hierarchical position and possessions of members of the royal family.²⁶¹ At times, the texts touch upon issues that relate to rebellion as well, or on the administration of Achaemenid Egypt specifically. Both deserve a closer look.

First, a good example of a dossier that touches upon rebellion in the Achaemenid Empire consists of five Elamite tablets from the Persepolis Fortification Archive. The tablets document the distribution of flour and beer to several different men in 495 – 494 BC (year twenty-seven to twenty-eight of Darius I).²⁶² In two cases, the texts mention that the men carried travel authorizations from Artaphernes (“Irdapirna”). The latter is known from Greek sources as Darius I’s brother and satrap of Sardis in the late sixth and early fifth century BC. The men whom he authorized to travel “went to the king,” who presumably resided at or near Persepolis.²⁶³ A third text mentions that a certain Dātiya – possibly Datis, a Persian general who was involved in Darius I’s later campaign against Greece – travelled from Sardis to Persepolis with an authorization from the king.²⁶⁴ In the remaining two cases, men travelled from the king to Sardis.²⁶⁵ Most of the people who made up these small travel parties are identified in the texts as *pirradaziš* or as travelling via *pirradaziš* service. The term is an Elamite rendering of Old Persian **fratačiš* (“fast messenger”). Such express messengers used the royal roads that connected the Achaemenid Empire to communicate both oral and written messages at top speed.²⁶⁶ As has been recently argued, the fact that several of these express

²⁶⁰ See Azzoni, Dusinberre, Garrison, Henkelman, Jones, and Stolper, “Persepolis Administrative Archives,” <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/persepolis-admin-archive> (accessed 17 December 2021), and Henkelman, “Administrative Realities,” 534.

²⁶¹ See e.g. Henkelman, “Heartland Pantheon,” 1221-42, Henkelman, “Consumed before the King,” 667-775, and Stolper, “Atossa Re-Enters,” 449-66.

²⁶² The dossier was identified by Hyland, “Achaemenid Messenger Service,” 150-69.

²⁶³ See *ibid.*, 153, 157-59, 167 (Fort. 2131-101 and PF-NN 0196).

²⁶⁴ See Hyland, “Achaemenid Messenger Service,” 151-52, 158, 167 (PF-NN 1809), and Lewis, “Datis the Mede,” 194-95.

²⁶⁵ See Hyland, “Achaemenid Messenger Service,” 158, 168 (Fort. 2292-101 and PF 1321).

²⁶⁶ See *ibid.*, 154-57, and Colburn, “Connectivity and Communication,” 41-47. The Fortification Archive shows that such messengers travelled with a type of passport, a document that was issued by satraps and their deputies or by certain members of the royal family, which authorized them to travel from A to B, and to receive food

messengers travelled between Sardis in western Turkey and Persepolis in southwestern Iran in 495 – 494 BC suggests a connection to the Ionian revolt. The latter had begun in 499 BC at Miletos, spread to a large number of Greek city-states on the west coast, and eventually affected Sardis as well. According to Herodotus, the Empire responded in 494 BC with a large-scale military assault on Miletos (*Histories* 6.6-6.18). Though the tablets from the Fortification Archive do not explicitly refer to the rebellion, they suggest that the preparations for Artaphernes' assault against the rebels were communicated with Darius I.²⁶⁷ In a similar vein, we may assume that the satraps of Achaemenid Egypt discussed their response to Egyptian rebellions with the Persian court, even if the king was not directly involved in the campaign(s). Tablets that document such communications have not been identified, but it is clear that they could have existed: at present, two texts are known that mention men who travelled from Pherendates (“Parindada”), who was satrap of Egypt during a large part of Darius I's reign, to the king. The texts are dated to March/April and April/May of 495 BC (year 27). One of the men is explicitly identified as *pirradaziš*.²⁶⁸ Under ideal circumstances, the journey from Memphis to Persepolis may have taken about twelve days.²⁶⁹

Second, both the Persepolis Fortification Archive and the Persepolis Treasury Archive include tablets that document the presence of Egyptian laborers in and around Persepolis. About twenty-six attestations are presently known.²⁷⁰ In most cases, the Egyptians are identified as dependent workers (*kurtasš*) or as craftsmen, such as goldsmiths, woodcarvers, and painters.

rations at waystations; see Hyland, “Achaemenid Messenger Service,” 156-57, and Henkelman, “Nakhthor in Persepolis,” 199.

²⁶⁷ See Hyland, “Achaemenid Messenger Service,” 157-67. For a reconstruction of the Ionian revolt, see e.g. Murray, “Ionian Revolt,” 480-90.

²⁶⁸ See Hyland, “Achaemenid Messenger Service,” 162-63, 168 (PF-NN 2472, PF-NN 1271) and Henkelman, “Nakhthor in Persepolis,” 202. As mentioned above, the chronological scope of the Fortification Archive largely excludes the possibility of finding *pirradaziš* tablets that may be connected to the first two Egyptian rebellions, while the different nature of the Treasury Archive – focused as it is on laborers and craftsmen rather than people of a wide variety of professional backgrounds – largely excludes this for the second and third rebellions. As the majority of tablets are unpublished, however, it is possible that relevant texts will be identified in the future.

²⁶⁹ See Colburn, “Connectivity and Communication,” 46.

²⁷⁰ See Henkelman, “Anhang,” 273, and the journal entry cited in Henkelman, “Nakhthor in Persepolis,” 201. For other possible attestations of Egyptians in southwestern Iran – some of whom may have lived there permanently – see Joannès, “Textes babyloniens de Suse,” 173-80, Wasmuth, “Egyptians in Persia,” 133, 136-40, Garrison and Ritner, “Seals with Egyptian Hieroglyphic Inscriptions,” 1-58, Qahéri, “Premier témoignage,” 1-24, Wasmuth, *Ägypto-persische Herrscher- und Herrschaftspräsentation*, 85-96, and Qahéri, *Objets égyptiens et égyptianisants*.

They were apparently transferred to southwestern Iran to work at royal building sites.²⁷¹ Some of these Egyptians travelled in relatively small groups. In month six of year twenty-four of Darius I (August/September 498 BC), seven Egyptian goldsmiths at Persepolis received 280 liters of flour as rations.²⁷² In year thirty-two (490/89 BC), fourteen Egyptian workers were each given three shekels of silver per month for a period of seven months. The workers were “building a palace” at Nupištaš, a palatial site that may have been located near modern-day Shiraz.²⁷³ Other Egyptians travelled in much larger numbers. In year twenty-one of Darius I (500/501 BC), 547 Egyptian workers were travelling to Tamukkan, a palatial center on the Persian Gulf. On the way, they received 180 liters of wine.²⁷⁴ In month four of year twenty-three (July/August 499 BC), 690 Egyptian stonemasons were likewise travelling to Tamukkan. They received 230 liters of wine.²⁷⁵ Unlike some of the Babylonian texts discussed above, the migration of these groups of laborers cannot be directly connected to the aftermath of Persian military campaigns. Instead, they were part of a larger imperial policy, in which labor forces were drawn from all corners of the Empire – including, for example, Ionia, Cappadocia, Lycia, Arabia, Babylonia, Parthia, Bactria, and India – and redirected to the Achaemenid heartland.²⁷⁶ The texts do show us a glimpse, however, of an aspect of Achaemenid rule of Egypt that is invisible in contemporary Egyptian sources. Though difficult to prove, it is conceivable that the (forced) migration which the Persepolitan archives document – provocatively called a “brain drain” by one scholar – will have contributed to animosity against Persian rule among the population of the Egyptian Delta and Nile Valley.²⁷⁷

²⁷¹ See Henkelman, “Anhang,” 273-363. At times, such groups included or consisted solely of women. See e.g. NN 1924, which mentions that twenty-three Egyptian women were escorted to Persepolis (ibid., 292-93).

²⁷² See ibid., 275-76 (Fort. 2293-101).

²⁷³ See ibid., 278 l. 9, 283-84 (PT 02).

²⁷⁴ See ibid., 291 (PF 1557).

²⁷⁵ See Henkelman, “Anhang,” 280-82 (NN 0480). For Tamukkan (Greek Taoke), see Henkelman, “From Gabae to Taoce,” 303-16, and Henkelman, “Imperial Signature,” 135-49. It has been suggested that Egyptians arrived at Tamukkan by boat, following a route that led from the Red Sea to the Persian Gulf; see Klotz, “Darius I and the Sabaeans,” 276, and Klotz, “Persian Period,” 5. Though certainly possible (see 4.3.1.2), the hypothesis is not directly supported by the archives from Persepolis, which indicate the use of a land rather than a sea route; see Henkelman, “Anhang,” 278, Henkelman, “Nakthor in Persepolis,” 201, and the texts just cited.

²⁷⁶ See e.g. Rollinger and Henkelman, “New Observations on ‘Greeks,’” 331-43, Henkelman and Stolper, “Ethnic Identity and Ethnic Labelling,” 271-329, and Henkelman, “Bactrians in Persepolis,” 223-55.

²⁷⁷ See Klotz, “Persian Period,” 5: “The mass transport of skilled artisans and advisors to Persia may have led to a minor ‘brain drain’ in Egypt.” See also Sternberg-el Hotabi, *Ägypter und Perser*, 37-42, 59-60.

2.5.4 Achaemenid seals

Aside from administrative texts that document activities in the imperial heartland, the tablets from Persepolis have also yielded a large corpus of Achaemenid sealings. Such sealings consist of seal impressions on administrative texts, as well as impressions on uninscribed pieces of clay.²⁷⁸ It is clear that the objects which made these impressions belonged to a wide variety of individuals: both low-ranking administrators and members of the royal family used seals to e.g. authorize, or “sign,” specific texts.²⁷⁹ At present, more than 4000 distinct seals are known from the Persepolis archives, attested by many more individual seal impressions.²⁸⁰ The size of the corpus can yield interesting insights in Achaemenid art history. It seems, for example, that the ahistorical style which characterized Achaemenid monumental art also dominated the glyptic corpus. The most popular scene by far was the so-called heroic encounter, in which a male hero held or battled with (mythical) animals (over 600 distinct seals).²⁸¹ A second popular motif consisted of animal combat scenes, in which a (mythical) animal attacked another (mythical) animal (over 600 distinct seals).²⁸² Both types of scenes are known from monumental wall reliefs at Persepolis, though the latter display less iconographical variety than the glyptic images.²⁸³ Having said that, there is also a handful of seal impressions in the Persepolis archives that portrays combat between human figures. About eleven distinct seals are currently known: ca. six from the Fortification Archive, and ca. five from the Treasury and Mountain Fortification Archives.²⁸⁴ The seals are part of ca. seventy-five distinct combat seals that are

²⁷⁸ See e.g. Garrison, “Seals and Sealing,” 769.

²⁷⁹ See *ibid.*, 770, 773.

²⁸⁰ See *ibid.*, 772-76. The largest number by far stems from the Fortification Archive (ca. 4059 seals); small additions stem from the Treasury Archive (ca. 77 seals), and the Mountain Fortification Archive (at least 8 seals). The finds in the Treasury and the Mountain Fortification also include a handful of actual seals; see *ibid.*, 776, and Schmidt, *Treasury of Persepolis*, 37-43.

²⁸¹ See Garrison, *Ritual Landscape*, 78, and Garrison and Root, *Images of Heroic Encounter*, 42-43. For the motif's occurrence in other Achaemenid seal corpora, see *ibid.*, 54-56.

²⁸² See Garrison, *Ritual Landscape*, 78-79.

²⁸³ See e.g. Garrison and Root, *Images of Heroic Encounter*, 56-60, and Sathe, “Lion-Bull Motifs,” 75-78.

²⁸⁴ For the combat seals from the Fortification Archive, see Garrison and Henkelman, “Seal of Prince Aršāma,” 83-89, 91-93, 98-101, and Tuplin, “Sigillography and Soldiers,” 389-90 no. 1, 391 no. 3, 397-98 no. 12, 437-38 no. 64. An additional six seals might portray combat, but are incompletely preserved; see *ibid.*, 98 n. 94, 100-101. For the combat seals from the Treasury and Mountain Fortification Archives, see *ibid.*, 89-91, 93-98, and Tuplin, “Sigillography and Soldiers,” 396 no. 9, 407-8 nos. 21.3 and 22.1-2. In the case of *ibid.*, 407-8 nos. 21.3 and 22.1-2, I follow Garrison and Henkelman, “Seal of Prince Aršāma,” 97 n. 89, in identifying the different seal

known from the Achaemenid Empire as a whole.²⁸⁵ Though a comparatively small corpus, the combat scenes provide us with an exceptional glimpse of Achaemenid representations of military conflict that post-date Darius I's relief at mount Bisitun.²⁸⁶ As some of them include representations of Egyptians, the corpus deserves a closer look.

The corpus of ca. seventy-five Achaemenid combat seals that are known to date includes cylinder seals, stamp seals, seal impressions on uninscribed clay labels, and seal impressions on cuneiform tablets.²⁸⁷ Many of the seals are without provenance. Those with a recorded provenance stem from a variety of different regions, including – aside from Iran – Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Turkey and southern Russia.²⁸⁸ The handful of seals that can be dated suggest that they were made from the early to the late Achaemenid period.²⁸⁹ In keeping with this broad geographical and chronological horizon, the composition of the combat scenes varies considerably. Though the vast majority portrays a victor who can be identified as “Persian” on the basis of his clothing, and who shoots an arrow at or drives a weapon in a non-Persian adversary, this core image could be extended with a variety of additional motifs. Deceased soldiers could lie horizontally in the scene, for example, horses could be present, and palm trees, religious symbols, or inscriptions could be included.²⁹⁰ For our present purposes, one

impressions as the product of one seal, which appears to have been identical with a seal from the Treasury Archive (PTS 28).

²⁸⁵ This number is based on the recently published catalogue of combat seals compiled by Tuplin, “Sigillography and Soldiers,” 389-440. Note that latter lists sixty-seven distinct seals. Three of these (nos. 20-22) may instead be counted as one seal (see n. 284 above). On the other hand, one may add the “nine or ten other items that show or imply combat” mentioned by Tuplin, but which are excluded from the catalogue because none of the combatants appear to be Persian (see *ibid.*, 337). One can also add PFUTS 0802, a combat seal from the Persepolis Fortification Archive, published by Garrison and Henkelman, “Seal of Prince Aršāma,” 99-100. Whether one should include the famous combat seal from the Persepolis Fortification Archive that mentions Cyrus the Anshanite can be debated as its creation is thought to be pre-date the Persian Empire; see Garrison, “Seal of ‘Kuraš the Anzanite,’” 375-405, and Tuplin, “Sigillography and Soldiers,” 331, who excludes the item from the catalogue.

²⁸⁶ See 2.3.2 above. It is important to observe that the number of Achaemenid combat seals is small in comparison with other Achaemenid motifs (such as the heroic encounter mentioned above), but substantial in comparison with the number of combat seals that are known from other periods in ancient Near Eastern history; see Tuplin, “Sigillography and Soldiers,” 330 n. 3 for further references.

²⁸⁷ See Tuplin, *ibid.*, 341-42.

²⁸⁸ See *ibid.*, 340-41, and the find spots mentioned in the catalogue.

²⁸⁹ See *ibid.*, 331, and the dates mentioned in the catalogue.

²⁹⁰ See *ibid.*, 336-37, 342-59.

subcategory that should be highlighted are combat scenes that include one or more captive figures. Ca. ten examples are currently known.²⁹¹ A well-known specimen is PTS 28: the seal is attested by several impressions from the Persepolis Treasury and Mountain Fortification Archives, which are roughly dated to the reign of Xerxes, as well as from impressions of unknown provenance. Its scene depicts a standing figure in Persian court robe who drives a spear into the neck of a kneeling figure. The latter wears a plumed helmet and a round shield. Behind the Persian figure stand three captives – all with plumed helmets – , whose necks are tied together with rope. The defeated figures can be identified as Greeks on the basis of their outfits.²⁹² Two seals that portray Egyptians belong to this subcategory as well. Both consist of unprovenanced cylinder seals made from precious stone. They show a strong resemblance to PTS 28: the scenes include a palm tree and four captives in Egyptian dress whose hands appear to be tied behind their backs and whose necks are tied together with rope. In front of them, a figure in Persian court robe thrusts a spear into a kneeling fifth captive. The latter wears Egyptian dress and what appears to be an Egyptian double crown.²⁹³ Another cylinder seal, allegedly found in the southeastern corner of the Crimea, shows a slightly different scene: it portrays a palm tree, three captives in Egyptian dress whose necks are tied together with rope, and a figure in Persian court robe who appears to lead them forward. The scene includes an Old Persian inscription that reads “I (am) Artaxerxes, (the) Great King.”²⁹⁴ As this third seal

²⁹¹ See *ibid.*, 345-46, 393-95 nos. 6-7, 397 no. 11, 403-11 nos. 17-25 (nos. 20-22 can be counted as one seal; see above).

²⁹² See *ibid.*, 332-34, 405-8 nos. 20-22, and Garrison and Henkelman, “Seal of Prince Aršāma,” 97-98.

²⁹³ See Stephani, “Erklärung einiger Kunstwerke,” 81-82, pl. V nos. 8-9, Strelkov, “Moscow Artaxerxes Cylinder Seal,” 20 fig. 3, Tuplin, “Sigillography and Soldiers,” 404-5 nos. 18-19, and “Cylinder Seal and Modern Impression: Battle Scene with King, Soldiers, Enemy,” Art Collection, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed December 21, 2021, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/327710> (= figure 6). Note that the Persian figure on both these seals and the seal discussed below has sometimes been identified with a Persian king, sometimes with a Persian general or hero - an identification based on whether or not one identifies their headgear as a royal crown; see e.g. Strelkov, “Moscow Artaxerxes Cylinder Seal,” 17, 20, Wu, ““O Young Man,”” 249-50, and Wasmuth, *Ägypto-persische Herrscher- und Herrschaftspräsentation*, 205. However, figures with and without crowns appear to have functioned as a generic “Persian hero” in Achaemenid glyptic; see Garrison and Root, *Images of Heroic Encounter*, 56-58.

²⁹⁴ See Strelkov, “Moscow Artaxerxes Cylinder Seal,” 17 fig. 2, and Schmitt, *Altpersische Siegel-Inschriften*, 36-37. For an introduction to royal-name seals (which often belonged to non-royal individuals), see Garrison, “Royal-Name Seals,” 67-104.



Figure 6. A broken cylinder seal shows a row of Egyptian prisoners, and a Persian figure spearing an Egyptian king. (Photo from <https://images.metmuseum.org/CRDImages/an/original/DP-16934-022.jpg>)

does not depict fighting, it is not strictly a “combat seal.” It can instead be connected to seven other Achaemenid seals which focus on captives (of different ethnicities).²⁹⁵ With or without combat, however, these Achaemenid “prisoner seals” are of particular interest because some of them invoke the row of bound rebel kings from the monumental relief at mount Bisitun.

In terms of interpretation, scholars of the Achaemenid Empire have sometimes connected the combat seals – as well as the non-combat prisoner seals – to specific historical events. It has been suggested that the seals were created to celebrate imperial victories in newly conquered regions, for example, and perhaps even to memorialize the specific role of a seal’s owner in a successful military campaign.²⁹⁶ In the case of the “Egyptian” seals, some scholars have argued that they were made in the aftermath of the Egyptian rebellion of the Bisitun crisis in the late sixth century BC, after Inaros’ rebellion in the mid-fifth century BC, or after Artaxerxes III’s

²⁹⁵ See Tuplin, “Sigillography and Soldiers,” 331-32, 345 n. 36. See also Wu, ““O Young Man,”” 220-21, who includes such seals in her discussion of “warfare scenes,” subdividing the latter into “ongoing scenes” and “aftermath scenes.”

²⁹⁶ For an elaborate discussion of the “historicity” of warfare images on seals, see Wu, ““O Young Man,”” 209-99.

reconquest of Egypt in the mid-fourth century BC.²⁹⁷ The feasibility of such historical interpretations has recently been called into question, however. When one looks at the corpus of Achaemenid combat seals as a whole, it is clear that it is dominated by two specific groups. Aside from Persians and a few Egyptians, one finds soldiers that are portrayed in Greek attire on the one hand, and soldiers who can be connected to a variety of Central-Asian tribes on the other. Both groups lived at the (north)western and (north)eastern edges of the Achaemenid Empire. Combat seals that portray peoples from more central imperial regions – such as, for example, Babylonia – are absent.²⁹⁸ As we know that Persian military activity was not restricted to the edges of their Empire, it is possible that the predominance of the periphery in Achaemenid glyptic is the result of ideology rather than political history. In the words of Christopher Tuplin, there appears to be “a deliberate message about the defense of imperial peace in the Empire’s frontier-lands (...) the heartlands of the Empire are peaceful (as indeed they appear on the walls of Persepolis) and it is only at its edges that war is necessary.”²⁹⁹ In light of this, it is unclear whether the seals with Egyptian captives were produced in the direct aftermath of Persian victories in Egypt, or whether they were part of a more general iconographical program, which highlighted the (successful) Persian hold on regions that were considered to be imperial borderlands. Nevertheless, the fact that the violent subjection of Egyptians was a subject in Achaemenid glyptic at all remains noteworthy. At the very least, it suggests that Egypt was imagined by some inhabitants of the Achaemenid Empire as a space in which Persian military activity was necessary – and perhaps more prominent than in other satrapies. That the Egyptian rebellions of the sixth to fourth centuries BC will have played a role in that image is plausible.

²⁹⁷ See e.g. Colburn, “Spear of the Persian Man,” 304-5, Strelkov, “Moscow Artaxerxes Cylinder Seal,” 17-20, Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 214-15, and Wasmuth, *Ägypto-persische Herrscher- und Herrschaftspräsentation*, 205. It is important to note that the exact date of all three seals remains an open question. The unscribed combat seals could have been made as early as the reign of Xerxes, for example (compare PTS 28 above). The non-combat seal, inscribed with the name of Artaxerxes, was evidently made during or after the reign of Artaxerxes I. Some arguments in favor of an attribution to Artaxerxes III can no longer be maintained, however. E.g. royal name seals with monolingual Old Persian inscriptions existed as early as the reign of Xerxes (see Garrison, “Royal-Name Seals,” 86 n. 116, and Garrison, *Ritual Landscape*, 77, 374-75), and are not necessarily indicative of a late Achaemenid date (*pace* Strelkov, “Moscow Artaxerxes Cylinder Seal,” 19, and Schmitt, *Altpersische Siegel-Inschriften*, 36-37).

²⁹⁸ See Tuplin, “Sigillography and Soldiers,” 336-37, 372-75, and Wu, ““O Young Man,”” 246-53.

²⁹⁹ See Tuplin, “Sigillography and Soldiers,” 387, and more elaborately *ibid.*, 375-79.

2.6 Conclusion

The present chapter has shown that the rebellions of Achaemenid Egypt can be studied on the basis of Greco-Roman narrative texts as well as contemporary Greek inscriptions, Persian royal inscriptions, various textual and material sources from Egypt, and – more indirectly – on the basis of Achaemenid seals, and cuneiform tablets from Babylonia and Persia. As may be expected from such a diverse corpus, the information that the sources provide us with does not always overlap. It is therefore useful to summarize the main characteristics of the groups of sources outlined above. First, starting from the fifth century BC, Greco-Roman narrative texts sometimes provide us with references to Persian-Period Egyptian rebellions. According to these references, Egyptian rebellions occurred in the (early) reign of Darius I, at the end of Darius I's reign, at the beginning of Artaxerxes I's, and around the accession of Artaxerxes II (2.2.1-2.2.4). In addition, Egypt's last Saite king is said to have been executed for planning a rebellion shortly after Cambyses' conquest, and a handful of Egyptian and Libyan kings are said to have ruled parts of Egypt in the second half of the fifth century BC (2.2.1, 2.2.3). Aside from indicating when Egyptian rebellions would have occurred, Greco-Roman references also provide occasional information on the names of the (rebel) kings in question, the support they gained from Greek military forces, and how they were defeated. The sources suggest, for example, that some of the rebellions were only defeated after additional Persian military forces were sent to Egypt (2.2.1-2.2.2). At the same time, it is important to observe that Greco-Roman references to Egyptian rebellions were generally embedded in larger stories, few of which were focused on the history of Achaemenid Egypt, and most of which were written by people who lived outside of the Achaemenid Empire. In addition, many of the authors lived at a significant chronological remove from the events in question (2.1-2.2). Many of the references therefore provide us with little information on historical details, such as the origins of the rebel kings in question, or the rebellions' geographical spread in the Delta and Nile Valley. Only the stories about the Libyan rebel king Inaros of the mid-fifth century BC are a partial exception to this rule (2.2.2). Second, starting from the late sixth century BC, the royal inscriptions of Persian kings sometimes provide us with references to rebellions in and reconquests of the Empire's satrapies. In particular, the sources suggest that Egypt as well as a series of other provinces rebelled in ca. 521 BC, i.e. in the early reign of Darius I, and that a rebellion in an unidentified satrapy may have been quelled at the start of Xerxes' reign (2.3.1, 2.3.3-2.3.3.2). Inscriptions that postdate Xerxes' reign are much less forthcoming. This is in keeping with the general tendency of Persian royal inscriptions to omit references to political events (2.3.2.2). The

Bisitun inscription, which concerns rebellions at the start of Darius I's reign – including the Egyptian rebellion of ca. 521 BC –, is the most important exception to this rule: it provides us with the (throne) names of rebel kings, the geographical spread of their rebellions, when they rebelled and when they were defeated, how many soldiers were killed in battles, and even how some of the rebel kings were executed. Though the details of the Egyptian rebellion are not provided, the inscription gives us an invaluable glimpse of the way in which rebellions were dealt with according to a Persian king himself (2.3.1; see also 3.2-3.2.1.3). Third, Egyptian sources from the sixth to fourth centuries BC sometimes refer to non-Persian kings who ruled parts of Egypt, to rebels and rebellions, and to acts of violence and destruction that may have been political in nature. Based on Egyptian sources alone, it is not always easy to reconstruct the exact date of the events in question. Nevertheless, contemporary inscriptions, letters and contracts indicate that Egyptian kings ruled parts of Egypt in the early years of Persian rule, at the end of the reign of Darius I, in the mid-fifth century BC, around 400 BC, and during the short Second Persian Period in the fourth century BC. These sources not only give us the names and titles of such kings, but also allow for reconstructions of the geographical spread of their rule (2.4, 2.4.1.1-2.4.1.2, 2.4.2.1-2.4.2.2). In addition, the sources provide us with an occasional glimpse of violence that may have been connected to the rebellions, from the death of Egyptians on a Persian estate to the destruction of fortified border settlements (2.4.2.2, 2.4.3). Fourth, though generally less informative than the aforementioned groups, Greek inscriptions, cuneiform tablets from Babylonia and Persia, and Achaemenid seals occasionally provide us with additional data on the Egyptian revolts. For example, a handful of Greek inscriptions show that Inaros, leader of the Egyptian rebellion in the mid-fifth century BC, had gained military support from Athens and Samos (2.5.1). For their part, cuneiform tablets suggest that Babylonian soldiers were involved in an imperial campaign against Egypt in the early reign of Darius I (2.5.2). They also indicate that groups of Egyptian extraction were put to work in southern Iraq and southwestern Iran in the sixth to fifth centuries BC. Some of these Egyptians may have been captured as war booty, as has been suggested for an enslaved Egyptian woman who was sold in Babylonia in the early reign of Xerxes (2.5.2-2.5.3). In addition, a handful of images on Achaemenid seals show Egyptian prisoners bound with rope or speared to death. This further highlights the violence that would have occurred in Achaemenid Egypt, likely as a result of the rebellions and the (re-)invasions that followed (2.5.4).

To repeat, each group of sources that stands at our disposal provides us with a different perspective on Persian-Period Egyptian resistance. Each group also has its own merits and

limitations, which means that they are not always neatly complementary. One example is that Greco-Roman texts mention the names of several (rebel) kings who ruled in the second half of the fifth century BC (i.e. Amyrtaios I, Thannyras, Pausiris, Psamtik). Egyptian texts, on the other hand, mention the names of pharaohs who ruled in the late sixth, early to mid-fifth and fourth century BC (Petubastis IV, Psamtik IV, Khababash; compare section 2.2.3 with 2.4-2.4.2.1). The only kings whose names appear in both groups of texts are Inaros (mid-fifth century BC), and Amyrtaios II and Psamtik V (ca. 400 BC; compare 2.2.2 and 2.2.4 with 2.4.2.1-2.4.2.2). In addition, while Greco-Roman texts reveal little information about the rebellions of the late sixth and early fifth century BC, the only Persian royal inscriptions that (may) refer to revolts stem from the reigns of Darius I and Xerxes (compare 2.2.1 with 2.3.1, 2.3.3.1-2.3.3.2). Despite these differences – which can only be expected from such diverse corpora –, there are clear overlaps between the groups as well. These overlaps allow us to reconstruct the existence of Egyptian rebellions at several points in time with a high degree of probability. For example, the existence of the rebellion in the early reign of Darius I is indicated by Greco-Roman, Persian, Egyptian and Babylonian sources (2.2.1, 2.3.1, 2.3.3.1, 2.4.1.1, 2.5.2). Its historicity as well as its exact dates are more elaborately discussed in Chapter 3. The existence of the rebellion at the end of the reign of Darius I, which was defeated at the beginning of Xerxes' reign, is documented by Greek, Egyptian and possibly Babylonian sources (2.2.1, 2.4.1.2, 2.4.2.1, 2.5.2). This makes it plausible that the Daiva inscription from Xerxes' reign, which refers to unrest in an unidentified satrapy that was put down in Xerxes' early reign, may also have referred to this rebellion (2.3.3.2).³⁰⁰ The rebellion is more elaborately discussed in Chapter 4. Later revolts are likewise documented by multiple source corpora: Inaros' rebellion is reflected in Greco-Roman texts, Greek inscriptions, and Egyptian sources (2.2.2, 2.5.1, 2.4.2.1-2.4.2.2); and Egypt's secession in ca. 400 BC is documented by Greco-Roman texts and Egyptian texts (2.4, 2.4.2.1-2.4.2.2). By contrast, when there is no overlap between the information in different corpora, our assessment of the events in question becomes more difficult. It is unclear, for example, whether Psamtik III's conspiracy during the reign of Cambyses – as mentioned by Herodotus – should be understood as a rebellion, and, if so, if the episode reflects historical reality (2.2.1). It is also unclear whether the kings who, according to Greco-Roman sources, ruled parts of Egypt in the second half of the fifth century BC were (all) historical figures, and whether they should be understood as the leaders of

³⁰⁰ As noted, such an interpretation does not exclude the possibility that the inscription was also read as a “timeless” statement on Xerxes' duties as king of the Persian Empire; see 2.3.3.2.

rebellions, or as (minor) kings whose rule was condoned by the Persian government (2.2.3). We likewise know little about the origins and reign of Khababash, a fourth century BC Egyptian king whose reign is only documented by Egyptian sources (2.4). It can only be hoped that future finds will solve some of the questions that these sources raise.

Putting the differences between and the uncertainties inherent in some of the sources to one side, it is important to highlight that the material as a whole suggests that the Egyptian revolts of the sixth to fourth centuries BC shared several characteristics. These can be summarized as follows. First, Greco-Roman and Egyptian texts, as well Greek inscriptions, indicate that many of the rebellions were led by or resulted in the installation of local (Libyo-)Egyptian kings (2.2.1-2.2.4, 2.4.1-2.4.2, 2.5.1). Egyptian sources show that the latter often claimed traditional Egyptian royal titles, such as pharaoh and King of Upper and Lower Egypt (2.4.1-2.4.2). This is compatible with the information provided by the Bisitun inscription and Babylonian cuneiform texts on non-Egyptian rebellions in the late sixth and early fifth centuries BC (2.3.1, 2.5.2). Second, the short periods of (partial) secession that resulted from the rebellions can be characterized in two different ways. On the one hand, hieroglyphic sources show that some of the rebel kings enjoyed sufficient stability and access to resources to create royal monuments (2.4.1). In addition, demotic texts suggest that life resumed its regular course quite quickly in some parts of the country, with the only difference being that the name in the date formulae of Egyptian contracts was changed from a Persian to an Egyptian one (2.4.2.1). On the other hand, the rebellions went hand in hand with violent conflict. Greco-Roman narratives, demotic and Aramaic texts, Greek inscriptions and Babylonian tablets indicate that there were armed clashes between people who supported the Persian Great Kings on the one hand and those who supported the local rebel kings on the other (2.2.1-2.2.3, 2.4.2.1-2.4.2.2, 2.5.1-2.5.2). Comparable clashes are described by the Bisitun inscription (2.3.1). In addition, the Persian army was often assisted by additional imperial forces, which were sent to the rebellious province from other parts of the Empire – as suggested by Greco-Roman texts and, to a lesser extent, Babylonian tablets. The campaigns were coordinated by the Persian kings, though generally from afar (2.2.1-2.2.2, 2.5.2; compare 2.3.1). A handful of tablets from the Persepolis Fortification Archive show us a glimpse of the imperial communication network that would have facilitated such royal coordination (2.5.3). For their part, the rebel kings were sometimes assisted by forces from the Greek mainland and Aegean islands, whose leaders had an interest in destabilizing Persia's hold in the Mediterranean. This is clear from both Greco-Roman narratives and contemporary Greek inscriptions (2.2.2-2.2.3, 2.5.1). During these periods of

armed conflict, Greco-Roman narratives, Aramaic texts, Babylonian tablets and Achaemenid seals show that some inhabitants of Egypt retreated into fortresses, while others were killed or seized as war booty (2.2.2, 2.4.2.2, 2.5.2, 2.5.4). This is comparable with the descriptions of rebellions in the Bisitun inscription (2.3.1). Remains of some of the fortresses that may have served as havens for either imperial or rebel forces have been found in northeastern Egypt (2.4.3). Third and finally, though the Persians were not always successful in their attempts to reconquer Egypt, Achaemenid royal inscriptions, coins, and seals with combat imagery emphasized their continued claim to the Delta and Nile Valley, and that the Persian kings alone were the rightful pharaohs of Egypt (see 2.3.1, 2.3.3.1-2.3.3.3, 2.5.4).

Chapter 3

The Egyptian Rebellion of the Bisitun Crisis (ca. 521 BC)³⁰¹

3.1 Introduction

Cambyses conquered Egypt in the early months of 526 BC and appears to have remained in the Nile Valley in the years that followed. Regrettably, little is known about the details of his stay. Contemporary sources indicate that Cambyses adopted an Egyptian throne name, used pharaonic titles, and that he visited Sais, the former dynastic capital of Egypt (see 1.1). The reliability of the *Histories* of Herodotus is more difficult to assess: Book Three portrays Cambyses as a madman, who committed a host of (religious) crimes in his newly acquired satrapy – from the murder of a holy Apis calf to the burning of Egyptian cult statues (see e.g. *Histories* 3.27-29, 3.37).³⁰² One thing is clear, however: Cambyses' four-year-rule of Egypt – and his eight-year-reign of the Persian Empire – ended in a political crisis that affected large parts of ancient western Asia. Our primary source for this crisis is the Bisitun inscription. As discussed in Chapter 2, the Bisitun inscription was made at the behest of Darius I and consists of a relief and a trilingual text that was written in Old Persian, Babylonian and Elamite. The inscription claims that a man called Gaumata staged a coup d'état against Cambyses in the spring of 522 BC, and that he ruled (parts of) the Persian Empire for several months. In addition, it claims that Cambyses passed away, that Darius and several other men killed Gaumata, and that the kingship was subsequently given to Darius. What followed these events was a turbulent one-and-a-half-year period in which multiple provinces tried to secede from Persian rule. According to the Bisitun inscription, one of these provinces was Egypt: the country would have revolted at the turn of 522/21 BC, while Darius was in Babylon.³⁰³

³⁰¹ A short version of the present chapter was published in article format in 2018; see Wijnsma, "Worst Revolt of the Bisitun Crisis," 157-73.

³⁰² Studies on Herodotus' portrayal of Cambyses are numerous. See e.g. Brown, "Herodotus' Portrait," 387-403, Depuydt, "Murder in Memphis," 119-26, Munson, "Madness of Cambyses," 43-65, Dillery, "Cambyses and the Egyptian Chaosbeschreibung Tradition," 387-406, and Wojciechowska, "Black Legend of Cambyses," 26-33.

³⁰³ See section 2.3.1 above and 3.2.1 below. For a comparative edition of the Bisitun inscription see Bae, "Comparative Studies," 76-236; for a convenient English translation of the Old Persian version, see Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 141-57 no. 5.1.

That the Bisitun inscription mentions the existence of an Egyptian rebellion at the start of Darius I's reign has been known for more than 150 years: in 1853, Edwin Norris published a translation of the Elamite version of the Bisitun inscription, which – contrary to the previously published Old Persian and Babylonian versions – included “Egypt” in the inscription's list of rebellious satrapies.³⁰⁴ If the historicity of the rebellion is accepted, it can be counted as the first revolt that occurred in Achaemenid Egypt.³⁰⁵ Ever since Norris' publication, however, interpretations of the episode have varied considerably. Some scholars have doubted whether the rebellion actually occurred, and have maintained that the first rebellion against the Persians was not waged until later in Darius' reign.³⁰⁶ Others, by contrast, have accepted the rebellion's historicity, but have given different dates for its duration: some have suggested that the rebellion lasted several months or a year at most, and that it was defeated in 521 or 520 BC;³⁰⁷ others have argued that the rebellion lasted multiple years, and that Darius did not reconquer Egypt until 519 or even 518 BC.³⁰⁸ The latter hypothesis would make the Egyptian rebellion the longest-lasting revolt of the Bisitun crisis. An important factor in this lack of consensus is that neither the Bisitun inscription nor other ancient texts provide us with a complete and reliable account of the episode.

³⁰⁴ See Norris, *Memoir on the Scythic Version*, 107. At present, it is clear that the Egyptian rebellion is also mentioned in the Babylonian version of the inscription; see Voigtlander, *Bisitun Inscription*, xi-xii, 22-23, 56, and 3.2.2.1 below.

³⁰⁵ For earlier plans of Egyptian resistance – in which case it is uncertain whether we are dealing with a rebellion, let alone a historical one – , see 2.2.1.

³⁰⁶ See Wiedemann, *Geschichte Aegyptens*, 80, Meyer, *Die Entstehung des Judenthums*, 82-83 n. 3, and Kienitz, *Die politische Geschichte Ägyptens*, 60 n. 4 for explicit rejections of the historicity of the Egyptian rebellion mentioned in the Bisitun inscription. Consequently, multiple scholars have identified the rebellion of 487/86 BC as the first rebellion of Persian Period Egypt; see Lloyd, “Late Period,” 286, Vittmann, *Ägypten und die Fremden*, 130, and McCoskey, “Fight the Power,” 132.

³⁰⁷ See Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 223, and Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 115.

³⁰⁸ See Parker, “Darius and His Egyptian Campaign,” 373-77, Cameron, “Darius, Egypt, and the ‘Lands Beyond the Sea,’” 310-12, Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire*, 112-13, 141-43, Ruzicka, *Trouble in the West*, 23, Kaper, “Petubastis IV,” 142-43, and Quack, “Egypt,” 556-57. In addition to the aforementioned studies, it is important to note that some scholars have recognized indications for a rebellion in the 520s BC, but have not occupied a clear position regarding its likelihood (see Rottpeter, “Initiatoren und Träger,” 13-14), or its duration (see Sternberg-el Hotabi, *Ägypten und Perser*, 163, Perdu, “Saites and Persians,” 151, Waters, *Ancient Persia*, 72, and Klotz, “Persian Period,” 4).

Because of the continued lack of consensus on both the historicity and the duration of the 522/21 BC Egyptian rebellion, the present chapter takes an in-depth look at all the sources that are currently available for its reconstruction. This is done in three steps. First, section 3.2 provides a detailed summary of the Bisitun inscription and discusses the different ways in which scholars have interpreted the inclusion of “Egypt” in the text. Second, section 3.3 provides a discussion of the Egyptian sources that can be dated to ca. 522 – 518 BC, from texts dated to Persian kings to texts that mention an Egyptian king. Third, section 3.4 focuses on the end date of the rebellion, the evidence for which is based on a combination of Greco-Roman histories, Egyptian sources, Babylonian sources, and the Bisitun inscription itself. On the basis of these sources, the chapter argues that the existence of an Egyptian rebellion in the early reign of Darius is likely. In addition, it probably resulted in the reign of an Egyptian rebel king, whose name was Petubastis Seheribre. Though the exact duration of the rebellion remains uncertain, several texts indicate that it may indeed have lasted until 518 BC. It is important to emphasize that this conclusion is based on the cumulative weight of the evidence: although the reliability of each individual source may be questioned, the different sources reinforce each other’s testimony.

3.2 The Bisitun inscription

The Bisitun inscription owes its name to its location: it was carved in the rocks of mount Bisitun (also known as Bisotun, or Behistun), near the modern city of Kermanshah, western Iran. The inscription is located about sixty-six meters above ground level.³⁰⁹ At the center of it features a monumental relief, which shows Darius, crowned and armed, trampling a man beneath his feet. Nine other men stand before him. Their hands are bound behinds their backs, and their necks are tied together with rope. Several columns of text surround this image. To the left of

³⁰⁹ The number of meters derives from Lushey, “Studien zu dem Darius-Relief von Bisutun,” 66. It is difficult to discern from which point the measures were made. Lushey describes it as follows: “Das Darius-Relief mit seinen Inschriften liegt an der steilen, etwa tausend Meter hochragenden, fast senkrechten Ostwand des Bisutun-Berges in einer Felsschlucht etwa 66 Meter über einem Quellsee, an dem vorbei die uralte Karawanenstraße aus dem mesopotamischen Tieflande zum iranischen Hochland nach Ekbatana führt” (ibid., 66). On the same page, Lushey remarks that the base of the inscription begins ca. 20 meters above what appears to have been a “Kult-Terrasse.” Other scholars sometimes give different numbers; compare e.g. “[r]oughly 200 feet [ca. 60 meters] above the road” (Waters, *Ancient Persia*, 59), and “125 feet [ca. 38 meters] high into the side of a cliff along the ‘Royal Road’” (Finn, “Gods, Kings, Men,” 223).



Figure 7. Darius I's inscription on the rock face of mount Bisitun (center, above scaffolding) as seen from the ground. (Photograph by the author)³¹⁰

the relief, one finds a large slab covered in Babylonian text. Beneath the relief, there are five columns of Old Persian text. To the left of that, one finds three columns of Elamite text. An older Elamite text was once inscribed to the right of the relief as well. The texts were – and remain today – the longest royal inscriptions known from the Achaemenid Empire.³¹¹

For simplicity's sake, the story of the Bisitun inscription can be divided into three parts. The first part of the story describes how Darius I came to be king of the Achaemenid Empire in 522 BC. The narrative covers a large part of the first column in the Old Persian and Elamite versions, and ca. twenty-nine lines in the Babylonian version. The second part tells us that multiple rebellions were waged against Darius' reign in 522 – 521 BC – most of which Darius managed to defeat. This part makes up the majority of the narrative: it covers ca. two columns in the Old Persian and Elamite texts and ca. sixty lines in the Babylonian text. The third part informs us about additional campaigns, which were waged in Darius' second and third years

³¹⁰ For a close-up of the inscription, see figure 2 in Chapter 2.

³¹¹ See 2.3.1.

of rule (520/19 – 519/18 BC).³¹² In contrast with parts one and two, part three was recorded only in Old Persian, and covers column five of that version. It seems that the column was added at a later date (on which more below).³¹³ The following pages give a summary of all three parts. The section thereafter focuses on the inclusion of “Egypt” in the inscription’s list of rebellious satrapies, and the different ways in which scholars have interpreted it.

3.2.1 Summary of the Bisitun inscription

3.2.1.1 Part one: Darius’ rise to power

Part one of the Bisitun inscription describes Darius’ rise to power, as well as his right to the imperial throne. It begins with Darius’ genealogy: the inscription states that he was a descendant of Achaemenes via Cyrus’ and Cambyses’ forefather Teispes. It also states that eight men of Darius’ family had been kings before him. Darius was the legitimate ninth (§1-9). After these introductory statements, the inscription describes the events that led to Darius’ accession to the throne. The inscription claims that when Cambyses was king of the Persian Empire he decided to kill his own brother Bardiya. Cambyses subsequently left for Egypt (§10).³¹⁴ After that, a man called Gaumata began a rebellion in Persia. The inscription dates this rebellion to 11 March 522 BC. Curiously, Gaumata claimed to be Bardiya. His coup d’état was supported by Persians, Medes, and a host of other peoples, many of whom apparently believed his claim. On 1 July 522 BC, Gaumata/Bardiya was able to take the imperial throne (§11).³¹⁵ This is where Darius enters the picture. Though several people knew of Gaumata’s

³¹² In accordance with the Bisitun inscription, all references to regnal years in this and the following paragraphs follow the Persian/Babylonian system of dating, whereby regnal years began at the start of spring (ca. March/April); see Depuydt, “Regnal Years,” 155. Cf. the Egyptian system of dating in section 3.3.

³¹³ The Babylonian version lacks columns, hence the reference to lines. The number of lines and columns given here is based on Bae, “Comparative Studies,” 76-223.

³¹⁴ The Babylonian version adds that he went “with troops” (*itti uqu*; see Bae, “Comparative Studies,” 91), which indicates that Cambyses’ invasion of Egypt is meant.

³¹⁵ I.e. he “seized the kingship” (Old Persian *xšačam agarbâyatâ*); see Bae, “Comparative Studies,” 91-92. The exact meaning of the phrase – especially in comparison with Gaumata’s earlier rebellion in March – is unknown. Perhaps it refers to a formal coronation ceremony; see e.g. Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 153 n. 20.

true identity, only Darius and six other men dared to act.³¹⁶ They killed Gaumata on 29 September, in a fortress called Sikayahuvati in Media. Cambyses, meanwhile, had died in unknown circumstances. The kingship of the Achaemenid Empire was thereupon granted to Darius (§11-13). In Darius' own words: "The kingdom which had been taken away from our family, I re-established it, I put it back in its place. (...) with the help of Auramazda, I strove in such a way that Gaumata the magus did not make our house destitute" (§14).³¹⁷

3.2.1.2 Part two: the rebellions of 522-521 BC

Part two of the Bisitun inscription describes events that followed Darius' accession to the throne. It focuses on a series of rebellions that were waged against Darius' reign. The earliest among them occurred shortly after Gaumata's execution. First, a man called Açina son of Upadarma claimed to be king in Elam. Darius sent an army to quell the unrest. At an unspecified date, Açina was led before Darius, whereupon Darius had him executed. Second, a man called Nidintu-Bēl son of Ainaira – who adopted the throne name Nebuchadnezzar (III) – claimed to be king in Babylon. Darius personally campaigned against him. Battles were fought on 13 and 18 December 522 BC – until Darius captured Nebuchadnezzar III in Babylon, and killed him there (§16-20). After that, other regions took up arms against him.

The regions that rebelled against Darius at the end of or after 522 BC are numerous. They consist of Persia, Elam (again), Media, Assyria, Egypt, Parthia, Margiana, Sattagydia, and Scythia – all of which are said to have rebelled while Darius was in Babylon (§21). They also consist of Armenia, Sagartia, Hyrcania, and Arachosia, which are mentioned at later points in the inscription (§26-30, §33, §35, §38-39, §45-47).³¹⁸ In addition, Babylonia – like Elam – is said to have rebelled anew (§49-50) This second rebellion was led by another king who adopted the throne name Nebuchadnezzar (IV). Paragraphs 22 to 51 of the inscription provide us with elaborate descriptions of some of these rebellions. Among other things, we hear the dates and

³¹⁶ That Darius was assisted by six men is specified in §70, where the men's names are given.

³¹⁷ Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 143-44.

³¹⁸ Note that some of the regions mentioned in the inscription were connected to one rebellion. The rebellion of Parthia and Hyrcania (§35), for example, is explicitly connected to the rebellion of Fravartish in Media (§24, 31-32). The regions of Armenia and Assyria are likewise linked together (§26-30). In addition, some scholars have suggested that the latter should also be connected to the rebellion in Media; see Lecoq, *Les inscriptions de la Perse*, 197.

locations of battles, and what the ethnic background of the rebel kings was. We also hear about the numbers of war dead and prisoners, and the titles which the rebel kings claimed. The overall impression is that a far-reaching wave of dissent swept over the Persian Empire following Darius' accession to the throne. The central and eastern regions of the Empire were especially affected. Table 1 collects information on eight of these rebellions, as an illustration of the detail in which the episodes are described.³¹⁹

In the end, the Bisitun inscription emphasizes that most or all resistance against Darius' reign was successfully quelled. The rebellions were defeated at the end of 522 or during 521 BC, either by Darius himself, or by one of his generals. The conclusion of the inscription highlights nine rebel kings – including Gaumata, Açina, and the two Nebuchadnezzars – as captured and killed. In Darius' own words: “This (is) what I have done, by the favour of Auramazda, in one and the same year, after I became king. I have fought nineteen battles. By the favour of Auramazda, I defeated them and took nine kings prisoner” (§52).³²⁰ It is these nine kings who feature in the inscription's monumental relief.³²¹

3.2.1.3 Part three: the campaigns of 520/19 and 519/18 BC

Part three of the inscription consists of a small column in Old Persian (column five; §71-76). As mentioned above, the column does not feature in the Elamite and Babylonian versions of

³¹⁹ Note that the numbers of killed and captured soldiers in the table are based on the exact figures that are given by the Babylonian version of the Bisitun inscription, but rounded off for simplicity. The original figures are often difficult to read. The total number of captured soldiers in one battle against Vahyazdata, for example, is given as “2xxx” (Bae, “Comparative Studies,” 168); this is simplified as 2.000 in the table. Note also that the killed and captured soldiers in Armenia are excluded from the table, as they cannot be confidently connected to any of the identified rebel kings (Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 117-18).

³²⁰ Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 148.

³²¹ Note that the “summary” of §52-53, where Darius highlights the number of battles that were fought and the kings whom were captured, is followed by several short statements (§54-70). The statements emphasize, among other things, that it was “the Lie” which made the countries rebellious, that the story of the inscription is true, that the story was – and should be – propagated throughout the empire, and that six men assisted Darius in slaying Gaumata.

Table 1. Information on the eight rebel kings who rebelled after Darius I's accession to the throne, as provided by the Bisitun inscription.

Name /patronymic	Ethnicity	Royal claims	Killed and captured soldiers	Means of execution
Açina /Upadarma	Elamite	I am king in Elam.	-	Açina was killed.
Nidintu-Bēl /Ainaira	Babylonian	I am Nebuchadnezzar, son of Nabonidus; king in Babylon.	-	Nidintu-Bēl and his forty-nine foremost followers were impaled at Babylon.
Fravartish	Mede	I am Khshathrita, of the family of Cyaxares; king in Media.	Ca. 64.000	Fravartish was physically mutilated and held in fetters at Darius' palace entrance. He was subsequently impaled at Ecbatana. Fravartish's forty-seven foremost followers had their heads cut off, which were subsequently hanged from the battlements of Ecbatana's fortress.
Martiya /Cincakhri	Persian	I am Imani, king in Elam.	-	Martiya was killed by the Elamites.
Cicantakhma	Sagartian	I am king in Sagartia, of the family of Cyaxares.	Ca. 450	Cicantakhma was physically mutilated and held in fetters at Darius' palace entrance. He was subsequently impaled at Arbela.
Vahyazdata	Persian	I am Bardiya, son of Cyrus; king.	Ca. 21.500	Vahyazdata and his foremost followers were impaled at Huvadaicaya.
Arakha /Haldita	Armenian	I am Nebuchadnezzar, son of Nabonidus; king in Babylon.	Ca. 2.500	Arakha and his foremost followers were impaled at Babylon.
Frada	Margian	I am king in Margiana.	Ca. 12.000	Frada and his forty-six foremost followers were killed.

the inscription. The column records two campaigns in Darius' second and third years of rule (i.e. 520/19 and 519/18 BC).³²² The first campaign was prompted by yet another rebellion: a man called Athamaita was recognized as chief of the Elamites. Darius sent an army to quell the unrest. Athamaita was captured, brought before Darius, and killed. The second campaign was initiated by Darius himself. Darius crossed the sea and defeated the Scythians "who wear the pointed hat." A Scythian chief called Skunkha was captured. Another chief was installed in his place. "After that," Darius says, "the country became mine" (§74).³²³

Column five of the Old Persian version may be understood as an addition to the main story of the Bisitun inscription (i.e. parts one and two). That the column postdates the main story is clear from the relief. At some point after Darius' defeat of the Scythians, a figure of Skunkha, the Scythian chief, was added to the relief's row of prisoners – making him Darius' tenth captive. The figure was carved over an Elamite text which featured to the right of the relief. The addition rendered the text partly illegible, though it is clear that it once told the story of Darius' rise to power and the rebellions of 522-21 BC.³²⁴ It is commonly believed that the addition of Skunkha was the reason for the creation of a second Elamite text. This second version features below the relief, between the Babylonian and Old Persian versions. Incidentally, these adaptations provide us with an approximate date for the main story of the Bisitun inscription. It seems that the original relief and the older Elamite text had been inscribed after the rebellions of 521 BC were quelled, but before Darius finished the campaigns of his second and third years of rule. Their approximate creation date is therefore regnal year two (520/19 BC). Column five may have been added after Darius' third year (519/18 BC), or at any point after that.³²⁵ The date of the Babylonian and second Elamite version, as well as column one to four

³²² Strictly speaking, it is unclear whether the second and third years that are mentioned are Persian regnal years. It is also possible that the years were counted from the moment of Darius' accession to the throne in the autumn of 522 BC. In the latter case, the "one year" in which Darius claims to have defeated many of the rebellions of part two would have lasted from his accession to the autumn of 521 BC, while the second and third years would have lasted from the autumn of 521 to 520 BC, and from the autumn of 520 to 519 BC respectively. For a discussion of the issue, see Parker, "Darius and His Egyptian Campaign," 374 n. 9, Depuydt, "Evidence for Accession Dating," 196-97, and Wijnsma, "Worst Revolt of the Bisitun Crisis," 167.

³²³ Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 151.

³²⁴ See Cameron, "Elamite Version," 61.

³²⁵ Why this addition was only recorded in Old Persian is uncertain. It is possible that the Babylonian and Elamite versions simply lacked the space for it, as suggested by Wiesehöfer, *Ancient Persia*, 17.

of the Old Persian version remain a point of discussion. Their stories are, however, roughly the same as the older Elamite text.³²⁶

3.2.2 *The Egyptian rebellion in §21*

As mentioned above, the Bisitun inscription includes Egypt in the list of provinces that rebelled while Darius was in Babylon (§21). Aside from Egypt, the list includes Persia, Elam, Media, Assyria, Parthia, Margiana, Sattagydia, and Scythia. Though the exact date on which each province rebelled is not given, we may assume that the revolts began at different times during a period of several months. This is supported by dates given in other parts of the inscription: the text suggests that Darius stayed in Babylon from ca. December 522 BC, when he defeated Nebuchadnezzar III, to ca. April 521 BC, when he must have traveled to Media to fight a battle against a different rebel king (see § 19-20, 31).³²⁷ While Darius was in Babylonia, generals of his fought battles against some of the regions that are said to have rebelled in §21. We hear of battles in Assyria and Arachosia at the end of December 522 BC, in Media in January 521 BC, at a place called Gandutava, located in either Arachosia or Sattagydia, in February 521 BC, and in Parthia in March 521 BC.³²⁸ By the time that Darius left Babylonia, and fought a battle in Media on 7 May 521 BC, Egypt was presumably in revolt (see §25, 29, 35-36, 45, 47). However, although the Bisitun inscription describes additional battles fought in Armenia (May and June 521 BC), Persia (May and July 521 BC), Parthia (July 521 BC), Babylonia (November 521 BC), Margiana (December 521 BC), and Elam and Scythia (520/19 - 519/18 BC; see §26-29, 36, 38, 41-43, 50, 71-72, 74-75), Egypt is not mentioned again.³²⁹ The rebellion, in the words of one scholar, is left “in suspense.”³³⁰

The fact that Egypt is included in §21 yet does not recur in the remainder of the Bisitun inscription has long been identified as a curiosity. The inscription does not provide us with the name and royal claims of an Egyptian rebel king, nor of battles fought in the Nile Valley. Over the years, this omission

³²⁶ For the different stages of engraving, see Cameron, “Elamite Version,” 60, Wiesehöfer, *Ancient Persia*, 15-17, and Bae, “Comparative Studies,” 16-30. The preserved parts of the original Elamite text indicate that the second Elamite text was “a slavish copy of the older text” (Cameron, “Elamite Version,” 61).

³²⁷ See Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 140-41, for a chronological overview of the events mentioned in the inscription.

³²⁸ For the location of Gandutava, see Fleming, “Achaemenid Sattagydia,” 106-8.

³²⁹ Note that the battle fought in Margiana is difficult to date: it should be dated to either 10 December 522 BC or 28 December 521 BC (see Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 155 n. 83).

³³⁰ Cook, *Persian Empire*, 59.

of information on Egypt has been explained in different ways. One can divide the explanations into three hypotheses. The first hypothesis rejects the historicity of the Egyptian rebellion, and states that the inclusion of “Egypt” in §21 was the result of a scribal mistake. The second hypothesis likewise rejects the historicity of the rebellion, but attributes its inclusion in §21 to the inscription’s rhetorical hyperbole. The third hypothesis, by contrast, accepts that the rebellion occurred, and assumes that it was not further elaborated on because the Bisitun inscription was not intended as a comprehensive account of everything that had happened in Darius’ early reign, and/or because Egypt was not yet defeated by the time that the Bisitun inscription was completed. The following pages discuss all three hypotheses. To anticipate this section’s conclusions: it will be argued that the first two hypotheses are insufficiently convincing; the third hypothesis is plausible, although the exact reason behind the exclusion of Egypt’s defeat from Darius’ official narrative is difficult to identify.

3.2.2.1 Egypt: a scribal mistake

To understand why some scholars have attributed the inclusion of “Egypt” in §21 to a scribal error, it is important to review the publication history of the Bisitun inscription. The Old Persian version of the inscription was published in 1846.³³¹ A translation of the Babylonian version followed in 1851.³³² Both translations were made by Henry Rawlinson, at the dawn of cuneiform studies. Despite Rawlinson’s efforts, neither translation yielded a complete running text: the fact that cuneiform was still imperfectly understood, paired with damage to some parts of the Bisitun inscription, stood in the way of that goal. In the case of §21, Rawlinson managed to read Persia, Elam, Assyria, [... ..], Sattagydia and Scythia in the Babylonian version.³³³ He read Persia, Elam, Assyria, [... ..]thia, Margiana, Sattagydia, and Scythia in the Old Persian text. A suggestion was made that Armenia and Parthia should be restored in the lacunae: both countries featured in the remainder of the narrative (Armenia in §26-30, Parthia in §35-37), and the final signs of “Parthia” could still be read in the Old Persian text.³³⁴

Within several years, some of Rawlinson’s suggestions could be improved upon. The improvements were partly due to Edwin Norris’ translation of the third version of the Bisitun inscription: the

³³¹ Rawlinson, *Persian Cuneiform Inscription*.

³³² Rawlinson, *Memoir on the Babylonian and Assyrian Inscriptions*.

³³³ See *ibid.*, l. 40-41 of the “Babylonian Translation of the Great Persian Inscription at Behistun” (no page numbers are provided).

³³⁴ See Rawlinson, *Persian Cuneiform Inscription*, vi, xxx, xlvi-xlvii.

(second) Elamite text. In the case of §21, Norris' translation showed that the name of Parthia indeed preceded Margiana in the list. It also showed that the country which featured between Assyria and Parthia was Egypt ([^mMi]-zariyap). When Norris published his translation in 1853, he did not comment on the significance of "Egypt" in the line.³³⁵ It should be noted that several historians of the nineteenth and early twentieth century subsequently overlooked it. Justin Prášek, for example, still included Armenia among the countries that rebelled while Darius was in Babylon in his 1910 history of the Persian Empire.³³⁶ In addition, of the historians who did notice Norris' alternative reading in §21 some were disinclined to accept it. They emphasized that the Elamite text was the only version that included Egypt. Because Egypt was absent from the remainder of the narrative, scholars entertained the possibility that "Egypt" was a scribal mistake: it may have been an error of the Elamite translator – an error for e.g. "Armenia."³³⁷

The idea that "Egypt" is mentioned only in the Elamite version of the Bisitun inscription, and that this renders the historicity of an Egyptian revolt in 522/21 BC suspect, still features in modern scholarship.³³⁸ What has been overlooked in this regard, however, is the updated edition of the Babylonian version of the inscription. In 1957, George Cameron visited mount Bisitun, and obtained new squeezes of the Babylonian text. In 1978, Elizabeth Voigtlander published her readings of the squeezes, which – at some points – included corrections or additions to the translations made by Rawlinson. Among the additions were Egypt, Parthia, and Margiana in §21 (KUR 'mi'-šir KUR pa-ar-tu-ú KUR mar-gu-ú).³³⁹ Voigtlander – like Norris before her – did not comment on the significance

³³⁵ See Norris, *Memoir on the Scythic Version*, 55, 107, 139. The reading of Egypt in the line has since been corroborated by King and Thompson, *Sculptures and Inscription of Darius the Great*, 112, and Cameron, "Elamite Version," 65, all of whom collated the text at Bisitun. Note that Norris transliterated "Vu t ša ri ya" (*ibid.*, 55); the transliteration given here is that of Bae, "Comparative Studies," 117.

³³⁶ See Prášek, *Die Blütezeit und der Verfall*, 32. See also *ibid.*, 41-43, Rawlinson, *Five Great Monarchies*, 409-17, and William, *Outline of Persian History*, 39-53. Although trouble in Egypt is discussed by all three authors, their discussion is based on Greco-Roman sources (see 2.2.1 and 3.4.1); the fact that Egypt features in §21 of the Bisitun inscription is not mentioned.

³³⁷ See Wiedemann, *Geschichte Aegyptens*, 80, and Meyer, *Entstehung des Judenthums*, 82-83 n. 3.

³³⁸ See e.g. Kienitz, *Die politische Geschichte Ägyptens*, 60 n. 4, Cruz-Urbe, "Invasion of Egypt," 52, and Rottpeter, "Initiatoren und Träger," 13. That Egypt is only mentioned in the Elamite version is likewise suggested by Schmitt, *The Bisitun Inscriptions*, 56, (repeated by Schmitt, *Die altpersischen Inschriften*, 51), though Schmitt does not endorse the view that this makes the existence of the rebellion less likely.

³³⁹ Voigtlander, *Bisitun Inscription*, xi-xii, 22-23, 56. Before Voigtlander's translation, an updated edition of the Babylonian version – likewise based on new copies made at the site – was published by Leonard King and Reginald

of Egypt in the line. It nevertheless indicates that Egypt was not an anomaly of the Elamite text: the country is mentioned by at least two of the inscription's different versions.³⁴⁰ It is therefore safe to conclude that the inscription's composers intended Egypt to be included among the list of countries that rebelled.

3.2.2.2 Egypt: the result of hyperbole

The second hypothesis accepts that the inclusion of Egypt in §21 was deliberate, but doubts whether the country actually rebelled. The argument states that Egypt was one of many provinces that were said to have revolted while Darius was in Babylon, and that Egypt featured in this list simply because the inscription was meant to emphasize the universalism of Darius' rule, and his ability to defeat any and all unrest in the Empire. In the words of Ronan Head: "All foreign (and potentially chaotic) lands are included in the inscription in order to stamp Darius's imperial ideology across the *whole* Empire – from Egypt to the Indus – whether or not they participated significantly in any kind of rebellion (Egypt) or were indeed defeated (Armenia). Such is Bisitun's central concern, and attempts to see the portrayal of accurate history in the inscription miss the point" (original italics).³⁴¹ Eugene Cruz-Uribe has entertained a similar hypothesis: "We should note that mention of this revolt [in Egypt] is found only in the Elamite version of the inscription, which suggests that the supposed revolt may have been only a propagandistic device used by Darius to show what insurmountable odds he had to overcome in order to reunify the Persian empire."³⁴²

In general, the idea that certain events in the Bisitun inscription were modified so as to highlight Darius' military power and his royal legitimacy is plausible. Part one of the inscription is illustrative

Thompson. Like Rawlinson, however, they were unable to discern the names of Egypt, Parthia and Margiana in §21; see King and Thompson, *Sculptures and Inscription of Darius the Great*, 173.

³⁴⁰ In light of Egypt's inclusion in the Elamite and Babylonian versions, one may assume that the Old Persian version at mount Bisitun, as well as the Babylonian version found in Babylon and the Aramaic version from Elephantine (on which see 3.3 below), included Egypt in §21. Unfortunately, the lacuna in the Old Persian version continues to render the text illegible (see e.g. King and Thompson, *Sculptures and Inscription of Darius the Great*, 21-22, and Schmitt, *Die altpersischen Inschriften*, 51); and the fragmentary texts from Babylon and Elephantine preserve only small sections of the narrative, of which §21 does not happen to be a part (see Voigtlander, *Bisitun Inscription*, 63-66, and Greenfield and Porten, *Bisitun Inscription*, 22-57).

³⁴¹ See Head, "Assyria at Bisitun," 123; see also *ibid.*, 117.

³⁴² See Cruz-Uribe, "Invasion of Egypt," 52. The statement that Egypt only occurs in the Elamite version is erroneous; see above.

in this regard: scholars have generally rejected Darius' claim that Cambyses murdered his brother, that a man called Gaumata usurped the throne in the guise of Bardiya, and that Darius – after he had killed Gaumata – was Cambyses' legitimate successor. In the words of Amélie Kuhrt, this elaborate story of court conspiracy “rings false.”³⁴³ As an alternative, scholars have proposed that Darius was the real usurper in 522 BC, and that he was the one who killed Cambyses' brother.³⁴⁴ Another example of the probable influence of royal rhetoric in the Bisitun inscription is that the text only mentions the victories which Darius and his generals claim to have won. Imperial defeats or setbacks are never mentioned. That multiple battles were waged against individual rebel kings indicates, however, that not all of them could have been the overwhelming triumphs which the inscription suggests they were.³⁴⁵ An element that is closely related to this is the numbers of war dead and prisoners, which the Babylonian version of the Bisitun inscription provides: the numbers only relate to the side of the rebels, while casualties on Darius' side are omitted. In addition, some of the numbers appear to be highly inflated.³⁴⁶ It is therefore clear that Darius' version of events should be taken with a large grain of salt. Nevertheless, it is less clear whether the influence of royal rhetoric in the Bisitun inscription should prompt us to dismiss the historicity of the Egyptian rebellion mentioned in §21.

One reason why the historicity of the Egyptian rebellion cannot be easily dismissed is that the Bisitun inscription's tendency towards embellishment – and in particular “universalism” – does not clearly apply to the list of countries mentioned in §21. The countries that are listed number nine in total: we hear of Persia, Elam, Assyria, Egypt, Parthia, Margiana, Sattagydia, and Scythia. The remainder of the Bisitun inscription adds Armenia, Sagartia, Hyrcania, Arachosia, and Babylonia to the list.³⁴⁷ It is informative to compare these countries with §6, where Darius mentions the regions which he ruled once he became king: “These are the peoples/countries who obey me; by the favour of Auramazda, I was their king: Persia, Elam, Babylonia, Assyria, Arabia, Egypt, those of the sea, Lydia, Ionia, Media, Armenia, Cappadocia, Parthia, Drangiana, Areia, Chorasmia, Bactria, Sogdiana, Gandara, Scythia (Saca), Sattagydia, Arachosia, Maka; in all twenty-three peoples/countries.”³⁴⁸ The comparison shows that the rebellious countries which the Bisitun inscription describes do not reflect the twenty-

³⁴³ See Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 137.

³⁴⁴ See e.g. Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 100-103, and Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 135-38.

³⁴⁵ A prime example is the rebellion in Armenia: Darius' armies fought five different battles against the rebels – each of which is described as a complete victory (see §26-30).

³⁴⁶ See Hyland, “Casualty Figures,” 173-99, and table 1 above.

³⁴⁷ See 3.2.1.2 above.

³⁴⁸ See Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 141.

three lands which Darius claims to have ruled – neither literally nor symbolically. Instead, the inscription suggests that the rebellions affected a specific selection of provinces, which were largely located in the central and eastern regions of the Empire. In the case of §21, it is noteworthy that only Assyria and Egypt were located to the west of the Zagros mountains. Other satrapies in the west, such as Arabia, Lydia, Ionia and Cappadocia, are absent from the list. To attribute the mention of an Egyptian rebellion to rhetorical “universalism” is therefore insufficiently convincing. As an alternative, one might even suggest that the inclusion of Egypt in §21 indicates that whatever happened in that country was significant enough to be highlighted, despite the inscription’s tendency to focus on the central and eastern half of the Empire at the expense of the west.³⁴⁹

Another reason why the historicity of the Egyptian rebellion cannot be easily dismissed is that the narrative of the Bisitun inscription – for all its rhetorical embellishments – was rooted in historical events: a political crisis did affect the Persian Empire in 522-21 BC, whereby several kings succeeded each other in quick succession. That this part of the Bisitun inscription was not merely exaggerated is clear from contemporary sources from Babylonia.³⁵⁰ Several Babylonian archives cover the period that the Bisitun inscription describes, and allow us to trace the events of Darius’ early reign from a regional perspective. When one compares the date formulae of the Babylonian archival texts to the Bisitun inscription, it is clear that they are roughly compatible. First, both the inscription and ca. forty-two archival texts indicate that a king with the throne name Bardiya ruled (parts of) the Persian Empire from the spring of 522 BC to the end of September (§11-13).³⁵¹ Second, both the inscription and ca. twenty-two archival texts indicate that a ruler called Nebuchadnezzar (III) was recognized in Babylonia from the (late) summer of 522 BC until mid-December (§16-20).³⁵² And third, both the

³⁴⁹ As noted by Cook, *Persian Empire*, 60. See also 3.2.2.3 below, for the inscription’s possible omission of events in western Anatolia.

³⁵⁰ For an introduction to the cuneiform sources of Babylonia, see 2.5.2. Aside from Babylonian sources and a handful of Egyptian sources (on which see below), the only other contemporary text that might document the Bisitun crisis is a royal stele that has been attributed to Athamaita, the Elamite rebel king who is mentioned in part three of the Bisitun inscription; see Waters, *Survey of Neo-Elamite History*, 85.

³⁵¹ See Graziani, *Testi editi ed inediti*, xv-xvi, Jursa, “Neues aus der Zeit des Bardia,” 14, Frahm and Jursa, *Neo-Babylonian Letters*, 53, and Pearce and Wunsch, *Documents of Judean Exiles*, xxxix. I follow Bloch, “Contribution of Babylonian Tablets,” 7-10, in attributing all texts dated to Bardiya to the rebellion of Gaumata/Bardiya rather than the rebellion of Vahyazdata. According to the Bisitun inscription, the latter also claimed the throne name Bardiya (§40).

³⁵² See Lorenz, *Nebukadnezar III/IV*, 87. The only significant discrepancy between the Bisitun inscription and Babylonian cuneiform tablets is that the former states that the rebellion of Nebuchadnezzar III followed Darius’ execution of Gaumata/Bardiya on 29 September 522 BC (§13), while the latter indicate that inhabitants of Cutha recognized Nebuchadnezzar as king as early as 30 August 522 BC (see Lorenz, *Nebukadnezar III/IV*, 6, 121-22, and Bloch,

inscription and ca. sixty-five archival texts show that a second ruler called Nebuchadnezzar (IV) rebelled in the spring of 521 BC and was recognized until the end of the same year.³⁵³ The compatibility lends some credence to what the Bisitun inscription claims to have happened in other regions. This observation especially applies to Egypt: the latter was a relatively distant province, which had been conquered by Cambyses only four years before the Bisitun crisis began. It is not difficult to believe that some Egyptians tried to secede from the Persian Empire once Cambyses had passed away, and while several men in and near the Persian heartland either claimed the imperial throne for themselves or tried to lead their own regions to independence.

3.2.2.3 Egypt: a genuine rebellion

The third and final hypothesis accepts what the Bisitun inscription claims: Egypt rebelled at the turn of 522/21 BC, while Darius was in Babylon. As mentioned above, this is the hypothesis that is adopted in the present chapter. The political chaos of the Bisitun crisis – partly corroborated by Babylonian archival texts – renders the existence of such a rebellion plausible. The question that remains is why the composers of the Bisitun inscription would have acknowledged a rebellion in the Nile Valley, yet did not return to it in the remainder of the narrative. To understand this omission, it is important to appreciate that the Bisitun inscription – as detailed and elaborate as it is – did not provide its audience with a comprehensive record of events. This is indicated by the fact that Egypt is not the only country that plays a curious role in the narrative. Consider, for example, Armenia: though a rebellion in Armenia is not mentioned in §21 (see 3.2.1.2 above), we hear of troubles in that country in §26, where Darius says that he sent an army to Armenia to fight “the rebels.”³⁵⁴ Darius’ army was led by an Armenian called Dadarshi, who fought three battles in the region (21 May, 31 May, and 21 June 521

“Contribution of Babylonian Tablets,” 3-4 n. 13). It seems that Nebuchadnezzar’s reign only gained widespread recognition in October, however.

³⁵³ See Lorenz, *Nebukadnezar III/IV*, 88, Frahm and Jursa, *Neo-Babylonian Letters*, 53-54, Pearce and Wunsch, *Documents of Judean Exiles*, xxxix, and Bloch, “Contribution of Babylonian Tablets,” 2-6. The Bisitun inscription does not provide an exact date for the start of the rebellion; it merely claims that it began while Darius was “in Persia and Media” (§49; see Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 147), and that Nebuchadnezzar IV was defeated on 27 November (§50). It is clear, however, that Darius was in Media as early as 7 May 521 BC (§31). He was probably in Persia on 16 July 521 BC for the impalement of Vahyazdata (§42-43). This is broadly compatible with the Babylonian tablets, which show that Nebuchadnezzar IV was recognized in parts of Babylonia as early as March/April 521 BC, but that he was only widely recognized from August/September 521 BC onwards; see Lorenz, *Nebukadnezar III/IV*, 22-29, and Bloch, “Contribution of Babylonian Tablets,” 4-6.

³⁵⁴ See Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 145.

BC; see §26-28). Another general of Darius, a Persian called Vaumisa, fought against the same rebels: once in Armenia (11 June 521 BC; see §30), and once in Assyria (at an earlier date: 31 December 522 BC; see §29). After that, we do not hear about Armenia again. No specific rebel king is identified, nor are “the rebels” said to have been definitively defeated. Scholars are divided on how to interpret this silence.³⁵⁵ A similar observation applies to the rebellion of the Scythians. Like Egypt, Scythia is mentioned as one of the nine countries that rebelled while Darius was in Babylon (§21), but does not recur in the remainder of part two. It is only in part three, in the Old Persian column that was added to the Bisitun mountain at a later date, that a campaign against the Scythians is specifically described (§74-75). The campaign can be dated to ca. 519/18 BC.³⁵⁶ The inscription does not explain how this campaign related to the rebellion of 522/21 BC, however. The later campaign appears to be framed as a war which Darius chose to fight, rather than a necessity which was prompted by an earlier revolt.³⁵⁷ This stands in contrast with the Elamite episode of part three, which is explicitly identified as (yet another) rebellion (compare §74-75 with §71-72). In addition, it is noteworthy that only the Scythian campaign resulted in an adaptation of the Bisitun relief, namely the addition of the Scythian chief Skunkha (see 3.2.1.3 above). The Elamite rebel Athamaita whom Darius claims to have defeated in ca. 520/19 BC, on the other hand, was included in the additional Old Persian column (§71-72), but excluded from the eye-catching artwork on the rock.

Aside from curiosities in Darius’ official version of events, the idea that particular episodes were omitted from the Bisitun inscription finds support in one external source as well. This source is the *Histories* by Herodotus. Herodotus, who wrote in the late fifth century BC, appears to have heard about troubles in western Turkey that were connected to 522 BC. The troubles were related to Oroetes, the satrap of Sardis, who controlled Lydia, Ionia, and Phrygia. According to *Histories* 3.126-128,

³⁵⁵ See e.g. Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 117-18, Lecoq, *Les inscriptions de la Perse*, 197, Potts, “Darius and the Armenians,” 134, and Khatchadourian, *Imperial Matter*, 121, 217 n. 6.

³⁵⁶ Strictly speaking, the Bisitun inscription does not attribute the Elamite and Scythian campaigns to Darius’ second (520/19 BC) and third regnal years (519/18 BC) respectively. It merely states that Darius did “[t]his” in “the second and third year, after I became king,” after which a description of the Elamite and Scythian campaigns follows; see the translations of §71 in Bae, “Comparative Studies,” 221, and Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 149. It is generally assumed, however, that the Elamite and Scythian campaigns are described in chronological order, and that each can be attributed to one of the two years mentioned; see e.g. Parker, “Darius and His Egyptian Campaign,” 374-75, Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 127, Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 141, and Waters, *Ancient Persia*, 72. For the possibility that the years mentioned might not be Persian regnal years, see n. 322 above.

³⁵⁷ See e.g. Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 154 n. 42. Compare Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 127, who does connect the later campaign to the rebellion mentioned in §21.

Oroetes did not support Darius when he tried to overpower “Smerdis” (Herodotus’ name for Gaumata/Bardiya). Instead, the satrap stayed in Turkey, where he used the chaos of the times to kill two distinguished Persians. A messenger sent by Darius was killed as well. Once Darius had acceded to the throne, the king was reluctant to wage an open war against Oroetes, “seeing that everything was still in confusion and he [=Darius] was still new to the royal power” (*Histories* 3.127).³⁵⁸ Instead, Darius tested the loyalty of the Persian guard stationed in Sardis. Once this proved satisfactory, Darius ordered the guards to kill Oroetes, which they dutifully did. Though one may question the particulars of Herodotus’ story, it does indicate that the Bisitun crisis may have had ramifications in regions that are entirely omitted from Darius’ version of events. Lydia and Ionia – just like Egypt, Scythia, and Armenia – were part of the countries which Darius claims to have ruled (§6); yet, nothing in the Bisitun inscription illuminates how the satraps or local inhabitants of these regions would have responded to the reign of Gaumata/Bardiya, or to Darius’ eventual bid for power.³⁵⁹

When one combines the different elements – the curious role of Armenia and Scythia in the inscription, the exclusion of an Elamite rebel from the relief, and the apparent omission of troubles in Lydia and Ionia – one may safely conclude that the Bisitun inscription did not provide a comprehensive account of everything that had occurred in 522 – 518 BC. It seems rather that a specific selection of regions and rebel kings were chosen for elaboration, while others received little or no attention. The reasons behind this selection are difficult to identify. In general, one may interpret the (partial) omissions in two different ways. On the one hand, one could follow a statement made by Darius in the concluding paragraphs of part two of the inscription: “By the favour of Auramazda, much else has also been done by me, that has not been written in this inscription; it has not been written down for this reason: for fear that, whoever should read this inscription hereafter, it should seem too much to him, (and so) it should not convince him, (but) he think it false” (§58).³⁶⁰ In other words, we could assume that all rebellions of Darius’ first few regnal years were quelled within the period which the Bisitun inscription describes, independent of their inclusion or elaboration in the narrative. In the case of Egypt, this means that the country may have been included in §21 because it happened to be among the countries that rebelled while Darius was in Babylon, and that it may have been defeated in or shortly after 521 BC; yet, in light of the many other rebellions that required elaboration – the kings, the battles, the executions – , it was decided that Egypt’s defeat would not be

³⁵⁸ Godley, *Herodotus*, 2:156-57.

³⁵⁹ For discussions of the Oroetes episode, see e.g. Cook, *Persian Empire*, 59-60, and Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 122.

³⁶⁰ See Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 148.

narrated.³⁶¹ On the other hand, one could question Darius' statement in §58. Perhaps the statement was a rhetorical strategy, meant to "explain away" some of the inscription's curious omissions – omissions which could reflect *de facto* political issues. In the case of Egypt: one could argue that the country rebelled in 522/21 BC, just like e.g. Scythia did. Yet, while the Scythians were defeated by Darius in ca. 519/18 BC, a defeat which was celebrated by an additional inscription and an adaptation to the relief on the rocks at mount Bisitun, Egypt remained in revolt. Egypt's defeat, in other words, was not described because it simply had not been accomplished yet when the Bisitun inscription was finished.³⁶² This would render Egypt's rebellion the longest-lasting of the Bisitun crisis. It is difficult, on the basis of the Bisitun inscription alone, to choose between one or the other option.

3.3 The Egyptian sources

When the Bisitun inscription was finished in ca. 520/19 or 519/18 BC, Darius claims to have propagated the text throughout the empire. He had it put "on clay tablet[s] and on parchment" and sent it "everywhere among the peoples" (§70).³⁶³ That this is indeed what happened is clear from three (groups of) sources. First, several fragments of stone were found near the Processional Way in Babylon, which record pieces of a second Babylonian version of the inscription. The fragments probably belonged to a monumental stele. Some of the fragments suggest that the stele included an adapted version of the Bisitun relief as well, which focused on Darius, Gaumata, and the two Babylonian rebel kings.³⁶⁴ Second, an Aramaic papyrus was found at the island of Elephantine, southern Egypt, which closely resembles the Babylonian version of the inscription. The text was written in the late fifth century BC, which suggests that Darius' story continued to circulate well after his death.³⁶⁵ Third and finally, various Greco-Roman works record stories about Darius' accession

³⁶¹ This is (implicitly) assumed by Yoyotte, "Pétoubastis III," 223, and Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 115, who suggest that the Egyptian rebellion was defeated in 521 BC or 520 BC at the latest. For the possibility that Darius did celebrate his (re)conquest of Egypt in the Egypto-Persian canal stelae – which do not bear an exact date – , see 2.3.3.1.

³⁶² This is explicitly noted by Parker, "Darius and His Egyptian Campaign," 374, and implicitly accepted by Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire*, 110-13, 135, 141-42, Ruzicka, *Trouble in the West*, 23, and Kaper, "Petubastis IV," 142-43.

³⁶³ Bae, "Comparative Studies," 220.

³⁶⁴ See Seidl, "Ein Relief Dareios' I.," 125-30, Voigtlander, *Bisitun Inscription*, 63-66, and Seidl, "Ein Monument Darius' I.," 101-14, and Seidl, "Eine Triumphstele Darius' I.," 297-306.

³⁶⁵ See Greenfield and Porten, *Bisitun Inscription*. Note that a small papyrus fragment from Saqqara has been attributed to a second Aramaic version; see Segal, *Aramaic Texts*, 85 no. 62, and Wesselius, Review of *The Bisitun Inscription*, 443.

that sound remarkably similar to part one of the Bisitun inscription. Though the stories are not identical to Darius' version, they share the claim that Cambyses' brother was killed, that his identity was usurped by a man of non-royal descent – who subsequently ruled the empire – , and that this usurper was exposed by Darius and six other men.³⁶⁶ The result is that most of our sources on ca. 522 – 518 BC are essentially derivatives of Darius' version of events. This makes it difficult to reconstruct some of the rebellions in more detail – especially when a rebellion is barely described by the inscription. Fortunately, there are some regions that have yielded texts which are contemporary with the period of the Bisitun crisis. The cuneiform tablets from Babylonia have already been mentioned above. Several Egyptian sources likewise provide us with a local perspective on the events. The only difference between the Egyptian and Babylonian sources is that the former have been preserved in far less numbers.³⁶⁷ This will be evident from the discussion below. First, an account is given of Egyptian texts from ca. 522 to 518 BC that are dated to Persian kings. The texts give some indication of when the reigns of Cambyses and Darius were recognized in Egypt. Second, an account is given of Egyptian sources dated to an Egyptian king. The sources have been dated to the late sixth century BC. If such a date is accepted, then the king mentioned in the sources – whose name was Petubastis Seheribre – may be connected to the Bisitun crisis. Because the date of his reign remains a topic of debate, this second section takes a detailed look at the relevant evidence. Particular attention will be paid to two groups of sources that have been recently (re)published: a fragmentary set of papyri that can be dated to the king's reign, and several temple blocks that were excavated at Amheida, a site in the Dakhla Oasis.

3.3.1 Texts dated to Persian kings

The Bisitun inscription provides us with little information on Cambyses' sojourn in Egypt. As discussed above, the inscription tells us that Cambyses went to Egypt after he had murdered Bardiya; that Gaumata/Bardiya rebelled on 11 March 522 BC and seized the Persian throne on 1 July 522 BC; and that Cambyses died at some point after that (§10-11). Whether Cambyses was still in Egypt when

³⁶⁶ See e.g. Herodotus, *Histories* 3.30, 3.61-88, and Ctesias, *Persica* FGrH 688 F13.11-18. For a comparison of these stories to the Bisitun inscription, see e.g. Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 98-101, and Waters, *Ancient Persia*, 65-68. The most significant difference between the Bisitun inscription and Greco-Roman versions is that the story of part two – i.e. the multitude of rebellions which were waged against Darius' reign – is largely omitted by the latter.

³⁶⁷ For an introduction to the Babylonian textual corpus, which is generally more numerous than the Persian Period Egyptian corpus, see 2.5.2.

he passed away is not mentioned, nor are the exact date or the circumstances of his death described.³⁶⁸ It may be useful to compare this narrative with the more detailed *Histories* of Herodotus. Book Three of the *Histories* claims that the rebellion of “Smerdis” (i.e. Gaumata/Bardiya) began while Cambyses was still in Egypt. It seems that the king departed for Persia shortly thereafter: one of the messengers of Smerdis, who had the task of proclaiming his kingship throughout the Empire, was on his way to Egypt when he found Cambyses in Syrian Ecbatana. When Cambyses heard that Smerdis had claimed the throne, he leapt on his horse, accidentally wounded himself with his sword, and died of gangrene shortly thereafter (*Histories* 3.61-66).³⁶⁹ If there is some truth to Herodotus’ tale, then Cambyses would still have been in Egypt in ca. March 522 BC (the date of Gaumata/Bardiya’s rebellion according to §10). He may have left Egypt shortly thereafter, and died on the way back to Persia in the late spring or early summer of the same year.³⁷⁰ Contemporary Egyptian texts that are dated to Persian kings add some information to this picture. They can be divided into texts dated to Cambyses’ last regnal year (522 BC), a text that is possibly dated to year three of Darius I (520/19 BC), and texts dated to year four of Darius I (519/18 BC). Thus far, Egyptian texts that are dated to Darius’ accession year and first two regnal years have not been identified.³⁷¹

³⁶⁸ There has been much discussion about the phrase that describes Cambyses’ death in the Bisitun inscription, i.e. “he died his own death” (Old Persian *uvamaršiyuš amariyatā*, Elamite *halpi duhema halpik*, Babylonian *mītūtu ramanišu mīti*). It used to be common to interpret the phrase as a reference to suicide. It has been convincingly argued, however, that the phrase was a common way of referring to someone’s demise, whether from natural causes or otherwise; see Stolper, ““His Own Death,”” 1-13.

³⁶⁹ The location of Ecbatana in Syria is uncertain; at present, such a city is not known to have existed (see Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 162 n. 3). Other Greco-Roman authors mention different places; see e.g. Ctesias, *Persica* FGrH 688 F13.14, who locates Cambyses’ death in Babylon.

³⁷⁰ The so-called “Demotic Chronicle,” a third century BC demotic papyrus, agrees with such a general course of events: Cambyses died “auf dem Weg, bevor er seine Heimat erreichte” (Quack, “Zum Datum der persischen Eroberung,” 234-35).

³⁷¹ All references to regnal years in this and the following paragraphs follow the Egyptian system of dating, whereby regnal years began at the start of winter (ca. December/January); see Depuydt, “Regnal Years,” 153. Cf. the Persian/Babylonian system of dating in section 3.2.

3.3.1.1 Cambyses' last regnal year (522 BC)

At present, a small archive from Asyut in Upper Egypt is the only Egyptian archive that documents the transition from Saite to Persian rule.³⁷² The archive was excavated from a Middle Kingdom tomb in Asyut's cemetery in the early twentieth century. Its ca. seven texts largely deal with the transport and distribution of foodstuffs in the area of Asyut, as well as with a family whose members were connected to the local temple of Wepwawet.³⁷³ While two of the ca. seven texts date to the (late) reign of Amasis (P. Cairo 50058, 50061a), four date to the reign of Cambyses (P. Cairo 50059, 50060, 50062; P. BM 10792). Of the latter, two texts – P. Cairo 50059 and P. BM 10792 – can be dated to year eight of the Persian king.³⁷⁴ Both texts are deeds that deal with the transfer of priestly offices within the aforementioned family. Regrettably, the date formulae of both papyri are imperfectly preserved. In P. BM 10792, only a reference to “year 8 [...] Cambyses” is legible.³⁷⁵ The date of P. Cairo 50059 is slightly better preserved: it seems to date to Choiak of year eight, i.e. March/April 522 BC.³⁷⁶ If the reading is correct, the text indicates that some inhabitants of Egypt still recognized Cambyses' reign after Gaumata/Bardiya had rebelled on 11 March. The same is true of Babylonia, where the last text from Cambyses' reign dates to 18 April 522 BC.³⁷⁷ Unfortunately, whereas the

³⁷² The other archive which will have covered the period of transition is Tsenhor's from Thebes (published by Pestman, *Les papyrus démotiques de Tsenhor*), but none of the documents which have been preserved – spanning from Amasis' reign to the end of Darius' – date to Cambyses.

³⁷³ The texts are published by Spiegelberg, *Demotische Inschriften und Papyri*, 39-53, and Shore, “Swapping Property at Asyut,” 200-206. The exact number of documents is uncertain due to the presence of several papyrus fragments (see P. Cairo 50061b and 50062). The texts are currently studied by Jannik Korte at Heidelberg University. For a discussion of the tomb in which the papyri were found (which included e.g. hundreds of stelae and canine mummies), see Moss, “Unpublished Rock-Tomb at Asyut,” 33, and Wells, “Display and Devotion,” 81-88. A catalogue of the objects is provided by DuQuesne, *Salakhana Trove*. Why the papyri, as well as the large number of religious objects, were deposited in the tomb is uncertain; compare e.g. DuQuesne, *Salakhana Trove*, 82-84, with Wells, “Display and Devotion,” 81-88.

³⁷⁴ See Spiegelberg, *Demotische Inschriften und Papyri*, 42-46, and Shore, “Swapping Property at Asyut,” 200-206.

³⁷⁵ See Shore, “Swapping Property at Asyut,” 204-5, l. 8.

³⁷⁶ See Spiegelberg, *Demotische Inschriften und Papyri*, 43-44, l. 10. According to Jannik Korte, the relevant passage was quite thoroughly erased, but Spiegelberg's reading of Choiak (fourth month of Akhet) “remains the best guess” (personal communication, 31 January 2020).

³⁷⁷ See Lorenz, *Nebukadnezar III/IV*, 23 (Camb 409). In both cases, but especially in the case of Egypt, one needs to consider that the continued recognition of Cambyses may have been due to the time which it took for news of Gaumata/Bardiya's rebellion to reach the imperial provinces. Theoretically, the Achaemenid messenger service (Elamite *pirradaziš*) could cover the road between Persepolis and Memphis in twelve days – but only in ideal circumstances. During the Roman Empire, it took fifty-seven days on average for news of an emperor's accession to reach Egypt; see

last Babylonian text dated to Cambyses' reign is followed by a series of tablets dated to Bardiya, P. Cairo 50059 is the last text dated to 522 BC in Egypt. Egyptian texts that may have been dated to Bardiya have not been preserved; nor do we have texts that date to Darius' accession year. It is therefore unclear which kings were recognized in Egypt during the first few months that the Bisitun inscription describes, and before Egypt rebelled at the turn of 522/21 BC.

3.3.1.2 Darius I's third year (520/19 BC)

As mentioned above, Egyptian texts that date to Darius I's first two regnal years are not extant. The earliest Egyptian text that might date to Darius' reign is a papyrus called P. Golénischeff. The provenance of the text is unknown, but its contents suggest that it may stem from the temple of Horus at Edfu. Eugène Revillout provided a partial translation and hand-copy of the text in 1883.³⁷⁸ In 1909, Francis Griffith provided a description of the different fragments. In Griffith's words: the papyrus "may be a temple-document or record the result of government inquiry." The fragments of the papyrus indicate the existence "of eight columns, and more may have existed originally." Column one and two of the text are the best preserved: the former appears to be a "[l]ist of cups and other objects, and amount of gold and silver in (or taken from?) the temple of Hor at Edfu(?)" ; the latter appears to concern "[g]old and silver left in the temple of Edfu(?) in the third year of Darius; the priests assembled and divided(?) the property among themselves."³⁷⁹ For the present discussion, the reference to the third year of Darius in column two of the text is significant. It has prompted multiple scholars to date P. Golénischeff to year three (520/19 BC).³⁸⁰ If the text was written in that year, it would indicate that some Egyptians in southern Egypt recognized Darius' reign in 520/19 BC. By extension, the date formula could indicate that Darius had defeated the Egyptian rebellion of 522/21 BC in or before 520/19 BC.³⁸¹ Because of the ramifications of the date for the reconstruction of the

Colburn, "Connectivity and Communication," 46, 48. For the possible implications of this time lag in relation to the Persian kings recognized in Egypt in 522 BC, see Wijnsma, "Worst Revolt of the Bisitun Crisis," 162-63.

³⁷⁸ See Revillout, "Seconde lettre," 61-63 n. 3, pl. 1-2.

³⁷⁹ Griffith, *Catalogue of Demotic Papyri*, 25-26.

³⁸⁰ See e.g. Seidl, *Ägyptische Rechtsgeschichte*, 76, Thissen, "Chronologie der frühdemotischen Papyri," 114, Devauchelle, "Un problème de chronologie," 15, Cruz-Uribe, "Invasion of Egypt," 54-55, and Quack, "Zum Datum der persischen Eroberung," 241 n. 62. Note that Devauchelle suggests that the papyrus could be dated to Darius II; Cruz-Uribe rejects this on the basis of the text's paleography.

³⁸¹ As suggested by Cruz-Uribe, "Invasion of Egypt," 57, and Quack, "Zum Datum der persischen Eroberung," 241. At times, the suggestion that Darius had reconquered Egypt by his third year is supported with a reference to P. BN 215, a

Egyptian rebellion, it should be emphasized, however, that it can be interpreted in a different manner as well. The partial translation of Revillout is important in this regard.

According to Revillout, column one and two of P. Golénischeff are headed by “titles,” which roughly summarize the contents of the columns. The title of column one refers to gold and silver received by the temple in Mecheir of an illegible year. The title of column two refers to things established (“Ceux qu'on a établis”) in Paophi of year forty-three of Darius (“l’an 43 du roi Darius, toujours vivant, paophi”). Year forty-three – a regnal year which Darius never enjoyed – is presumably an error by Revillout for year three. This assumption is reinforced by the fact that Revillout translates “An 3, Choiak” at a later point in the same column.³⁸² If Paophi and Choiak both refer to year three of Darius, the months mentioned in column two would be January/February and March/April of 519 BC. The reference to Mecheir occurs in column one rather than two, so one may presume that it refers to May/June of a previous year. The significance of these dates is as follows: the references to different months – and perhaps even different years – within P. Golénischeff problematizes the act of dating the papyrus to a year which occurs in its second column. This is especially true as the original papyrus may have contained six additional columns (see above). As an alternative, one may consider that the text was a survey of the temple’s finances, which was written during one of Darius’ later regnal years. In this scenario, “year three” would not be the date on which the text was written; it would have been a retroactive date, part of a survey which encompassed a longer span of time.³⁸³ Though the fact that

third century BC demotic text which records a mixture of oracles, stories, and temple regulations that refer back to kings of the sixth to fourth centuries BC; see Spiegelberg, *Die sogenannte Demotische Chronik*, Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 124-27 no. 4.14, 393-94 no. 9.60, 397-98 no. 9.65, and Quack, “So-Called Demotic Chronicle,” 27-34. One passage claims that Darius had ordered his satrap to collect the laws of Egypt in a specific year, which implies that the king had regained authority over the country. According to some scholars, the order was given in year three of Darius’ reign (see Spiegelberg, *Die sogenannte Demotische Chronik*, 30-31 l. 9, followed by Devauchelle, “Le sentiment anti-perse,” 74, Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 125, Agut-Labordère, “Darius législateur,” 355, and Quack, “Zum Datum der persischen Eroberung,” 233-35). Others, however, have translated the phrase as year four (see again Spiegelberg, *Die sogenannte Demotische Chronik*, 144, followed by Parker, “Darius and his Egyptian Campaign,” 373, Tuplin, “Darius’ Suez Canal,” 265, and Cruz-Urbe, “Invasion of Egypt,” 47). The numbers can look quite similar in demotic (see Johnson, “Numbers,” 22-32). As the reading is uncertain, and its reliability unclear, the reference cannot be used as a *terminus ante quem* for Darius’ invasion. In addition, if one does accept the reading of “year three,” it should be noted that the reference is not incompatible with an invasion that took place in late 519 or early 518 BC; see Wijnnsma, “Worst Revolt of the Bisitun Crisis,” 168-70.

³⁸² See Revillout, “Seconde lettre,” 62-63.

³⁸³ That “year three” in P. Golénischeff may have been a retroactive date was already suggested by Parker, “Darius and His Egyptian Campaign,” 375-76.

this survey attributes year three to Darius remains noteworthy, it is difficult to use a retroactive date as a *terminus ante quem* for Darius' reconquest of Egypt: after the Egyptian rebellion's defeat, scribes may have chosen to attribute specific months and regnal years to the reign of the ruling Persian king, even if (parts of) Egypt would originally have been ruled by an Egyptian rebel king. Indeed, that retroactive dates were not necessarily congruent with past political realities is clear from several Babylonian texts: three tablets from Sippar retroactively attribute certain months and years to the reign of Darius I, even though during those periods of time Nebuchadnezzar IV ruled (parts of) Babylonia.³⁸⁴

3.3.1.3 Darius I's fourth year (519/18 BC)

If year three in P. Golénischeff is a retroactive date, then the first contemporary texts that certainly date to Darius' reign are a series of Apis stelae. The Apis, according to Egyptian religion, was a divine animal that lived in the sanctuary of Ptah in Memphis. When the Apis passed away, the bull was buried in the Serapeum at Saqqara. Its death was commemorated with elaborate funerary rituals, as well as inscribed stone epitaphs. While some of the epitaphs were made on behalf of the ruling king, others were set up by private individuals.³⁸⁵ In relation to Darius' early reign, at least ten such epitaphs have been preserved. One royal epitaph states that an Apis bull was buried in year four of Darius, Epeiph, day 13 (8 November 518 BC). The animal had died in year four of Darius, Pakhons, on an illegible day.³⁸⁶ Two of the at least nine private stelae that refer to this bull preserve its exact date of death: year four of Darius, Pakhons, day 4 (31 August 518 BC).³⁸⁷ It should be noted that the exact date of the stelae's commission and erection in the Serapeum vaults is unclear. As far as we know, both occurred during the seventy-day period of mourning that separated the death of the Apis bull from its official burial.³⁸⁸ What we can conclude from the stelae, in other words, is that some people in Memphis recognized Darius' reign before 8 November 518 BC, when the bull was buried; it is

³⁸⁴ See Waerzeggers, "Silver Has Gone," 83-84.

³⁸⁵ For editions of (a part of) the Serapeum stelae, see Vercoutter, *Textes biographiques du Sérapéum*, and Malinine, Posener, and Vercoutter, *Catalogue des stèles du Sérapéum*. For introductions to the Apis cult in the Late Period, see Jurman, "Running with Apis," 224-67, and Marković, "Majesty of Apis," 145-53.

³⁸⁶ See Posener, *La première domination perse*, 36-41 no. 5.

³⁸⁷ See Chassinat, "Textes provenant du Sérapéum," 76-77 no. cxxx, 80-81 no. cxxxv. Note that the latter is erroneously attributed to year six of Darius I. For other private stelae that refer to the bull of year four, see *ibid.*, 77-78 no. cxxxi, and Devauchelle, "Les stèles du Sérapéum," 103.

³⁸⁸ For this period, see e.g. Marković, "Majesty of Apis," 146-49.

plausible – though not entirely certain – that the same people recognized Darius’ reign as early as 31 August, when the seventy-days period of mourning began.

Unlike P. Golénischeff, the date preserved on the Apis stelae of Darius’ fourth regnal year gives us an important *terminus ante quem* for Darius’ reconquest of Egypt: some Egyptians clearly recognized Darius as pharaoh by the second half of 518 BC. Papyri that date to Darius’ reign followed shortly thereafter: in Hathyr of year five of Darius (February/March 517 BC) a family in Thebes dated their marriage and inheritance contracts to the Persian king.³⁸⁹ One may conclude, in other words, that the Egyptian rebellion had been sufficiently quelled by the end of 518 BC.

3.3.2 Sources dated to Petubastis Seheribre

Aside from texts dated to Persian kings, there are several texts at our disposal that mention an Egyptian king.³⁹⁰ His name was “Petubastis Seheribre” – or simply “Seheribre.” The dossier that documents his reign consists of a scarab, two fragments of a wooden naos, two different seal impressions, and several temple blocks from Amheida.³⁹¹ Three fragmentary papyri were likely written during his reign as well.³⁹² About half of this group of sources – i.e. the scarab, the fragments of the naos, one of the seal impressions, and the papyri – has been known to scholars since the nineteenth and early twentieth century. It is only since the second half of the twentieth century, however, that Petubastis Seheribre has been mentioned in connection to the Bisitun crisis.

That Petubastis Seheribre is a relative latecomer to the debate on the 522/21 BC Egyptian rebellion is due in large part to the difficulty of dating kings called Petubastis. In the early days of Egyptology, an important foundation for dating kings was the *History of Egypt* by Manetho. This third century BC work provides us with a long list of Egyptian kings, starting from Egypt’s mythical origins and ending

³⁸⁹ See Pestman, *Les papyrus démotiques de Tsenhor*, 1:46-59 nos. 3-6.

³⁹⁰ Note that Petubastis Seheribre has been referred to as Petubastis (e.g. Vandier, *Musée du Louvre*, 65), Petubastis II (e.g. Gauthier, *De la XIXe à la XXIVe dynastie*, 397-98), Petubastis III (e.g. Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 216-23), and Petubastis IV (e.g. Kaper, “Petubastis IV,” 125-49, esp. 125 n. 1). The number depends on how many kings called “Petubastis” one thinks existed in the Third Intermediate Period (ca. 1069 - 664 BC). To avoid confusion, the present study uses the king’s throne name “Seheribre” in lieu of a roman numeral.

³⁹¹ Most of the sources are discussed by Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 216-23 (for bibliographic details, see below). The exception consists of the temple blocks, which were found and published at a later date; see Kaper, “Petubastis IV,” 125-49.

³⁹² See Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 217, Cruz-Urbe, “Early Demotic Texts,” 59-66, and Vittmann, “Two Administrative Letters,” 433-50.

in the mid-fourth century BC.³⁹³ According to the list, “Petubastis” was a ruler from Tanis, who had founded the Twenty-Third Dynasty in the ninth century BC (*History of Egypt* Fr. 62-63).³⁹⁴ Other kings called Petubastis are not mentioned. Some early Egyptologists consequently identified Petubastis Seheribre with the Twenty-Third Dynasty founder of Manetho’s *History*.³⁹⁵ Yet, with the increased publication of contemporary Egyptian monuments, it became gradually clear that Manetho’s king list was incomplete. A second king called Petubastis – Petubastis Wesermaatre-Setepenamun – was found on Egyptian objects in the nineteenth century.³⁹⁶ A third Petubastis – Petubastis Sehetepibre – could be added in 1966.³⁹⁷ As early as 1906, some scholars began to identify Manetho’s Petubastis with Petubastis Wesermaatre-Setepenamun.³⁹⁸ In which dynasties his namesakes should be placed remained a puzzle.

When the connection between Petubastis Seheribre and Manetho’s king list was severed, scholars struggled to propose an alternative date for Seheribre’s reign. According to some, Seheribre may have ruled in the seventh century BC, shortly before the advent of the Saite period. Such a date could connect him to an Egyptian king called Putubišti who was mentioned in the royal inscriptions of Assurbanipal.³⁹⁹ The first detailed study of the objects that mentioned Seheribre was not published until 1972, however. The study was carried out by Jean Yoyotte, who argued that all objects that could be attributed to Seheribre’s reign bore a strong resemblance to artefacts from the late Saite to early Persian period. The seal impressions included inscriptions of a type that was known from the reign of Amasis, for example, while the fragments of the naos resembled naoi from the reigns of

³⁹³ For an introduction to Manetho and his work, see Verbrugge and Wickersham, *Berosos and Manetho*, 95-120.

³⁹⁴ See Waddell, *Manetho*, 160-63.

³⁹⁵ See e.g. Pierret, *Catalogue de la salle historique*, 160-61 no. 649, Brugsch-Bey and Bouriant, *Le livre des rois*, 107 no. 649, and Budge, *Dynasties XX-XXX*, 60; and Vandier, *Musée du Louvre*, 65.

³⁹⁶ See e.g. Wiedemann, “Inscripfen aus der saitischen Periode,” 63-64.

³⁹⁷ See Habachi, “Three Monuments,” 69-74.

³⁹⁸ See e.g. Legrain, “Nouveaux renseignements,” 151-52, and Gauthier, *De la XIXe à la XXIVe dynastie*, 378-80. That Manetho’s Petubastis - or “Petubastis I” - should be identified with Petubastis Wesermaatre-Setepenamun is now generally accepted. The question that remains is whether or not two kings of the same name existed, one who bore the epithet “son of Isis,” and another who bore the epithet “son of Bastet.” See e.g. Schulman, “A Problem of Pedubasts,” 33-41, Kitchen, *Third Intermediate Period*, 97-99, 123-25, Beckerath, “Über das Verhältnis der 23. zur 22. Dynastie,” 33-35, Kahn, “A Problem of Pedubasts,” 23-42, and Jurman, “From the Libyan Dynasties to the Kushites,” 124-25.

³⁹⁹ See e.g. Legrain, “Nouveaux renseignements,” 152, Gauthier, *De la XIXe à la XXIVe dynastie*, 397-98, and a letter by Petrie to Griffith, quoted in Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 217 n. 3. At present, it is usually Petubastis Sehetepibre who is dated to the seventh century BC; see e.g. Kitchen, *Third Intermediate Period*, 97-98, Ryholt, “Assyrian Invasion of Egypt,” 486, and Kahn, “A Problem of Pedubasts,” 35.

Amasis and Darius I. In short, there was reason to believe that Seheribre had ruled (parts of) Egypt in the late sixth century BC rather than in the pre-Saite period.⁴⁰⁰ Yoyotte built on this approximate date by suggesting that Seheribre may have been connected to the Egyptian rebellion of 522/21 BC.⁴⁰¹ This was the first time that objects from a possible Egyptian rebel king entered the debate on the Bisitun crisis.

In the decades that followed Yoyotte's article, a late sixth century BC date for Petubastis Seheribre's reign was gradually adopted. In addition, scholars began to mention Seheribre's reign in connection to the Bisitun crisis – though the connection has often been made with reservations: Seheribre “may have” revolted in 522/21 BC; it is “possible” that he ruled Egypt for a while; but he was “an extremely shadowy” and obscure figure.⁴⁰² It is important to observe that such reservations have gone hand in hand with the occasional rejection of Seheribre's connection to the Bisitun crisis. Some scholars have suggested that Seheribre should be dated to the reign of Cambyses rather than Darius, for example.⁴⁰³ Others have been skeptical about the possibility of dating the objects to such a specific time period at all. In the words of Marc Rottpeter: “Die Belege für eine mögliche Existenz des Petubastis III. [Seheribre] und seine Einstufung als Gegenkönig in genau diesem Zeitabschnitt sind sehr vage und lassen in keinem Falle ein sicheres Urteil zu.”⁴⁰⁴ In light of this discussion, it is necessary to review the evidence that is available for Petubastis Seheribre's reign anew. This evidence includes the objects studied by Yoyotte in 1972. It also includes the papyri that were found with one of the seal impressions, and which were published in 2004, as well as the temple blocks from Amheida, which were published in 2015.⁴⁰⁵ To anticipate this section's conclusions: it will be argued that a late sixth

⁴⁰⁰ See Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 216-22. Note that Yoyotte had already suggested a Persian date for Seheribre in 1956, though in connection to the rebellion of the 480s BC rather than the 520s BC (see Yoyotte, “L'Égypte et l'empire achéménide,” 256). This approximate Persian date was gradually adopted in the 1960s; see e.g. Habachi, “Three Monuments,” 73-74, and Riefstahl, *Glass and Glazes*, 109.

⁴⁰¹ See Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 223.

⁴⁰² See e.g. Ray, “Egypt 525 – 404 B.C.,” 261-62, Tuplin, “Darius' Suez Canal,” 265, Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 115, Vittmann, *Ägypten und die Fremden*, 130, Ruzicka, *Trouble in the West*, 23, and Klotz, “Persian Period,” 4.

⁴⁰³ See e.g. Cruz-Uribe, “The Invasion of Egypt,” 55-56. That Petubastis Seheribre began his rule in the time of Cambyses – though his reign may have ended in the early years of Darius I – is also maintained by Kaper, “Petubastis IV,” 125-49, and Sternberg-el Hotabi, *Ägypten und Perser*, 18.

⁴⁰⁴ Rottpeter, “Initiatoren und Träger,” 14 n. 22. Similar considerations might explain why some scholars have omitted Petubastis Seheribre from their introductions to Persian Period Egypt; see e.g. the omission in Perdu, “Saites and Persians,” 151, and Sternberg-el Hotabi, “Politische und sozio-ökonomische Strukturen,” 163.

⁴⁰⁵ See Cruz-Uribe, “Early Demotic Texts,” 59-66, and Kaper, “Petubastis IV,” 125-49. The papyri were republished by Vittmann, “Two Administrative Letters,” 433-50, in 2015.

century BC date for the sources is probable. A specific connection between Petubastis Seheribre and the Bisitun crisis is difficult to prove; but this remains the most plausible hypothesis.

3.3.2.1 The naos fragments

Among the objects that refer to Petubastis Seheribre, the fragments of the naos have been known the longest. The best-known fragment consists of a door panel (Louvre N 503), which entered the Louvre Museum in 1852/1853. It was first published in 1873.⁴⁰⁶ The second fragment consists of a decorative element of what was probably a side panel (Bologna KS 289). It was acquired for the Museum of Bologna between 1818 and 1828. Its earliest publication dates to 1895.⁴⁰⁷ Both fragments portray the figure of a kneeling king, who is identified as Petubastis Seheribre by accompanying cartouches. On the Bologna fragment, the king is enclosed by the wings of a goddess. He wears a nemes-headdress – a traditional Egyptian crown – and holds a *nb*-basket in hand, topped by a *wḏꜣt*-eye and a *nfr*-sign. The hieroglyphs would have symbolized the offerings that were given to the gods in the Egyptian temples.⁴⁰⁸ On the Louvre fragment (see figure 8), the kneeling pharaoh is enclosed by the representation of an archaic Egyptian palace façade. He also holds a *nb*-basket in hand, topped by a *wḏꜣt*-eye (but no *nfr*-sign). Instead of a nemes-headdress, the king is wearing the Egyptian Double Crown, which signified a pharaoh's control of – or claim to – Upper and Lower Egypt.⁴⁰⁹ To which specific deity the naos was dedicated is unknown: the deity would have been depicted on the opposite door panel.⁴¹⁰ It is important to observe that the fragments may have come from two different shrines,

⁴⁰⁶ See Pierret, *Catalogue de la salle historique*, 160-61 no. 649, Pierret and Rougé, *Description sommaire*, 70, Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 216 no. 1, pl. 19 C, and Étienne, *Les portes du ciel*, 303 no. 255. Its provenance is not mentioned.

⁴⁰⁷ See Kminek-Szedlo, *Catalogo di antichità egizie*, 31 no. 289, Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 216 no. 1, and Ziegler, *Pharaohs*, 418 no. 81. Its provenance is not mentioned. Note that a third fragment, currently in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, closely resembles the fragment from Bologna. It has been attributed to Seheribre's reign as well, though it lacks a specific reference to the king; see Habachi, “Three Monuments,” 70 n. 11, and “Section of a Panel from a Naos,” Art Collection, Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed 23 December 2020, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/550889> (MMA 23.6.75a).

⁴⁰⁸ See Ziegler, *Pharaohs*, 418, and Goebis, “Crowns, Egyptian,” 2.

⁴⁰⁹ See Étienne, *Les portes du ciel*, 303, and Goebis, “Crowns, Egyptian,” 1.

⁴¹⁰ Compare Louvre N 504 (door panels of a wooden naos from Amasis' reign) and BM 37496 (door panels of a wooden naos from Darius' reign) in Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” pl. 19 a-b.

Figure 8. A door panel from a wooden naos inscribed with the cartouches of Petubastis Seheribre. (Photo from https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/42/Pedubast_II_door.jpg)



though they are sometimes said to have belonged together.⁴¹¹

In terms of dating the naos or naoi to which the fragments belonged, the materials with which they were made are noteworthy: both fragments were made of wood, and originally inlaid with pieces of colored glass. As far as we currently know, the practice of combining wood with glass inlays dates back to the Eighteenth Dynasty. The practice appears to have been abandoned with the end of the New Kingdom, but it was gradually revived in the mid-first millennium BC.⁴¹² The evidence for this revival mainly consists of several (fragments of) wooden naoi inlaid with glass, which are similar to the fragments from Seheribre's reign: the earliest examples consist of two (fragmentary) naoi from the reign of Amasis;⁴¹³ one example dates to the reign of Darius I,⁴¹⁴ and the fourth dates to the reign of Nectanebo II.⁴¹⁵ Incidentally, the latter is the earliest first millennium BC example of Egyptian mosaic glass – a type of glass that would become more popular in the Greco-Roman period.⁴¹⁶ Though the sources are scant, they suggest two things: first, the naos fragments from Seheribre's reign – which did not include mosaic glass – may have predated the (mid-)fourth century BC; second, they may have been made in the sixth to fifth century BC, when similar naoi were being produced in the names of Amasis and Darius I. As already observed by Yoyotte, this would suggest a late Saite to early Persian Period date for Seheribre's reign.⁴¹⁷

3.3.2.2 The scarab

After the publication of the naos fragments, it took several years before an additional source could be added to the corpus of Petubastis Seheribre's reign. The addition eventually came in the form of a

⁴¹¹ See e.g. Gauthier, *De la XIXe à la XXIVe dynastie*, 397, Yoyotte, "Pétoubastis III," 216 no. 1, and Ziegler, *Pharaohs*, 418, who speak of one naos.

⁴¹² See Bianchi, "Those Ubiquitous Glass Inlays," 29-32, Grose, *Early Ancient Glass*, 83-84, and Auth, "Mosaic Glass Mask Plaques," 51-55.

⁴¹³ See Yoyotte, "Pétoubastis III," 220, pl. 19 b, and Étienne, *Les portes du ciel*, 304-5 no. 256 (Louvre N 504); and Martin, *Tomb of Hetepka*, 50, pl. 44 no. 160, and Bianchi, "Those Ubiquitous Glass Inlays," 31 fig. 2 (ROM 969.137.2).

⁴¹⁴ See Yoyotte, "Pétoubastis III," 220, pl. 19 a, Bianchi, "Those Ubiquitous Glass Inlays," 32 fig. 3, Grose, *Early Ancient Glass*, 83 fig. 55, and Auth, "Mosaic Glass Mask Plaques," 52 fig. 1 (BM 37496).

⁴¹⁵ See Auth, "Mosaic Glass Mask Plaques," 53 fig. 2, 54-55 (Brooklyn Museum of Art 37.258E).

⁴¹⁶ See Cooney, "Notes on Egyptian Glass," 33, Bianchi, "Those Ubiquitous Glass Inlays," 32, and Auth, "Mosaic Glass Mask Plaques," 53, 56-59.

⁴¹⁷ See Yoyotte, "Pétoubastis III," 220.

scarab, which was published by Percy Newberry in 1908.⁴¹⁸ The publication was part of a larger catalogue of Egyptian seals and signet rings, which came from a variety of different collections. As far as can be discerned from Newberry's monograph, this particular object was seen in an antiquities shop in Luxor.⁴¹⁹ The original provenance of the object, as well as its current whereabouts, are unfortunately unknown. What we are left with is a small drawing which Newberry made of the base of the scarab. According to the drawing, the base was inscribed with two cartouches, written perpendicular to the length of the object (see figure 9). The cartouche on the left records the birth name of the king (Petubastis), the cartouche on the right gives his throne name (Seheribre).⁴²⁰ Additional titles or decorations are absent.

In 1972, Yoyotte dismissed the scarab published by Newberry as insignificant for dating the reign of Petubastis Seheribre.⁴²¹ So-called "royal name scarabs" were made as early as the Middle Kingdom, and continued to be created in the centuries thereafter.⁴²² The scarabs usually included the birth and/or throne name of the king, as well as pharaonic titles, epithets, and period-specific figural decoration. As the latter is absent from the scarab under discussion, it is indeed difficult to date the object precisely.⁴²³ Nevertheless, it is important to observe that the design of Seheribre's scarab, simple as it is, was relatively uncommon. Scarabs with an identical design include ten specimens that mention the birth- and throne name of Thutmose III Menkheperre, a pharaoh of the Eighteenth Dynasty. They also include twelve specimens that mention the birth- and throne name of a Shoshenq Hedjkheperre, i.e. Shoshenq I or IV.⁴²⁴ A handful of scarabs with a similar design, but which follow a different

⁴¹⁸ See Newberry, *Scarabs*, 185, pl. 37 no. 10.

⁴¹⁹ See Newberry, *Scarabs*, v, 100, 185. It is not stated that Newberry bought the scarab, *pace* Yoyotte, "Pétoubastis III," 216 no. 2.

⁴²⁰ As already mentioned by Yoyotte, "Pétoubastis III," 216 n. 10, scarabs that refer to the name Petubastis but which lack the throne name Seheribre cannot be attributed to the latter's reign with any degree of certainty (*pace* Gauthier, *De la XIXe à la XXIVe dynastie*, 398, and Matouk, *Les scarabées royaux*, 198).

⁴²¹ See Yoyotte, "Pétoubastis III," 218: "Il n'y a rien à tirer du doc. 2, simple scarabée dont l'authenticité devra être vérifiée."

⁴²² See Ward, *Pre-12th Dynasty Scarab Amulets*, 62 n. 267, Tufnell, *Scarab Seals*, 151, and Wegner, "Evolution of Ancient Egyptian Seals," 237-39.

⁴²³ Compare e.g. the examples in Hall, *Royal Scarabs*.

⁴²⁴ The numbers given in the present paragraph are partly based on Jaeger, *Essai de classification*, 244. In addition, a variety of publications has been consulted in search of additional specimens. These include Petrie, *Historical Scarabs*, Pier, "Historical Scarab Seals," 75-94, Newberry, *Timins Collection*, Newberry, *Scarabs*, Hall, *Royal Scarabs*, Petrie, *Scarabs and Cylinders*, Rowe, *Catalogue of Egyptian Scarabs*, Matouk, *Les scarabées royaux*, Hornung, *Skarabäen und andere Siegelamulette*, Tufnell, *Scarab Seals*, Giveon and Kertesz, *Egyptian Scarabs*, Gorton, *Egyptian and*

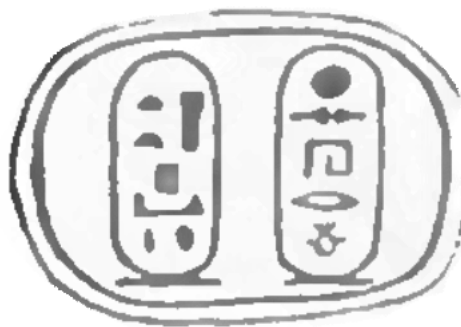


Figure 9. Drawing of the base of a scarab inscribed with the names of Petubastis Seheribre. (Adapted by the author from Newberry, *Scarabs*, 185, pl. 37 no. 10.)

pattern in terms of the recorded royal names, may be added to this: one example refers to the throne name of Seti I Menmaatre and the birthname of Tuthmose III;⁴²⁵ another refers to the throne name of Thutmose IV Menkheperure and the name of his queen Nefertari.⁴²⁶ On the basis of these sources, one may tentatively conclude that royal name scarabs that were inscribed with two cartouches written perpendicular to the length of the base were in use from the New Kingdom to the early Third Intermediate Period.⁴²⁷ That a similar design was commissioned for a royal name scarab from Seheribre's reign suggests one of two things. Either Seheribre ruled around the same time as the

Egyptianizing Scarabs, Teeter and Wilfong, *Scarabs, Scaraboids, Seals and Seal Impressions*, Ben-Tor, *Scarabs, Chronology, and Interconnections*, Śliwa, *Egyptian Scarabs*, and Kalloniatis, *Egyptian Collection at Norwich*. In relation to Thutmose III and Shoshenq, examples not specifically mentioned by Jaeger include Petrie, *Historical Scarabs*, nos. 1764-65, Newberry, *Timins Collection*, 30, pl. 10 no. 14, and Petrie, *Scarabs and Cylinders*, pl. 49 no. 22.1.11 (UC 13035). On the difficulty of differentiating between Shoshenq I and IV, see Broekman, Demarée and Kaper, "Numbering of Kings Called Shoshenq," 9-10, and Jurman, "Memphitische Skarabäen," 94-95.

⁴²⁵ See Petrie, *Historical Scarabs*, no. 1443, Hall, *Royal Scarabs*, 209 no. 2092, and Jaeger, *Essai de classification*, 244-45 no. 2741 (BM 17145).

⁴²⁶ See Petrie, *Scarabs and Cylinders*, pl. 30 no. 18.8.13.

⁴²⁷ That this date is tentative bears some emphasis. Royal name scarabs that referred to Thutmose III, for example, became popular in the centuries after his reign. Without a clear archaeological context – which most of the specimens under discussion lack –, it is difficult to ascertain whether the scarabs were contemporary issues or later reissues. Jaeger, *Essai de classification*, 242-45, argues that all Thutmose III scarabs of the design under discussion – "variante (a)," in his classification – should be dated to the reign of Shoshenq I, in light of similar scarabs that bear the latter's name. Yet, the existence of scarabs of the same type, which refer to other kings (see above), problematizes this theory. See also Jurman, "Memphitische Skarabäen," 94-95, for the suggestion that some of the Shoshenq scarabs themselves might not be contemporary issues either.

aforementioned pharaohs, i.e. in the late second to early first millennium BC; or Seheribre ruled in a later period of time, when craftsmen imitated older designs. It goes without saying that if the latter were the case the specific period in which Seheribre would have ruled cannot be specified on the basis of the scarab.

3.3.2.3 The seal impressions and associated papyri

A fourth object from the reign of Petubastis Seheribre was published in 1910. The object, a clay bulla impressed with an inscribed seal (UC13098) was found by William Flinders Petrie, Ernest Mackay, and Gerald Wainwright. They had unearthed it in the course of excavations that had been carried out earlier that year. According to a letter written by Petrie, the find spot of the bulla was “the rubbish” of the Meydum pyramid of Snefru, a pharaoh of Dynasty Four (ca. 2613 – 2498 BC). With it were found three demotic papyri (P. Ashmolean 1984.87, 1984.88, 1984.89), as well as a second bulla impressed with a different seal.⁴²⁸ Though it was not recognized as such at the time, the UC13098 bulla is one of the most important objects for dating the reign of Petubastis Seheribre. This importance stems from the bulla’s seal impression on the one hand, and the bulla’s connection to the demotic papyri on the other. Both deserve an in-depth look.

3.3.2.3.1 The seal impressions

The seal impression on the UC13098 bulla was made by the base of an oval stamp seal. The seal in question may have been a scarab or a signet ring. Within the confines of its oval shape a hieroglyphic inscription can be read from left to right, which reads “Protection of Seheribre; the Overseer of the

⁴²⁸ See Petrie, Mackay, and Wainwright, *Meydum and Memphis*, 43, pl. 37 nos. 43-44. The letter is quoted by Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 217 n. 3. Note that there has been some confusion about the provenance of the artefacts. Both Kaper, “Petubastis IV,” 128, and “Seals and Sealings: UC13098,” Petrie Museum Catalogue, University College London, accessed January 21, 2020, <http://petriecat.museums.ucl.ac.uk/detail.aspx#12535>, mention Meydum as well as Memphis as possible find spots. The confusion is due to the fact that Petrie, Mackay, and Wainwright discussed the sources within their chapter on the palace at Memphis, rather than their chapter on Meydum (Petrie, Mackay, and Wainwright, *Meydum and Memphis*, 40-44). In addition, a later publication showed the bullae on a plate with finds from Memphis (Knobel, Midgley, Milne, Murray, and Petrie, *Historical Studies*, pl. 20 no. 770). That the sources were found “in the rubbish of the Meydum pyramid” – regrettably without further specification – is, however, clear from Petrie’s letter to Francis Griffith (Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 217 n. 3). Note also that the plates of the original publication include the label “papyrus, Meydum,” written beneath bullae nos. 43-44 (Petrie, Mackay, and Wainwright, *Meydum and Memphis*, pl. 37).

Seal Psamtik” (*s3 Shr-ib-rꜥ mr ḥtm Psmṯk*). The name of Seheribre is enshrined in a plumed cartouche.⁴²⁹ When the impression was published in 1910, its editors thought that the title “Overseer of the Seal” (*mr ḥtm*) was connected to the Egyptian funerary cult. UC13098 was therefore attributed “to the keeper of the tomb of king Seher-ab-ra.”⁴³⁰ It has since become clear that the title refers to an administrative office that can be translated as “treasurer.” The title was in use as early as the Middle Kingdom. Though the meaning of the title changed over time, it was generally borne by high court officials who were involved in the management of the state’s financial resources.⁴³¹ In the case of UC13098, the original seal appears to have belonged to a treasurer by the name of Psamtik who served under king Petubastis Seheribre.⁴³² As we shall see below, the seal was used to seal a letter that concerned the allotment of plots of agricultural land.

In terms of dating Petubastis Seheribre, two elements of UC13098 are significant. The first element is the name of the official to whom the seal belonged: “Psamtik.” Though the exact origin of the name is obscure, it is primarily associated with the Saite Dynasty: three Saite kings bore “Psamtik” as a birthname (Psamtik I Wahibre, Psamtik II Neferibre, and Psamtik III Ankhkaenre).⁴³³ Due to its association with royalty, “Psamtik” soon became a popular private name as well. Men called “Psamtik” – or names composed with “Psamtik,” e.g. Psamtikemakhet, Psamtiksaneith, Psamtikseneb – can be found throughout the country from at least the seventh century BC onwards.⁴³⁴ It is therefore likely that the Overseer of the Seal Psamtik lived during or after the Saite Dynasty. By association, the same observation applies to the king whom he served. The second element of interest for dating the reign of Seheribre is the protection formula which UC13098 features. In general, protection formulae on seals consisted of *s3* (protection), the name of a deity or a king, and the name of the person on whom the protection was bestowed. In the case of an invoked deity, the date of a

⁴²⁹ Petrie, Mackay, and Wainwright, *Meydum and Memphis*, 43, pl. 37 no. 43; Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 217 no. 3, 218. For a silver ring which might be inscribed with a similar formula, see Petrie, *Scarabs and Cylinders*, pl. 58 AB.

⁴³⁰ Petrie, Mackay, and Wainwright, *Meydum and Memphis*, 43 no. 43.

⁴³¹ Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 218-19; Vernus, “Observations,” 251-60; Pressl, *Beamte und Soldaten*, 32-34.

⁴³² For more on the treasurer Psamtik, who may have been buried in a tomb near Memphis, see 5.2.2.2.1.

⁴³³ See Leprohon, *Great Name*, 165-67. The etymology of the name, which only entered Egyptian onomastics in the Late Period, is debated. Some scholars have argued that it is of Libyan origin, others that it may have been Ethiopian, Anatolian, or simply Egyptian; see e.g. De Meleunaere, *Herodotos over de 26ste Dynastie*, 16-21, Ray, “Names of Psammetichus and Takheta,” 196-97, and Colin, “Les Libyens en Égypte,” 2:121.

⁴³⁴ See e.g. Ranke, *Verzeichnis der Namen*, 136-37, Vittmann, *Priester und Beamte*, 225, Pressl, *Beamte und Soldaten*, 262-67, Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 268, Lüddeckens, *Demotisches Namenbuch*, 212-14, and Chevereau, *Prosopographie des cadres militaires égyptiens*, 377-78.

seal can be difficult to establish.⁴³⁵ In the case of a king, however, dating is usually straightforward. The earliest dateable example of a protection formula on a seal stems from the reign of the Saite king Apries. The example consists of a seal impression on clay, the inscription of which reads “Protection of Wahib, Psamtiksaneith” (*W3ḥ-ib s3 Psmṯk-s3-Nt*).⁴³⁶ It is important to observe that the *s3*-sign stands between the royal name and the private name, as was common when deities were invoked. The royal name itself is Apries’ Horus name, Wahib.⁴³⁷ Aside from this one example, the vast majority of royal protection formulae on seals date to the reign of Apries’ successor, Amasis. Twelve examples are currently known.⁴³⁸ In contrast with the aforementioned seal, the ones from Amasis’ reign show the *s3*-sign at the very start of the inscription, and utilize the ruler’s throne name, Khnemibre, rather than his Horus name, Semenmaat. For example, one typical seal inscription reads “Protection of Khnemibre; the Overseer of the Royal Fleet Hekaemsaf” (*s3 Ḥnm-ib-rꜥ mr ḥꜥw nswt Ḥk3-m-s3=f*).⁴³⁹ The third and final king who is mentioned on seals of this type is Petubastis Seheribre himself. The protection formula on UC13098 has already been mentioned. In addition, a seal impression on a bulla of unknown provenance, published by Yoyotte in 1972, reads “Protection of Seheribre; the Overseer

⁴³⁵ At present, at least twelve seals that invoke the protection of a deity in this way are known. See Petrie, Mackay, and Wainwright, *Meydum and Memphis*, 42, pl. 35-36 nos. 2, 9, 11, 12, Hall, *Royal Scarabs*, 292 no. 2793, Petrie, *Scarabs and Cylinders*, pl. 58 AJ, AK, AU, AZ, BK, Corteggiani, *Documents divers*, 151-53, pl. 13 A, B, and Zivie, *Une empreinte de sceau*, 176 n. 3. Most are without provenance. Four of them, however, were excavated from the palace at Memphis, together with Egyptian seals of other types and seals with distinctly Achaemenid iconography; see Petrie, Mackay, and Wainwright, *Meydum and Memphis*, 40-42, pl. 35-36.

⁴³⁶ See Zivie, *Une empreinte de sceau*, 175-77, fig. 12.

⁴³⁷ See Zivie, *Une empreinte de sceau*, 176-77. Note that one other seal from Apries’ reign might use the protection formula as well – again with reference to Apries’ Horus name; see Petrie, *Scarabs and Cylinders*, pl. 58 AB, and Zivie, *Une empreinte de sceau*, 177 n. 5. The *sA*-sign that might precede the Horus name is, however, illegible on the basis of the photograph.

⁴³⁸ Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 219-20, dates nine specimens to the reign of Amasis. At present, at least three others can be added to the list: see Masson, “Un scellé,” 657-58; Jurman, “Impressions of What Is Lost,” 240-47, pl. 1-2; and “Seal Impression with Names of King Amasis and Queen Nitocris,” Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Museum Associates, accessed January 16, 2020, <https://collections.lacma.org/node/245409>. Rather than “Amasis” and “Nitocris,” the latter impression records Amasis’ throne name, Khnemibre, and the basilophorous name of a private official: “Psamtik-[...]”

⁴³⁹ Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 219 c; presently known as LACMA M.80.202.305 (see below).



Figure 10. A seal impression from an official who served under the reign of Petubastis Seheribre (left) and one from the reign of Amasis (right). (Photos from <https://collections.lacma.org/node/245442> and <https://collections.lacma.org/node/245460>)

of the Seal Horwedja” (*sꜣ Shr-ib-rꜥ mr ḥtm Ḥr-wdꜣ*; see figure 10).⁴⁴⁰ The fact that both this seal impression and the one on UC13098 follow the same pattern as seal inscriptions from Amasis’ reign bears emphasis. The exact pattern is *sꜣ* plus the king’s throne name in plumed cartouche plus the name of a private official. The resemblance suggests that the seals of one king were imitated during the reign of the other.

⁴⁴⁰ Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 217 no. 4, fig. 3 (upper seal). It is important to note that three of the seals which Yoyotte discusses, namely the seals of Horwedja, Wahibre-Wennefer, and Hekaemsaf, were once part of the antiquities collection of George Michaélidis (Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 217 no. 4, fig. 3, 219 b-c). When Michaélidis passed away in 1973, his large number of antiquities ended up in a variety of different collections (Clackson, “Michaelides Manuscript Collection,” 223). Consequently, knowledge of the whereabouts of the seals was partly lost; see e.g. Moje, *Herrschaftsräume und Herrschaftswissen*, 268, Jansen-Winkel, *Die 26. Dynastie*, 534 no. 238, 582 no. 319, and Jurman, “Impressions of What Is Lost,” 245 n. 39, 260 n. 118. All three, however, ended up in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; see “Seal Impression of an Official of King Pedubast of Dynasty 27,” Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Museum Associates, accessed January 16, 2020, <https://collections.lacma.org/node/245442> (M.80.202.852; seal of Horwedja); “Seal Impression of an Official of the 26th Dynasty,” Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Museum Associates, accessed January 16, 2020, <https://collections.lacma.org/node/245460> (M.80.202.869; seal of Wahibre-Wennefer); “Seal Impression with Cartouche of Amasis,” Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Museum Associates, accessed January 16, 2020, <https://collections.lacma.org/node/245186> (M.80.202.305; seal of Hekaemsaf).

3.3.2.3.2 The papyri

As mentioned above, the UC13098 bulla was found in the rubbish of the Meydum pyramid together with three fragmentary papyri: P. Ashmolean 1984.87, 1984.88, and 1984.89. The papyri were published in 2004 – i.e. nearly a century after they were excavated – and republished in 2015.⁴⁴¹ At present, it is clear that the papyri were letters, which were sent to the region of Heracleopolis. How they ended up in the “rubbish” of the Meydum pyramid, far from their intended destination, remains unknown. Due to the papyri’s significance for reconstructing the geographical spread of and the officials involved in Petubastis Seheribre’s reign, their contents are more elaborately discussed in Chapter 5. For the present discussion, however, the relevant information can be summarized as follows.

The first of the letters from the Meydum pyramid, P. Ashmolean 1984.87, concerns the allotment of agricultural land in the nome of Heracleopolis. The papyrus was sealed by UC13098. According to the text of the papyrus, the letter was sent by an Overseer of the Seal (*mr htm*), whose name is left unmentioned. The date of the letter is 6 Choiak, regnal year one.⁴⁴² The second papyrus, P. Ashmolean 1984.88, is more difficult to understand. It consists of twelve small fragments, some of which are barely legible. It appears, however, that the original document shared three elements with P. Ashmolean 1984.87: it too was a letter, sent by an Overseer of the Seal, concerning land in the nome of Heracleopolis.⁴⁴³ The third papyrus, P. Ashmolean 1984.89, both resembles and differs from the other two. The papyrus is a letter, concerning affairs in the Heracleopolite nome. It may have been sent by another Overseer, but the official in question does not seem to have been an Overseer of the Seal. The letter was written on 17 Choiak, regnal year one – i.e. eleven days after P. Ashmolean 1984.87. A stamp seal with an inscription that refers to Ptah sealed its contents.⁴⁴⁴ Although the name

⁴⁴¹ See Cruz-Uribe, “Early Demotic Texts,” 59-66, and Vittmann, “Two Administrative Letters,” 433-50. In 1910, only a brief summary of P. Ashmolean 1984.87 and 1984.89 was provided, based on a preliminary analysis by Francis Griffith; see Petrie, Mackay, and Wainwright, *Meydum and Memphis*, 43 no. 43.

⁴⁴² Petrie, Mackay, and Wainwright, *Meydum and Memphis*, 43 no. 43; Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 217 no. 3; Cruz-Uribe, “Early Demotic Texts,” 61-63; Vittmann, “Two Administrative Letters,” 433-443.

⁴⁴³ Cruz-Uribe, “Early Demotic Texts,” 59, 64-65. 61-63. Due to its bad preservation, Vittmann has refrained from giving a running translation of the text (Vittmann, “Two Administrative Letters,” 433 n. 1). See, however, Vittmann, “Two Administrative Letters,” 438 n. 6, 439 b, 440 g and m, 441 n, for miscellaneous notes on the papyrus.

⁴⁴⁴ Petrie, Mackay, and Wainwright, *Meydum and Memphis*, 43, pl. 37 no. 44; Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 218 n. 1; Cruz-Uribe, “Invasion of Egypt,” 55; Cruz-Uribe, “Early Demotic Texts,” 65-66; Vittmann, “Two Administrative Letters,” 433-443. Cruz-Uribe, “Early Demotic Texts,” 65, identified the Overseer of P. Ashmolean 1984.89 with the Overseer of

of the king is not mentioned in any of the letters – a common omission in correspondence of the time – , the paleography of the papyri indicates that they were written in the reigns of Amasis, Cambyses, or Darius I.⁴⁴⁵ The phraseology of the texts supports a similar timespan. P. Ashmolean 1984.87 and 1984.88 begin, for example, with the introductory formula A *dd n* B (“A says to B”). The only other demotic examples of the formula occur in P. Berlin 13540 and P. Berlin 23584, both of which date to year thirty of Darius I.⁴⁴⁶ In addition, the phrase B *m-dr.t* A (“B from A”) is used in the exterior address of P. Ashmolean 1984.87. The only other examples of this phenomenon occur in P. Berlin 13540 (again) and P. Louvre E 7855. The latter is dated to year twelve of Amasis.⁴⁴⁷ In short, it is safe to assume that P. Ashmolean 1984.87, 1984.88, and 1984.89 were written in the sixth to early fifth century BC.

As is the case with UC13098, the significance of P. Ashmolean 1984.87, 1984.88, and 1984.89 for dating the reign of Petubastis Seheribre is twofold. First, the letters provide us with is an approximate *terminus ante quem* for Seheribre’s reign: since Seheribre’s throne name was found on a bulla that sealed a sixth to early fifth century BC papyrus, one may conclude that he ruled at or before that time. The second element anchors Seheribre’s reign in a more fundamental way. As mentioned above, P. Ashmolean 1984.87 was sent by an Overseer of the Seal. In addition, it was sealed by an object that had been made for the Overseer of the Seal Psamtik, an official who served under Seheribre’s reign. It is theoretically possible that we are dealing with two different Overseers: one may have lived in e.g. the seventh century BC, while the other lived in the late sixth to early fifth century BC. The latter could have used a scarab or signet ring which was originally made for his predecessor as an heirloom seal.⁴⁴⁸ Nevertheless, a more straightforward assumption is that the Overseer of the Seal who sent the letter and the Overseer of the Seal Psamtik were one and the same individual. Psamtik the treasurer

the Seal mentioned in the other papyri; compare, however, Vittmann, “Two Administrative Letters,” 446 a, who emphasizes that there is insufficient space to reconstruct the phrase *mr xtm*.

⁴⁴⁵ Petrie, Mackay, and Wainwright, *Meydum and Memphis*, 43 no. 43; Cruz-Uribe, “Invasion of Egypt,” 55; Cruz-Uribe, “Early Demotic Texts,” 60.

⁴⁴⁶ Depauw, *Demotic Letter*, 152, 156; Vittmann, “Two Administrative Letters,” 439 b. See Martin, “Demotic Texts,” 290-91, for an English translation of P. Berlin 13540; and Zauzich, *Ägyptische Handschriften*, 119-20 no. 211, for a description of P. Berlin 23584.

⁴⁴⁷ Depauw, *Demotic Letter*, 120; Vittmann, “Two Administrative Letters,” 443 dd. For an edition of P. Louvre E 7855, see Donker van Heel, “Abnormal Hieratic and Early Demotic Texts,” 83-87 (P. Eisenlohr 2).

⁴⁴⁸ A clear example of an heirloom seal is the seal of Arsames, who was satrap of Egypt in the second half of the fifth century BC; see Garrison, “Sealing Practice in Achaemenid Times,” 558-63, and Garrison and Henkelman, “Seal of Prince Aršāma,” 46-166.

would then have sealed P. Ashmolean 1984.87 with his own personal seal. Indeed, that this is the case has been assumed by most scholars.⁴⁴⁹ What follows is that Petubastis Seheribre, whose name is featured on Psamtik's seal, would have ruled around the time that the papyri were written, i.e. in the sixth to early fifth century BC. It suggests, moreover, that the regnal year mentioned in P. Ashmolean 1984.87 and 1984.89 was that of Seheribre himself. The latter issue is further discussed below (see section 3.3.2.5).

3.3.2.4 The temple blocks

The most recent additions to the sources that document the reign of Petubastis Seheribre stem from the site of Amheida, a town in the northwest of the Dakhla Oasis. The additions consist of five temple blocks, which were excavated between 2005 and 2014. The blocks are inscribed with some of Seheribre's titles, royal names, and with the statement that the king made a monument for Thoth, the primary deity of the temple at Amheida.⁴⁵⁰ Like the papyri from the Meydum pyramid discussed above, the temple blocks throw important light on the geographical spread of Seheribre's reign; they are therefore more elaborately discussed in Chapter 5. In terms of dating, the temple blocks are not as revealing as the papyri and associated seal impressions – but they do support the information gained from the latter. Two elements deserve to be highlighted in this regard.

First, though several objects were found at the temple site of Amheida that date to the New Kingdom and the Third Intermediate Period – among which a fragment of a building block that can be attributed to the reign of Ramesses IX –,⁴⁵¹ the temple is primarily known from building blocks that date to the

⁴⁴⁹ See e.g. Petrie, Mackay, and Wainwright, *Meydum and Memphis*, 43 no. 43, Yoyotte, "Pétoubastis III," 218, Cruz-Uribe, "Early Demotic Texts," 59-60, and Vittmann, "Two Administrative Letters," 433. It is important to note that a certain "Psamtik son of Tjahapimu" is mentioned in line 3 of P. Ashmolean 1984.87. It is, however, uncertain whether he was the treasurer who sent the letter (*pace* Cruz-Uribe, "Early Demotic Texts," 63; compare Vittmann, "Two Administrative Letters," 442 w).

⁴⁵⁰ See Kaper, "Petubastis IV," 127-34 figs. 1-7. Though a temple block with the name "Petubastis" was already excavated in 2005, the absence of a throne name resulted in the attribution of the block to Petubastis I; see Kaper and Demarée, "Donation Stela," 20-21 fig. 1, and Kaper, "Dakhleh Oasis in the Libyan Period," 151 fig. 3. When blocks were excavated in 2014 that preserved the throne name Seheribre, the attribution was amended; see Kaper, "Petubastis IV," 127-28.

⁴⁵¹ See Kaper and Demarée, "Donation Stela," 19-37 figs. 2-8, Kaper, "Dakhleh Oasis in the Libyan Period," 149-53 figs. 1a-5, Davoli and Kaper, "Amheida before the Romans," 42-46 figs. 30-32, and Kaper, "Temple Building on the Egyptian Margins," 221-36 figs. 13.1-13.2. Objects and building material that predate the New Kingdom have been found on the

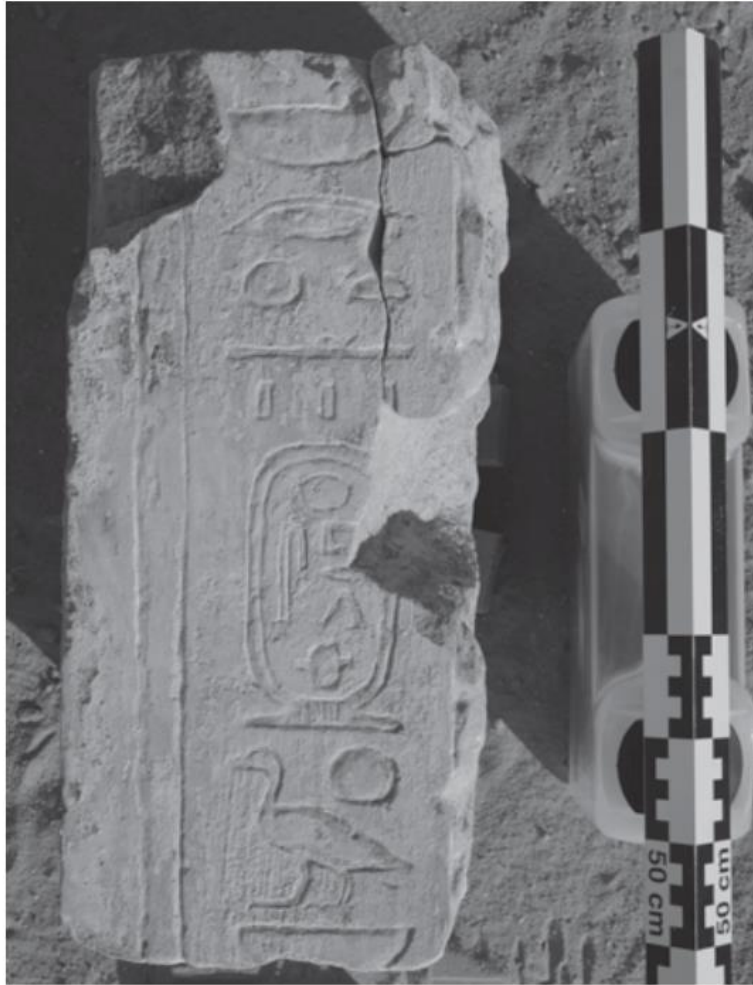


Figure 11. A temple block from Amheida inscribed with the throne name of Petubastis Seheribre. (Photograph by B. Bazzani, published in Kaper, “Petubastis IV,” 131 fig. 3)

Saite to Persian Period on the one hand, and from the remains of a Roman period sanctuary on the other. During the latter phase, some of the building blocks of the Saite to Persian period were plastered over and reused. The kings mentioned on these blocks include Necho II, Psamtik II, Amasis, possibly Darius I, and Petubastis Seheribre.⁴⁵² Though the situation may change with future excavations, the finds suggest that Seheribre’s temple blocks belonged to a Saite to Persian period construction phase, substantial material of which was still lying around in the Roman Period. Second, certain peculiarities

temple hill as well, but it is unclear whether they were part of an older temple or of buildings with a different function; see Davoli and Kaper, “Amheida before the Romans,” 35-42.

⁴⁵² See Kaper, “Dakhleh Oasis in the Late Period,” 169-72 pls. 4-11, Kaper, “Petubastis IV,” 126-27, and Davoli and Kaper, “Amheida before the Romans,” 46-56 figs. 33-40.

in the hieroglyphic inscriptions of Seheribre's temple blocks provide additional support for a Saite to Persian Period date. Inscriptions from the New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period show, for example, that the region of Amheida was traditionally called Sa-Wehat (*s3-wḥ3t*). From at least the mid-first millennium BC onwards, the area was called Set-Wah (*st-w3ḥ*). The last attestation of the older form occurs on a stela from the reign of Takeloth III. The earliest attestation of the later form dates to Amasis.⁴⁵³ Though it is unclear when the toponym changed exactly, it is significant that the temple blocks from Seheribre's reign follow the later version: the inscriptions refer to "Thoth the Twice Great, Lord of Set-Wah."⁴⁵⁴ In addition, it has been remarked that the size of Seheribre's cartouches is small in comparison with the surrounding text. The same phenomenon is discernible in inscriptions from Psamtik II and Amasis at Amheida, in inscriptions from Psamtik I and Psamtik II at Mut al-Kharab, and in inscriptions from Darius I at the temple of Hibis.⁴⁵⁵ Moreover, the *h* in Seheribre's throne name was written with the sign for *pr* (see figure 11). This phenomenon is likewise known from Darius I's inscriptions at Hibis.⁴⁵⁶ The evidence therefore suggests that the temple blocks from Seheribre's reign were made around the time of the Twenty-Sixth to (early) Twenty-Seventh Dynasty, i.e. between the seventh to (early) fifth centuries BC.

3.3.2.5 The date(s) of Petubastis Seheribre's reign

As the discussion above has shown, most of the sources from Petubastis Seheribre's reign suggest that they were created during the Saite to Persian Period. The only exception is the scarab published by Newberry, which shows affinities with artefacts from the New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period. Overall, however, the materials, design, paleography, phraseology, and/or archaeological context of the objects support a date in the late sixth to early fifth century BC. Particularly important in this regard are the seal impressions and the papyri from the Meydum pyramid: the former's protection formulae exhibit an explicit connection with seals from the reign of Amasis, while the latter's paleography resembles texts from the reigns of Amasis and Darius I. One may therefore

⁴⁵³ See Kaper, "Egyptian Toponyms," 124-29, and Kaper and Demarée, "Donation Stela," 34-35.

⁴⁵⁴ Kaper, "Petubastis IV," 133, 135.

⁴⁵⁵ See Kaper, "Petubastis IV," 130-31 figs 1-3, 135, 136 fig. 8, Kaper, "Dakhleh Oasis in the Late Period," 168 pls. 1-3, 170 pls. 5-9, and Cruz-Uribe, *Hibis Temple Project*, pls. 11A, 14C, 14E, and 17A.

⁴⁵⁶ See Kaper, "Petubastis IV," 134, and Cruz-Uribe, *Hibis Temple Project*, 227 O598. The interchange between *h* and *pr* was likely due to hieratic, as the signs looked quite similar in this script. A similar phenomenon is already visible in some Third Intermediate Period inscriptions, where *h* was used for *pr* (rather than the other way around); see Jansen-Winkel, *Spätmittelägyptische Grammatik*, 27 a), and Kaper, "Petubastis IV," 134 n. 19.

conclude that Petubastis Seheribre ruled (parts of) Egypt in the late Twenty-Sixth to early Twenty-Seventh Dynast. The question that remains is whether Seheribre ruled at the time of the Bisitun crisis specifically, and what the sources can tell us about the exact date and duration of his reign.

3.3.2.5.1 Petubastis Seheribre and the Bisitun crisis

Theoretically, Seheribre could have ruled at any point in the sixth to early fifth century BC. The sources discussed above do not exclude a date in the reign of Amasis or in the reign of Cambyses. Consequently, some scholars have suggested that Seheribre's rule may have predated that of Darius I, and that he was, for example, an Egyptian "puppet king" who had been installed by Cambyses.⁴⁵⁷ Nevertheless, there are three reasons why it is more probable that Seheribre ruled during the reign of Cambyses' successor, and during the years of the Bisitun crisis specifically. One reason is that the evidence for the existence of an Egyptian puppet king in the early Persian Period is lacking: the proposition merely rests on Herodotus' claim that the Persians were wont to honor the sons of kings (*Histories* 3.15), and the unsubstantiated suggestion that Petubastis Seheribre may have been a son of Amasis.⁴⁵⁸ If Seheribre was not a puppet king, the only logical conclusion is that he was a rival of one of the kings who are known to have ruled in the sixth to early fifth century BC. Second, as far as we presently know neither Amasis nor Cambyses were the objects of organized resistance in Egypt.⁴⁵⁹ By contrast, the reign of Darius I can be related to two Egyptian rebellions: the first is the one mentioned by the Bisitun inscription (ca. 521 BC); the second rebellion is mentioned by the *Histories* of Herodotus, and took place at the very end of Darius' reign (ca. 487/86 BC).⁴⁶⁰ It is therefore likely that Seheribre's reign should be connected to one of these documented events. Third and last, the

⁴⁵⁷ See Cruz-Urbe, "Invasion of Egypt," 55-56. In addition, Kaper, "Petubastis IV," 139-42, has suggested that Seheribre may already have ruled the Southern Oasis in the reign of Cambyses. The suggestion is primarily based on a story in Herodotus, which notes that Cambyses sent an army to an oasis in the Western Desert and that it perished in a sandstorm. The suggestion is further discussed in Chapter 5.

⁴⁵⁸ See Cruz-Urbe, "Invasion of Egypt," 55-56. For the historical problems of *Histories* 3.15, see Irwin, "Why Did Cambyses Conquer Egypt?," 119-23.

⁴⁵⁹ In the case of Amasis, the autobiographical inscription of one of his officials, called Psamtiksaneith, suggests that there was once disorder around Sais (Ranke, "Late Saitic Statue," 16), and Herodotus mentions that Amasis moved Ionian and Carian mercenaries to Memphis to be his bodyguard against the Egyptians (*Histories* 2.154). It is in neither case clear whether the sources refer to a historical rebellion. In the case of Cambyses, Herodotus refers to (plans for) a conspiracy against the king (*Histories* 3.15), but the anecdote attributes the conspiracy specifically to Psamtik III - not to an anonymous, yet-to-be-identified rebel king (see 2.2.1).

⁴⁶⁰ See Chapter 4.

rebellion at the end of Darius' reign can be connected to an Egyptian king called Psamtik, whose name is recorded on three demotic papyri from Hou.⁴⁶¹ It is theoretically possible that Seheribre's reign was contemporary with Psamtik's, and that this rebellion consisted of two different rebel kings.⁴⁶² Nevertheless, such double dating is unnecessary in light of the other rebellion that is known to have existed in early Persian Period Egypt: we saw at the beginning of this chapter how chaotic the political situation of 521 BC was. The troubles of Darius' accession year would have provided ample opportunity for Egyptians to rise and reclaim the independence they had lost a mere five years ago. Though some uncertainty remains, the hypothesis that Petubastis Seheribre led the Egyptian rebellion mentioned by the Bisitun inscription, and that he ruled (parts of) Egypt at the time of the Bisitun crisis therefore remains the most plausible hypothesis.

3.3.2.5.2 Petubastis Seheribre's accession date and the duration of his reign

Once we accept Petubastis Seheribre's connection to the Bisitun crisis, we can begin to use the sources from his reign to reconstruct the way in which the events of 522/21 BC affected Egypt. As mentioned previously, questions regarding the geographical extent of Seheribre's reign and his possible support base are discussed in Chapter 5. The only issues that are touched upon here are the date and duration of Seheribre's kingship. First, it will be recalled that the Bisitun inscription suggests that the rebellion in Egypt began while Darius was in Babylon, i.e. between ca. December 522 BC and April 521 BC (see 3.2.2). The papyri from the Meydum pyramid specify this further. As discussed above, P. Ashmolean 1984.87 and P. Ashmolean 1984.89 were written on 6 and 17 Choiak of the first regnal year of an anonymous king. It is highly likely that this king was Petubastis Seheribre, as P. Ashmolean 1984.87 was sealed by a clay bulla that bore an impression of Seheribre's throne name (see 3.3.2.3.2). The dates can therefore be translated as 5 April 521 BC (P. Ashmolean 1984.87) and 16 April of the same year (P. Ashmolean 1984.89).⁴⁶³ As we are dealing with Seheribre's first regnal year, the papyri indicate that he claimed the throne of Egypt on or after 1 January; the latter was the

⁴⁶¹ See Pestman, "Diospolis Parva Documents," 145-55, and Chapter 4.

⁴⁶² Compare e.g. the Babylonian rebellions of 484 BC, which featured two simultaneous rebel kings (Waerzeggers, "Babylonian Revolts against Xerxes," 150-73) and the rebellion of Inaros in the mid-fifth century BC, which appears to have involved a second king called Amyrtaos I (section 2.2.3). Yoyotte once suggested a date for Petubastis Seheribre in the 480s BC; he did so, however, when the papyri from Hou were not yet connected to that rebellion; see Yoyotte, "L'Égypte et l'empire achéménide," 256.

⁴⁶³ See Cruz-Uribe, "Early Demotic Texts," 61 l. 5, 65 l. 6, and Vittmann, "Two Administrative Letters," 437 l. 5, 446 l. 6.

date of the Egyptian New Year (1 Thoth) in 521 BC. The Egyptian rebellion probably began, in other words, after Darius' defeat and execution of Nebuchadnezzar III (§16-20; battles fought on 13 and 18 December 522 BC).⁴⁶⁴ Second, it is important to observe that the sources from Seheribre's reign are numerous in comparison with those of other Egyptian rebel kings: artisans made at least one wooden naos which featured the king's cartouches, a royal name scarab that harkened back to earlier New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period examples, and two private seals which mimicked seals from Amasis' reign. Most importantly, the temple blocks from Amheida show that there was sufficient time and stability to embellish a sanctuary in the Dakhla Oasis.⁴⁶⁵ In terms of number, the sources are comparable to those that can be connected to the reigns of Psamtik III and Cambyses.⁴⁶⁶ Though we should refrain from using the number of sources as an exact index for regnal duration – whereby more sources would equal a longer reign – it does suggest that Seheribre was recognized as king of (parts of) Egypt for at least several months, if not longer. In addition, he was sufficiently secure on his throne to command and implement building work.

3.4 The end of the Egyptian rebellion

Thus far, the present chapter has argued that the Egyptian rebellion mentioned in the Bisitun inscription should be accepted as a historical event. In addition, it has argued that no Egyptian documents can be dated with certainty to Persian kings between April 522 BC and November 518 BC, and that an Egyptian man called Petubastis Seheribre probably claimed the throne of Egypt on or after 1 January 521 BC. Moreover, the sources from his reign suggest that Seheribre ruled (parts of) the country for at least several months. The question that remains to be addressed is when Seheribre would have been defeated exactly. As discussed above, the Bisitun inscription is ambiguous in this regard. It does not mention the rebellion's defeat – a silence which may be explained in different ways. On the one hand, it could indicate that the composers of the Bisitun inscription did not attempt to provide their audience with a comprehensive account of events; on the other hand, it may suggest that Egypt had not yet been reconquered when the inscription was inscribed on the rocks of mount Bisitun – and that it continued to be undefeated when the accounts on the Elamite and

⁴⁶⁴ See Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 144.

⁴⁶⁵ Compare e.g. Psamtik IV, whose name appears on only three demotic papyri from Hou (Pestman, "Diospolis Parva Documents," 145-55; Chapter 4), and Inaros, whose name appears on only one demotic ostrakon from Ayn Manawir (Chauveau, "Inarôs," 39-46).

⁴⁶⁶ See Jansen-Winkeln, *Die 26. Dynastie*, 583-85 nos. 1-3, 5-7, and Vittmann, "Ägypten zur Zeit der Perserherrschaft," 377-82.

Scythian campaigns of Darius' second and third regnal years (i.e. 520/19 BC and 519/18 BC) were added to the text. A similar ambiguity characterizes the Egyptian sources from the early Persian Period. As discussed above, there is a gap between the last text dated to Cambyses' reign in Egypt (i.e. P. Cairo 50059, likely dated to March/April 522 BC) and the first texts that are certainly dated to Darius (i.e. the Apis stelae, created between 31 August and 8 November 518 BC; see 3.3.1-3.3.1.3). The gap allows us to attribute the intervening years to an Egyptian rebel king. On the other hand, such gaps are not uncommon in the Egyptian textual corpus, and they may have more to do with the low preservation rate of papyri than with ancient political events.⁴⁶⁷ In light of these ambiguities, it is understandable that the duration of the Egyptian rebellion has remained a point of discussion, with some scholars assuming that it lasted several months, and others that it lasted several years.⁴⁶⁸ Nevertheless, the following section argues that the latter hypothesis is the more likely one. This argument is based on two groups of sources. First, a Greco-Roman historical text connects an Egyptian rebellion in Darius' early reign to the death of an Apis bull. The passage has often been connected to the Apis stelae of 518 BC. Second, a handful of Babylonian sources suggest the existence of military activities connected to Egypt in years three and four of Darius. In contrast to the Apis story, these sources have only rarely entered the debate on the duration of the Egyptian rebellion.

3.4.1 *The Stratagems of Polyaeus and the Apis bull epitaphs*

Before it became widely known that the Bisitun inscription mentioned an Egyptian rebellion in 522/21 BC, multiple scholars had already accepted that an Egyptian revolt had occurred in Darius I's (early) reign.⁴⁶⁹ This was largely based on a story recorded by Polyaeus, a Bithynian author of Macedonian descent, who wrote a work called the *Stratagems* in the second century AD. The *Stratagems* collected a wide variety of military strategies that had been used by famous commanders and kings in the preceding centuries.⁴⁷⁰ In Book Seven of Polyaeus' work, one finds a story about a strategy which Darius had allegedly implemented to end an Egyptian rebellion. It can be quoted in full: "When the cruelty of the satrap Aryandes became unbearable for the Egyptians and they rebelled

⁴⁶⁷ The common occurrence of documentary gaps in Saite to Persian Period Egypt is clear from the dated papyri listed by Thissen, "Chronologie der frühdemotischen Papyri," 107-21, and Depauw, *Chronological Survey*, 3-27.

⁴⁶⁸ See n. 307-8 above.

⁴⁶⁹ See Ley, *Fata et conditio*, 11-12, Unger, *Chronologie des Manetho*, 288-89, and Wiedemann, *Geschichte Aegyptens*, 235-37.

⁴⁷⁰ For an introduction to Polyaeus and his work, see Lenfant, *Les Perses vus par les Grecs*, 339-41, and Brodersen, *Polyainos, Strategika*, 7-18.

on account of it, Darius himself crossed the Arabian desert and arrived in Memphis. As the Egyptians at the time were mourning the disappearance of the Apis, Darius made a written announcement that he would give one hundred talents of gold to the person who brought in the Apis. The Egyptians admired his piety, renounced the rebels and gave themselves over to Darius” (*Stratagemis* 7.11.7).⁴⁷¹ Though Polyaeus does not provide an exact date for the Egyptian rebellion, several sources suggest that it should be connected to the start of Darius’ reign.⁴⁷²

The most important group of sources for dating the rebellion mentioned by Polyaeus are the Apis stelae from the Saqqara Serapeum. As discussed above, several of the stelae indicate that an Apis bull had died in the summer of year four of Darius I (August 518 BC). The animal was buried in November of the same year (see 3.3.1.3 above). As early as 1880, Alfred Wiedemann suggested that this animal may have been the Apis bull whom the Egyptians are said to have mourned when – according to Polyaeus – Darius invaded Egypt.⁴⁷³ Later scholars sometimes connected the bull to the Egyptian rebellion of the Bisitun crisis, and argued that 518 BC must have been the end date of the rebellion that began in 522/21 BC.⁴⁷⁴ It is important to observe that this connection has not been universally accepted. Christopher Tuplin has pointed out, for example, that Polyaeus’ story might be linked to a later Apis bull. After all, once an Apis had passed away, the search for a new one began, which would be installed in Memphis. Several Serapeum stelae indicate that a second Apis passed away in Darius’ thirty-first regnal year (492/91 BC), and that a third was buried in Darius’ thirty-fourth regnal year (489/88 BC).⁴⁷⁵ Nevertheless, if Polyaeus’ story should be linked to an historical Apis bull, the animal of 518 BC remains the most logical candidate. This conclusion is based on the connection which Polyaeus draws between the Egyptian rebellion on the one hand and the satrap Aryandes on the other.

⁴⁷¹ The quote is an English adaptation of Brodersen, *Polyainos, Strategika*, 522-25.

⁴⁷² Whether the story is historically reliable is discussed below.

⁴⁷³ See Wiedemann, *Geschichte Aegyptens*, 235-37. Note that he attributes the bull’s death erroneously to 517 BC.

⁴⁷⁴ See e.g. Maspero, *Les empires*, 682-85, and – with some reservations – Parker, “Darius and His Egyptian Campaign,” 376. Wiedemann, by contrast, understood the rebellion mentioned by Polyaeus as a separate revolt that had occurred a few years after Darius’ accession to the throne, as he was one of the scholars who rejected the inclusion of “Egypt” in the Bisitun inscription as a scribal mistake (see Wiedemann, *Geschichte Aegyptens*, 80, and 3.2.2.1 above).

⁴⁷⁵ Tuplin has suggested that a fourth bull may be attributed to Darius I’s reign – one that may be connected to year seventeen (506/5 BC) – , and that this could have been the bull of Polyaeus’ story; see Tuplin, “Darius’ Suez Canal,” 265-66. Neither the Apis stelae, nor the number of Apis Mothers that are currently known, support this theory, however. See Devauchelle, “Les stèles du Sérapéum,” 103-4, and Smith, Andrews, and Davies, *Sacred Animal Necropolis*, 15-25.

According to the *Histories* of Herodotus, Aryandes had been installed as satrap of Egypt during the reign of Cambyses. He continued to hold this office in the (early) reign of Darius I. The historian of Halicarnassus suggests that Aryandes' most notable act as satrap was a military campaign against Libya, which occurred shortly after Darius led a campaign against the Scythians of Europe (*Histories* 4.145, 4.165-167, 4.200-205).⁴⁷⁶ At some point after Aryandes' campaign, however, Darius had the satrap executed. The reason for the execution would have been that Aryandes began to mint silver coins that were as pure as Darius' coins were gold – an act that may have been interpreted as a challenge to royal prerogatives (*Histories* 4.166).⁴⁷⁷ Though the stories are difficult to corroborate – at present, no silver coins or other contemporary sources have been identified that can be attributed to Aryandes – , a handful of texts indicates that Aryandes was indeed replaced by a different satrap during the reign of Darius. The best-known sources are two demotic letters from Elephantine, which show that a man called Pherendates was satrap of Egypt in the later reign of Darius I. The earliest letter dates to Pharmouthi of year twenty-nine of Darius I (July/August 493 BC).⁴⁷⁸ Two recently identified texts from the Persepolis Fortification Archive push Pherendates' period-of-office slightly further back in time: the texts are travel authorizations issued by an official called Parindadda. Both date to the early months of year twenty-seven of Darius (495 BC).⁴⁷⁹ In the words of Wouter Henkelman: “As travel passports were only issued by satraps and their deputies (and by the king and

⁴⁷⁶ For introductions to both campaigns, see e.g. Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 141-46, and Waters, *Ancient Persia*, 79-82.

⁴⁷⁷ For an extensive discussion of the passage, see Tuplin, “Coinage of Aryandes,” 61-82. It is important to observe that Herodotus' story about Aryandes' execution is often connected to Polyaeus' story: scholars sometimes suggest that Darius invaded Egypt because Aryandes had rebelled, or that the Egyptians rebelled against Aryandes, upon which Darius had the satrap executed; see Wiedemann, *Geschichte Aegyptens*, 235-37, Maspero, *Les empires*, 682-85, Prášek, *Die Blütezeit und der Verfall*, 41-43, Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 409-10, Vittmann, *Ägypten und die Fremden*, 130, and Yoyotte, “Egyptian Statue of Darius,” 249-50. The connection is based on the fact that both stories suggest that Aryandes did something wrong on the one hand, and that Herodotus claims that he was charged with insurrection (ἐπανάστατο) rather than with the practical charge of minting pure silver coins on the other – a word which recalls the rebellion which Polyaeus mentions, though the latter was waged against rather than by Aryandes. If both stories contain a grain of truth, however, it is likely that they occurred at different times: Polyaeus' story can be dated to 518 BC due to the Apis bull (see further below), while Aryandes' execution must have postdated this by several years, as Darius' Scythian expedition – after which Aryandes undertook his Libyan expedition – can be dated to ca. 513 BC; see Cameron, “Darius, Egypt, and ‘The Lands Beyond the Sea,’” 313, and compare Balcer, “Date of Herodotus IV.1,” 102-3, with Harmatta, “Darius' Expedition,” 15-17. At present, what Aryandes' role was during the Bisitun crisis remains obscure.

⁴⁷⁸ See Martin, “Demotic Texts,” 289-97, and Chauveau, “La chronologie,” 269-71.

⁴⁷⁹ See Henkelman, “Nakthor in Persepolis,” 202.

certain members of the royal house), Parindadda presumably was a satrap.”⁴⁸⁰ “Parindadda,” furthermore, was the Elamite transcription of *Farn(a)dāta, better known under the Greek form Pherendates.⁴⁸¹ It is therefore probable that Aryandes was replaced by Pherendates before 495 BC. Building on this date as the *terminus ante quem* for the end of Aryandes’ tenure as satrap of Egypt, one may conclude that the Apis bulls that died in years thirty-one and thirty-four of Darius (492/91 and 489/88 BC) must have passed away under Pherendates. By extension, the Apis bull mentioned by Polyaeus - which passed away while Aryandes was satrap of Egypt – must have been the bull that was buried in 518 BC. As argued by previous scholars, this date suggests that Polyaeus’ story was an echo of the Egyptian rebellion that had begun in 522/21 BC, and that the rebellion may not have been defeated until Darius’ fourth regnal year.

As a final remark, it is important to observe that the historicity of Polyaeus’ story can, of course, be doubted – especially when it is viewed in isolation from other sources. The attitude of foreign kings towards the Apis cult seems to have been a literary motif in Greek works, for example: Cambyses and Artaxerxes III were both portrayed as tyrants, who – among other things – mistreated the Apis bull, while Alexander the Great and Darius I showed their political acumen by paying the bull its proper respects.⁴⁸² It does not help that Polyaeus recorded the story about Darius’ invasion of Egypt in the second century AD, ca. seven centuries after the fact. Though it is clear that the author based many of his anecdotes on older Greek works – among which the *Histories* of Herodotus – ,the origins of this particular passage are unknown.⁴⁸³ The only Greek work contemporary with the Persian Empire that alludes to an Egyptian rebellion in the (early) reign of Darius is Aristotle’s fourth century BC *On Rhetoric*. The latter briefly states that Darius had conquered Egypt before he invaded Greece (*On Rhetoric* 2.20.3, 1393a32-b4). The statement implies that Egypt had rebelled before ca. 490 BC, which was the date of the Persian campaign that resulted in the battle of Marathon.⁴⁸⁴ Having said that, six Babylonian texts are currently known that suggest that a Persian campaign against Egypt indeed took place between ca. 519 and early 517 BC. The date of the country’s reconquest may therefore not have been too far removed from the death of the Apis bull in the summer of 518 BC –

⁴⁸⁰ See Henkelman, “Anhang,” 294.

⁴⁸¹ See *ibid.*

⁴⁸² See Wojciechowska, “Black Legend of Cambyses,” 29-30, for the stories on Cambyses, Artaxerxes III and Alexander.

⁴⁸³ On Polyaeus’ sources, see Lenfant, *Les Perses vus par les Grecs*, 340-41, and Brodersen, *Polyainos: Strategika*, 11-17, 697-710.

⁴⁸⁴ See Hammond, “Studies in Greek Chronology,” 385.

just like Polyaeus' account suggests. The texts in question all stem from the Ebabbar temple at Sippar.

3.4.2 *The Babylonian sources*

As is well known, the archive of the Ebabbar temple at Sippar consists of thousands of cuneiform tablets, which document the administration of the sanctuary in the seventh to early fifth century BC.⁴⁸⁵ The topics of the texts are wide-ranging: they include lists, which specify the delivery of foodstuffs and animals to the temple, documents that record the activities of temple craftsmen, payments of silver to a variety of temple personnel, and texts that document court cases and judicial interrogations.⁴⁸⁶ Among this wealth of documents, a sizeable dossier bears on the payment and equipment of soldiers that were connected to the Ebabbar sanctuary. The dossier throws an interesting light on the practical organization of Babylonian military personnel.⁴⁸⁷ In short, it seems that the administrators of the Ebabbar could levy soldiers from the hundreds of Babylonian men that were connected to the temple, and equip them with e.g. lances, bows, daggers, shields, sandals and saddlebags. The soldiers' work included police duties, such as the protection of the temple precinct and the accompaniment of local caravans, non-military duties, such as participation in royal building projects, and – as may be expected – outright military tasks, such as participation in long-distance campaigns that were initiated by the crown.⁴⁸⁸

Generally speaking, the “military dossier” of the Ebabbar temple archive is not particularly forthcoming about the background of individual levies. Whether texts relate to local police duties or long-distance campaigns therefore has to be carefully weighed. This observation likewise applies to a handful of texts that have been discussed and published in recent years. In 2010, John MacGinnis observed that three tablets of the Ebabbar archive document the equipment and payment of soldiers in year three and four of Darius I (CT 55 286, CT 57 82, and BM 64637).⁴⁸⁹ Two similar texts, which

⁴⁸⁵ For an introduction to the archive, see Jursa, *Neo-Babylonian Legal and Administrative Documents*, 116-20.

⁴⁸⁶ See *ibid.*, 117-20.

⁴⁸⁷ See MacGinnis, “Role of Babylonian Temples,” 495-502, and more elaborately MacGinnis, *Arrows of the Sun*.

⁴⁸⁸ See MacGinnis, *Arrows of the Sun*, 49-50, and MacGinnis, “Role of Babylonian Temples,” 498.

⁴⁸⁹ See MacGinnis, “Role of Babylonian Temples,” 500. The same tablets are listed by MacGinnis, *Arrows of the Sun*, 42, with the addition of Dar. 141, Dar. 112, and BM 29790. Note that MacGinnis attributes Dar. 112 erroneously to Borsippa, and that BM 29790 is still unpublished (*ibid.*, 42 n. 197). The latter is therefore excluded from the present discussion.

refer to the same years, were discussed by Gauthier Tolini in 2011 (Dar. 112 and Dar. 141).⁴⁹⁰ A tablet dated to year three of Darius I, which was published by MacGinnis in 2012, may be added to this (BM 55823).⁴⁹¹ Most of the texts simply record the amounts of silver – and sometimes foodstuffs – that were given to different men as payment for the *rikis qabli* of a particular year. The term *rikis qabli* refers to the “fitting-out” of soldiers with e.g. clothing, travel supplies and weapons.⁴⁹² In CT 55 286, for example, the archer Arad-Anunītu is said to have received 6.5 minas of silver for the *rikis qabli* of year three of Darius I. The tablet is dated to 12 June 519 BC.⁴⁹³ Dar. 141 states that 30 shekels of silver were given to Tatannu and his horsemen for the *rikis qabli* of year four. The tablet is dated to 21 February 517 BC.⁴⁹⁴ Moreover, an entry in CT 57 82 specifically states that 1 mina and 50 shekels of silver were meant for the “kur-ra” garments and jerkins of the archers.⁴⁹⁵ The payment might be connected to October/November 518 BC.⁴⁹⁶ These terse administrative entries reveal little about the possible political context of the payments. Nevertheless, two elements deserve to be highlighted.

First, it is important to observe that many regnal years of Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid kings cannot be connected to the military dossier of the Ebabbar temple archive. When a regnal year can be connected to the dossier, it is often documented by only one or two tablets. For example, other years of Darius’ reign that can be connected to the military dossier are year two (one tablet), years

⁴⁹⁰ See Tolini, “La Babylonie et l’Iran,” 1:246-47, who also mentions CT 57 82.

⁴⁹¹ See MacGinnis, *Arrows of the Sun*, 110-11 no. 54. The tablet relates to year three of Darius I, and mentions e.g. bows and jerkins that were given to the head of the archers Arad-Anunītu and several other men. Some of these men had gone to a country, the name of which was omitted from the tablet (see l. 15). The tablet is not included in the list of *ibid.*, 42.

⁴⁹² See Bongenaar, *Neo-Babylonian Ebabbar Temple*, 131, MacGinnis, “Role of Babylonian Temples,” 499, and Gombert, “L’Armée en Babylonie,” 154-55.

⁴⁹³ See Boudier and Joannès, “CT 55, 286,” Achemenet, CNRS, accessed March 4, 2022, http://www.achemenet.com/en/item/?/textual-sources/texts-by-publication/CT_55/3702793.

⁴⁹⁴ See Joannès, “Strassmaier, Darius 141,” Achemenet, CNRS, accessed March 4, 2022, <http://www.achemenet.com/fr/item/?/2078061=Textes%20babyloniens&1651737=%20Darius%20I%2004&l=a&c=1&t=1.4/3/24/1/1655379>.

⁴⁹⁵ See Zawadzki, *Rental of Houses*, 217-18 no. 53. On the meaning of kur-ra, see Gombert, “L’Armée en Babylonie,” 306-8.

⁴⁹⁶ The date of the tablet and its various payments is not specifically stated. The heading of the account merely indicates that the payments stemmed from the income of rents on houses during regnal year four. The year can be attributed to Darius I on the basis of prosopography. In addition, following the entry on the silver given for the archers’ outfits the month Tašrītu is mentioned in a broken context. See Zawadzki, *Rental of Houses*, 217-18 no. 53.

eight and nine (one tablet each), and year sixteen (one tablet).⁴⁹⁷ The cluster of six texts that relate to years three and four of Darius I therefore suggests that these years were characterized by a particular mobilization of soldiers. Second, it is possible that some of these soldiers fulfilled local police duties, or non-military tasks that were related to e.g. royal construction sites. The latter might apply to BM 64637, which states that the head of the archers Arad-Anunītu and six other men traveled to Elam. The tablet is dated to 16 October 518 BC.⁴⁹⁸ Having said that, a crucial entry in CT 57 82 indicates that at least some of the payments were connected to long-distance expeditions: lines 6-8 of the tablet states that 38 shekels of silver were given to “Šamaš-iddin and his horsemen who have come back from Egypt.”⁴⁹⁹ The “horsemen” can be interpreted as cavalry, and may be compared with Dar. 141’s entry on Tatannu and his horsemen who were paid for the *rikis qabli* of year four in February 517 BC (see above). As argued by Tolini, the exceptional reference to Egypt in CT 57 82 suggests that both this tablet and some of the other texts which record payments for the *rikis qabli* of years three and four of Darius I should be connected to a military campaign against the Nile Valley.⁵⁰⁰ Though the campaign cannot be dated with precision on the basis of the Ebabbar tablets, the latter suggest that it occurred between 23 March 519 BC (the start of Darius’ third Babylonian regnal year), and 29 March 517 BC (the end of Darius’ fourth Babylonian regnal year).

3.5 Conclusion

The present chapter began with the statement that Cambyses’ four-year-reign of Egypt ended in a political crisis that affected large parts of the Persian Empire. According to the Bisitun inscription, a man called Gaumata/Bardiya claimed the Persian throne in the spring of 522 BC, and Cambyses – who might still have been in Egypt – died in unknown circumstances. After several months, Gaumata/Bardiya was killed by Darius, who claimed the Persian throne for himself. The years that followed were characterized by extensive military conflict, as multiple men contested Darius’ kingship and as several provinces tried to secede from Persian rule under the leadership of local kings (see 3.2.1). The present chapter has argued that Egypt was one of the provinces that seceded during

⁴⁹⁷ See MacGinnis, *Arrows of the Sun*, 41-42.

⁴⁹⁸ See MacGinnis, *Arrows of the Sun*, 56-57 no. 2.

⁴⁹⁹ See Bongenaar, *Neo-Babylonian Ebabbar Temple*, 133, and MacGinnis, “Role of Babylonian Temples,” 495. The entire tablet has now been published by Zawadzki, *Rental of Houses*, 217-18 no. 3.

⁵⁰⁰ A handful of previous scholars had already connected the entry regarding Egypt in CT 57 82 to Darius’ campaign; see Bongenaar, *Neo-Babylonian Ebabbar Temple*, 133, and Tuplin, “All the King’s Horse,” 127-28. Tolini “La Babylonie et l’Iran,” 1:246-47, was the first to connect this document to others tablets from year three and four, however.

this period. In addition, it has argued that an Egyptian king called Petubastis Seheribre can be connected to the rebellion, and that Darius may not have reconquered Egypt until 518 BC. The argument can be summarized as follows.

First, the Bisitun inscription mentions that Egypt rebelled while Darius was in Babylon, i.e. between ca. December 522 BC and April 521 BC (3.2.2). Second, several Egyptian sources document the reign of Petubastis Seheribre, a king who is not known from Egyptian king lists. The artistic style, archaeological context, and paleography of the texts indicate that he ruled in the sixth to early fifth century BC; it is therefore likely that he should be connected to the Bisitun crisis (3.3.2). Two demotic papyri that can be attributed to Seheribre's reign suggest that he claimed the throne of Egypt on or after 1 January 521 BC, and that his reign lasted until at least April of that year (3.3.2.5.2). Third, several sources indicate that the Egyptian rebellion lasted several years rather than several months. The *Stratagems* by Polyaeus, for example, claims that Darius defeated an Egyptian rebellion shortly after an Apis bull had passed away. The story can be connected to a historical bull that died in August 518 BC and that was buried in November of the same year (3.4.1). In addition, several Babylonian tablets from the Ebabbar temple at Sippar suggest that Darius levied soldiers – some of whom may have participated in a campaign against Egypt – between March 519 and March 517 BC (3.4.2). Moreover, a late date for Darius' invasion of Egypt is compatible with both contemporary Egyptian sources and the Bisitun inscription: at present, the earliest Egyptian texts that are dated to Darius' reign are the Apis stelae which commemorate the death of the aforementioned bull in 518 BC (3.3.1); and the Bisitun inscription does not comment on Darius' defeat of the Egyptian rebellion, which may have been due to the fact that Egypt was not yet defeated when the text was inscribed – not even when the column on Darius' second (520/19 BC) and third regnal years (519/18 BC) was added to the rock (3.2.2.3). In short, although the very historicity of the 522/21 BC Egyptian rebellion has sometimes been doubted, and although the various sources provide only little and dubitable evidence when viewed in isolation, the complete dossier that bears on the events of 522 to 518 BC suggests that the first Egyptian rebellion against Persian rule, led by Petubastis Seheribre, may have lasted more than three years (early 521 BC – mid-518 BC). It is important to observe that this is only one year short of the duration of Cambyses' rule of Egypt (early 526 BC – early 522 BC).

Chapter 4

The Egyptian Rebellion at the End of Darius I's Reign (ca. 487/86 BC)⁵⁰¹

4.1 Introduction

After the tumultuous years of Darius I's early reign (see Chapter 3), the new Achaemenid king began to consolidate his rule in the territories that made up the Persian Empire. Among other things, Darius ordered temples to be renovated and (re)built, monumental inscriptions to be composed, and ambitious construction projects to be initiated. In Egypt, the most visible manifestation of the king's activity was probably the Suez Canal, a large waterway that connected the Delta with the Red Sea. The cuneiform inscriptions on the canal stelae highlighted that Darius had conquered Egypt, and that the canal was intended to connect the Nile Valley more closely to Iran.⁵⁰² In addition, it was during Darius' reign that large parts of the Achaemenid palaces in southwestern Iran were erected. The latter resulted in a considerable migration of labor forces, by which thousands of imperial subjects – among which hundreds of Egyptians – were moved to and put to work on Iranian construction sites.⁵⁰³ Though speculative, it is conceivable that such policies were ill received by some inhabitants of the Nile Valley. They may have played a role in the eruption of a second Egyptian rebellion in the early fifth century BC, which is mentioned in the *Histories* of Herodotus. The historian states that it began at the end of Darius' reign, that Darius passed away before he could defeat the unrest, and that it was his son, Xerxes, who sent an army to Egypt and defeated the uprising (*Histories* 7.1, 7.4, 7.7). The so-called Daiva inscription from Xerxes' reign might refer to the same event: it claims that one of the Empire's satrapies was in "turmoil" (*yaud-*) when Xerxes acceded to the throne, and that the king "defeated that country and put it in its proper place."⁵⁰⁴

⁵⁰¹ A short version of the present chapter was published in article format in 2019; see Wijnsma, "And in the Fourth Year," 32-61.

⁵⁰² See 2.3.3.1. For other Egyptian royal inscriptions from Darius I's reign, see 2.4.1.1.

⁵⁰³ See Boucharlat, "Persia (Including Khūzestān)," 194-206, Henkelman, "Anhang," 273-363, and the discussion in 2.5.3.

⁵⁰⁴ See Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 304-5 7.88. Whether the text refers to a (specific) rebellion is contested; see the discussion in 2.3.3.2. Due to the lack of the historical detail in the inscription, it is not further discussed in the present chapter. Note that a probable third reference to the rebellion can be found in Aristotle's *On Rhetoric* 2.20.3, 1393a32-b4, which briefly mentions that Xerxes conquered Egypt before he invaded Greece.

Unlike the Egyptian rebellion of the Bisitun crisis, the rebellion that began at the end of Darius I's reign has long been accepted as a historical fact. The event features consistently in modern histories of Achaemenid Egypt, and it is frequently mentioned in histories of the Achaemenid Empire.⁵⁰⁵ As is the case with the Egyptian rebellion of the Bisitun crisis, however, the chronology of the second Egyptian rebellion is debated. At present, one can divide the different chronologies into two hypotheses. The first hypothesis states that the revolt should be dated to 487 – 485 or 487/86 – 485/84 BC. This is largely based on the *Histories* of Herodotus and predominates in studies by Classicists.⁵⁰⁶ The second hypothesis states that the rebellion should be dated to 486 – 485 BC or 486/85 – 485/84 BC. This is partly based on Egyptian sources and predominates among Egyptologists and historians of the Achaemenid Empire.⁵⁰⁷ Though the difference between the dates is relatively small, it has important consequences for one's understanding of the revolt. The purpose of the present chapter is therefore threefold. First, it aims to clarify the chronology of the revolt as given by Herodotus' *Histories*. It shows that this chronology places the rebellion in 487/86 – 485/84 BC. Second, the chapter compares Herodotus' chronology with Egyptian texts that are dated to the last regnal year of Darius on the one hand, and the first two regnal years of Xerxes on the other. It argues that the texts cannot be used to delimit the chronology of the rebellion to e.g. 486 – 485 BC, contrary to what has sometimes been assumed. Third, it aims to show that when one compares Herodotus' chronology with Egyptian texts from 487/86 – 485/84 BC, it is clear that a larger number of sources can be connected to the event. These sources provide us with important information on the rebellion's geographical extent, as well as on the division of political loyalties in Egypt at the end of Darius' reign.

⁵⁰⁵ See e.g. Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire*, 228, 235, Kienitz, *Die politische Geschichte Ägyptens*, 67, Cook, *Persian Empire*, 99-100, Ray, "Egypt 525 – 404 B.C.," 275-76, Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 161, 525, Perdu, "Saites and Persians," 152, Waters, *Ancient Persia*, 115-16, Ruzicka, *Trouble in the West*, 27-28, and Leahy, "Egypt in the Late Period," 727.

⁵⁰⁶ See e.g. How and Wells, *Commentary on Herodotus*, 2:133, Hammond, "Studies in Greek Chronology," 385, Miller, "Earlier Persian Dates," 40, Strasburger, "Herodots Zeitrechnung," 725, and Rhodes, "Herodotean Chronology Revisited," 71–72, Krentz, *Battle of Marathon*, 180.

⁵⁰⁷ See e.g. Kienitz, *Die politische Geschichte Ägyptens*, 67, Pestman, "Diospolis Parva Documents," 147, Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 161, 525, Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 236 no. 6.59 n. 4, 248, no. 7.6 n. 2, and Rottpeter, "Initiatoren und Träger," 14–17. Note that Kahn, "Inaros' Rebellion," 424, and Klotz, "Persian Period," 7, have suggested that the revolt began after Darius' death; this erroneous date is probably the result of studies which have dated the start of the revolt to the very end of 486 BC on the basis of P. Loeb 1 (see 4.3 below).

4.2 The rebellion in the *Histories* of Herodotus

The Egyptian rebellion that began at the end of Darius I's reign is mentioned at the start of Book 7 of the *Histories*. The historian notes that the rebellion began a few years after Darius' attempts to invade Greece (*Histories* 7.1). The king's first attempt had occurred in 492 BC, when he sent an expedition to the Greek mainland via Thrace and Macedonia (*Histories* 6.43-44). The goal of the campaign was to punish Athens and Eretria for the role they had played in the Ionian revolt (ca. 499 – 493 BC): both city-states had sent military support to the Greek rebels in western Anatolia, and had played a role in the (partial) capture and destruction of the satrapal capital at Sardis (*Histories* 5.97, 5.99-101). Darius' first campaign was abandoned, however, when his army suffered heavy losses in a storm off the coast of mount Athos, and in an ambush in Macedonia (*Histories* 6.44-45). Undeterred, Darius organized a second expedition to Greece in 490 BC. This one took a different route: after sailing from island to island in the Aegean Sea, the Persian fleet landed at Eretria. The city was besieged, looted, and (partly) burned (*Histories* 6.94-101). Though this second campaign was partially successful, the Persians were eventually defeated by the Athenians on the beach at Marathon (*Histories* 6.102-116).⁵⁰⁸ The first paragraphs of Book 7 record what happened next. Section 4.2.1 below provides a summary of Herodotus' account, with particular focus on the Egyptian rebellion that is said to have followed the defeat at Marathon. In a second step, section 4.2.2 will discuss the chronology that Herodotus provides for the event. As the exact words which the historian uses are important for the latter discussion, the summary of 4.2.1 includes several paragraphs of the *Histories* that are quoted in full.

4.2.1 The Egyptian rebellion according to Book 7

According to Herodotus, when Darius I heard that his second attempt to invade Greece had been thwarted by the Athenians at Marathon, he became even angrier with Athens (*Histories* 7.1.1). The king immediately began preparations for a third campaign:

Herodotus, *Histories* 7.1.2-3

⁵⁰⁸ For an introduction to Darius I's Greek campaigns, see Waters, *Ancient Persia*, 87-91, and Rollinger and Degen, "Establishment of the Achaemenid Empire," 432-33.

καὶ αὐτίκα μὲν ἐπηγγέλλετο πέμπων ἀγγέλους κατὰ πόλιν ἐτοιμάζειν στρατιήν, πολλῶ πλέω ἐπιτάσσειν ἑκάστοισι ἢ πρότερον παρέχειν, καὶ νέας τε καὶ ἵππους καὶ σῆτον καὶ πλοῖα. τούτων δὲ περιαγγελιομένων ἢ Ἀσίῃ ἐδονέετο ἐπὶ τρία ἔτεα, καταλεγόμενων τε τῶν ἀρίστων ὡς ἐπὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα στρατευομένων καὶ παρασκευαζομένων. τετάρτῳ δὲ ἔτει Αἰγύπτιοι ὑπὸ Καμβύσει δουλωθέντες ἀπέστησαν ἀπὸ Περσέων. ἐνθαῦτα δὲ καὶ μᾶλλον ὄρητο καὶ ἐπ’ ἀμφοτέρους στρατεύεσθαι.

“Forthwith he [=Darius] sent messengers to all cities commanding the equipment of an army, charging each to provide much more than they had before provided of ships and horses and provision and vessels of transport. By these messages Asia was shaken for three years, the best men being enrolled for service against Hellas and making preparation therefor. In the fourth year the Egyptians, whom Cambyses had enslaved, revolted from the Persians; thereupon Darius was but the more desirous of sending expeditions even against both.” (Godley, *Herodotus*, 3:300-301)

While Darius was preparing for a campaign against Egypt and Athens, however, a quarrel arose among his sons: both Artobazanes, Darius’ eldest son by his first wife, and Xerxes, Darius’ eldest son by Atossa, the daughter of Cyrus, wished to be their father’s successor. They maintained that Darius should declare an heir before he went on campaign. After hearing arguments from both sides, Darius chose Xerxes as his heir (*Histories* 7.2-7.3).⁵⁰⁹ Herodotus then writes as follows:

Herodotus, *Histories* 7.4

Ἀποδέξας δὲ βασιλέα Πέρσησι Ξέρξεα Δαρεῖος ὄρητο στρατεύεσθαι. ἀλλὰ γὰρ μετὰ ταῦτα τε καὶ Αἰγύπτου ἀπόστασιν τῷ ὑστέρῳ ἔτει παρασκευαζόμενον συνήνεκε αὐτὸν Δαρεῖον, βασιλεύσαντα τὰ πάντα ἕξ τε καὶ τριήκοντα ἔτεα, ἀποθανεῖν, οὐδέ οἱ ἐξεγένετο οὔτε τοὺς ἀπεστεῶτας Αἰγυπτίους οὔτε Ἀθηναίους τιμωρήσασθαι.

“Having declared Xerxes king, Darius was intent on his expedition. But in the year after this, and the revolt of Egypt, death came upon him in the midst of his preparation, after a reign of six and thirty years in all; nor was it granted to him to punish either the revolted Egyptians, or the Athenians.” (Godley, *Herodotus*, 3:304-5)

⁵⁰⁹ The so-called Harem inscription from Xerxes’ reign likewise states that Darius chose Xerxes as his heir, even though Darius had other sons; see Schmitt, *Die altpersische Inschriften*, 160-63 (XPf), and Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 244 7.1.

With the death of Darius, Xerxes officially became king of the Achaemenid Empire. According to the historian from Halicarnassus, he had no particular interest in invading Greece. His cousin Mardonius had to persuade him to carry out Darius' plans, emphasizing that the Athenians should not go unpunished for their past deeds. In addition, messengers from Thessaly invited the king into Greece, and an oracle monger highlighted that the prophecies for such an invasion were favorable (*Histories* 7.5-7.6). Then:

Herodotus, *Histories* 7.7

Ὡς δὲ ἀνεγνώσθη Ξέρξης στρατεύεσθαι ἐπὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα, ἐνθαῦτα δευτέρῳ μὲν ἔτει μετὰ τὸν θάνατον τὸν Δαρείου πρῶτα στρατιήν ποιέεται ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀπεστεῶτας. τούτους μὲν νυν καταστρεψάμενος καὶ Αἴγυπτον πᾶσαν πολλὸν δουλοτέρην ποιήσας ἢ ἐπὶ Δαρείου ἦν, ἐπιτράπει Ἀχαιμένει ἀδελφεῷ μὲν ἑωυτοῦ, Δαρείου δὲ παιδί. Ἀχαιμένα μὲν νυν ἐπιτροπεύοντα Αἰγύπτου χρόνῳ μετέπειτα ἐφόνευσεν Ἰνάρωσ ὁ Ψαμμητίχου ἀνὴρ Λίβυς.

“Having been over-persuaded to send an expedition against Hellas, Xerxes first marched against the rebels, in the year after Darius' death. These he subdued, and laid Egypt under a much harder slavery than in the time of Darius; and he committed the governance of it to Achaemenes, his own brother, Darius' son. This Achaemenes, being then viceroy of Egypt, was at a later day slain by a Libyan, Inaros son of Psammetichus.” (Godley, *Herodotus*, 3:306-9)⁵¹⁰

After having successfully conquered Egypt, Xerxes turned to the plans for an expedition against Athens. After much deliberation (*Histories* 7.8-7.19), the preparations for a large-scale assault began:

Herodotus, *Histories* 7.20.1

Ἀπὸ γὰρ Αἰγύπτου ἀλώσιος ἐπὶ μὲν τέσσερα ἔτια πλήρεια παραρτέετο στρατιήν τε καὶ τὰ πρόσφορα τῇ στρατιῇ, πέμπτῳ δὲ ἔτει ἀνομένῳ ἐστρατηλάτεε χειρὶ μεγάλῃ πλήθεος.

“For full four years from the conquest of Egypt he was equipping his host and preparing all that was needful therefor; and ere the fifth year was completed he set forth on his march with the might of a great multitude.” (Godley, *Herodotus*, 3:334-35)

⁵¹⁰ For Inaros' rebellion, see 2.2.2.

Thus began Xerxes' invasion of Greece.

4.2.2 *The dates of the rebellion according to Herodotus*

As should be clear from the preceding summary, the Egyptian rebellion that began at the end of Darius I's reign is embedded within Herodotus' narrative of the Greco-Persian Wars. In fact, the rebellion is little more than a side-story. The focus of Book 7 falls heavily on the start of Xerxes' invasion of Greece, while Books 8 and 9 focus on the deadly battles that were fought on the Greek mainland, Xerxes' capture of Athens, and the Persians' eventual – and infamous – defeat.⁵¹¹ That the Egyptian rebellion is a minor episode in this grander scheme of events has downsides as well as benefits for modern historians. On the one hand, Herodotus does not provide his readers with detailed information on the Egyptian rebellion (assuming that he had any to give): the leaders of the rebellion are not identified, nor is information given on the rebellion's geographical reach. On the other hand, the rebellion can be dated with relative precision, as it is embedded within a larger – and quite well-known – chronological web. Two events are fundamental in this respect. The first is the battle of Marathon, which can be dated to ca. August/September 490 BC.⁵¹² The second is Xerxes' conquest of Athens, which can be dated to ca. August/September of 480 BC.⁵¹³ Classicists have long used these extremities to date the events in between. The goal of the following section is to illuminate their findings, and to show how different interpretations of Herodotus' chronological scheme influence our understanding of the dates of the Egyptian revolt.

4.2.2.1 Counting Herodotus' years

Dating the events that Herodotus places between Darius' defeat at Marathon and Xerxes' invasion of Greece can be done in two steps. The first step is straightforward. As should be evident from the paragraphs quoted above, Herodotus places some of the events that he describes in Book 7 in an explicit chronological sequence. One can follow this sequence, and simply count the years that the historian mentions. This creates the following picture. First, *Histories* 7.1 states that the Persian defeat at Marathon was followed by three years (τρία ἔτεα) of military preparations for a new assault against

⁵¹¹ For an introduction to these events, see e.g. Waters, *Ancient Persia*, 120-33, and Rollinger and Degen, "Establishment of the Achaemenid Empire," 433-34.

⁵¹² See Olson, Doescher, and Olson, "The Moon and the Marathon," 34-41, and Krentz, *Battle of Marathon*, 180-82.

⁵¹³ See Macan, *Herodotus*, 398-412, esp. 411, and Stoneman, *Xerxes: A Persian Life*, 226-28.

Greece. The Egyptian revolt started in the fourth year (τετάρτῳ ... ἔτει). As the battle of Marathon can be dated to ca. August/September 490 BC, the fourth year of preparations must have begun in 487 BC.⁵¹⁴ Second, *Histories* 7.4 states that Darius died in the year after (ὕστέρῳ ἔτει) he had declared Xerxes his heir, and after the Egyptian revolt had begun. This year must have been a year that began in 486 BC (*Histories* 7.4). Third, *Histories* 7.7 states that Xerxes sent an army to Egypt in the second or next year (δευτέρῳ ... ἔτει) after Darius' death. It is important to observe that both "second" and "next" are possible translations of the Greek word δεύτερος: the word literally means "second," but as Herodotus counted inclusively the English word "next" often bears the same meaning.⁵¹⁵ In other words, if the year in which Darius died began in 486 BC, and would be identified as a virtual year one, the second – or next – year would have begun in 485 BC. Fourth, *Histories* 7.20 states that Egypt's defeat was followed by four full years (τέσσερα ἔτια πλήρη) of military preparations for an assault against Athens, and that Xerxes' march against Greece began in the course of the fifth year (πέμπτῳ ... ἔτει). This fifth year must have begun in either 481 or 480 BC. The choice depends on whether one places the start of the preparations directly after Egypt's defeat, which might have happened as early as 485 BC, or in the year that followed the year of Egypt's defeat, which would have begun in 484 BC.⁵¹⁶ Finally, within several months of the start of the invasion, Xerxes occupied Athens in the summer of 480 BC (*Histories* 8.51).⁵¹⁷ Following this chronology, the approximate dates of the Egyptian revolt would be 487 – 485 BC, or – more accurately – 487/86 – 485/84 BC.

4.2.2.2 Defining Herodotus' years

If one wishes to specify the duration of the Egyptian revolt more precisely than what has been done above, a second step is required. It is important to observe that this second step is significantly more complicated than the first. It requires one to define the limits of the years in which the events took place. Scholars continue to debate what a "year" (ἔτος) was for Herodotus, however. There are roughly four options to consider. Option one is that Herodotus referred to "year periods" in his

⁵¹⁴ For the date of the battle at Marathon, see n. 512 above.

⁵¹⁵ See Powell, *Lexicon to Herodotus*, 82, and Hammond, "Studies in Greek Chronology," 383. The practice of inclusive counting becomes more important when one tries to identify Herodotus' years with exact periods of time (see below).

⁵¹⁶ Compare e.g. Miller, "Earlier Persian Dates," 40, and Rhodes, "Herodotean Chronology Revisited," 72, who place the start of the four years of military preparations in the same year as the defeat of Egypt, i.e. in 485/484, and Strasburger, "Herodots Zeitrechnung," 724–725 and How and Wells, *Commentary on Herodotus*, 2:133, who place it in the year following Egypt's defeat, i.e. in 484/483.

⁵¹⁷ For the date of Xerxes' capture of Athens, see n. 513 above.

narrative. A year period can be defined as a random period of about twelve months.⁵¹⁸ Option two is that Herodotus referred to calendar years in his narrative. A simple example of a calendar year would be the modern Gregorian year, which runs from 1 January to 31 December. In Herodotus' case, scholars have argued that he may have been using Athenian archon years, which began at the start of summer, or Persian regnal years, which began at the end of March or beginning of April.⁵¹⁹ Option three is that Herodotus referred to campaign years in his narrative.⁵²⁰ In fifth century BC Greece, campaign years began in the spring, when the passing of winter allowed the renewal of military campaigns in the Mediterranean. The fourth and final option is that Herodotus referred to all or several of these years within his narrative, choosing one or the other when it suited his purposes.⁵²¹ As one's acceptance of a particular Herodotean year influences the chronological reconstruction of the Egyptian rebellion, it is important to explore these options in more detail.

Let us begin with the start date of the rebellion. To repeat: Herodotus writes that three years of military preparations began after the battle of Marathon. Egypt rebelled in the fourth year. It is possible to interpret these years as year periods, for example, but also as calendar years. In the first case, the fourth year after the battle of Marathon would have started about thirty-six months after August/September 490 BC. The year in which the Egyptian revolt began would then have run from ca. August/September 487 BC to August/September 486 BC. In the second case, however, the possible start date of the revolt would be pushed back by several months. It is possible, for example, that the first year of military preparations was the Athenian archon year in which the battle of Marathon took place (following Herodotus' inclusive counting). This year ended in ca. June 489 BC. The third (archon) year would thus have ended in ca. June 487 BC. And the fourth (archon) year would have run from ca. June 487 to June 486 BC. If one applies the same logic to Persian regnal years, the start date moves even further back in time: the fourth (Persian) year would have begun on 30 March, i.e. the first day of the Persian New Year in 487 BC. The year ended on 17 April 486 BC.

⁵¹⁸ See e.g. Macan, *Herodotus*, 1:2, 29.

⁵¹⁹ See Hammond, "Studies in Greek Chronology," 371-411 (archon years), and Miller, "Earlier Persian Dates," 29-52 (Persian regnal years).

⁵²⁰ See Busolt, *Die ältere attische Geschichte*, 537-538 n. 3, How and Wells, *Commentary on Herodotus*, 2:79, 128, 133, Strasburger, "Herodots Zeitrechnung," 698 n. 31, Scott, *Historical Commentary*, 457 n. 1, and Stadter, "Thucydides as 'Reader,'" 44-45.

⁵²¹ See e.g. Macan, who thinks that Herodotus's years generally reflect campaign years (*ibid.*, *Herodotus*, 2:403-404), but that the years of military preparation under Darius and Xerxes are year periods (*ibid.*, 1:2, 29). As for the second/next year after Darius's death: Macan considers that both an interpretation of the passage as the next (calendar) year and as the second year (period) are possible (*ibid.*, 1:8-9).

Similar complications affect our understanding of the end-date of the Egyptian revolt. This can be illustrated with reference to year periods on the one hand and campaign years on the other. To repeat: Herodotus writes that Darius died in the year that followed the start of the Egyptian revolt. In the second or next year after Darius' death, Xerxes sent an army to Egypt and defeated the uprising. If Herodotus referred to year periods in his narrative there are two options to consider. The first is that Darius died between ca. August/September 486 BC and August/September 485 BC, i.e. in the fifth year period after the battle of Marathon. The second or next year after Darius' death would then have begun in ca. August/September 485 BC – the year of Darius' death being counted as the “first” year (see above). The second option is that Herodotus knew of Darius' exact date of death. According to contemporary cuneiform tablets, Darius probably passed away at the end of November 486 BC.⁵²² The second or next year after Darius' death might then have begun in ca. November 485 BC, i.e. one year period after Darius' date of death. If, on the other hand, Herodotus used campaign years rather than year periods in his narrative, the date of Xerxes' campaign against Egypt would be pushed back by several months. In this case, Darius would have died after the spring of 486 BC, i.e. in the fifth campaign year after the battle of Marathon (following Herodotus' inclusive counting); and the second or next (campaign) year after his death would have begun in the spring of 485 BC.

At present, none of the hypotheses regarding Herodotus' use of “years” in this part of the *Histories* can be proven beyond reasonable doubt. In the case of the chronology of the Egyptian rebellion, one therefore has to consider that there is a margin of error of several months. Simply put, this means that the start of the rebellion – according to Herodotus, at least – may be placed in 487 BC or in 486 BC, and that its end date may be placed in 485 BC or in 484 BC. Having said that, it is important to emphasize that the chronological reconstructions which the *Histories* allows for are not endless. For example, one can safely conclude that Herodotus dated the rebellion to the period between March 487 BC and June 484 BC. These are the outer-limits of all the possible Herodotean years combined (see table 2). In addition, one can qualify the outermost parameters of the beginning and end of the revolt as well. According to the *Histories*, its beginning fell somewhere between March 487 and August/September 486 BC. Its end fell between March 485 and June 484 BC. This leaves us with a period of at least seven months (August/September 486 – March 485 BC), and at most three years and four months (March 487 – June 484 BC), somewhere in which Herodotus placed an Egyptian revolt.

⁵²² See Zawadzki, “Date of the Death of Darius I,” 39.

Table 2. All possible timespans for the beginning and end of the Egyptian revolt, relative to which “year” Herodotus may have used.⁵²³

	Beginning of the revolt (= fourth year after the battle at Marathon in August/September 490 BC)	End of the revolt (= second/next year after Darius’s death in November 486 BC)
Campaign years (start in spring)	Mar 487 – Mar 486 BC	Mar 485 – Mar 484 BC
Persian regnal years (start in March or April)	30 Mar 487 – 17 Apr 486 BC	6 Apr 485 – 25 Mar 484 BC
Athenian archon years (start in ca. June)	June 487 – June 486 BC	June 485 – June 484 BC
Year periods (periods of twelve months)	Aug/Sept 487 – Aug/Sept 486 BC	Nov 485 – June 484 BC ⁵²⁴
Outer extremities of all possibilities	Mar 487 – Aug/Sept 486 BC	Mar 485 – June 484 BC

4.3 The Egyptian sources: year thirty-six of Darius I and year two of Xerxes

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, Classicists have long dated the Egyptian rebellion to ca. 487/86 – 485/84 BC.⁵²⁵ Egyptologists and historians of the Achaemenid Empire, however, have generally dated the revolt to ca. 486 – 485 or 486/85 – 485/84 BC.⁵²⁶ The reason for this difference is twofold. One reason is that Egyptologists and historians of the Achaemenid Empire have sometimes misread and/or followed a simplified reading of the *Histories*. The beginning of the revolt is often

⁵²³ This table was first published in Wijnsma, “And in the Fourth Year,” 38.

⁵²⁴ Strictly speaking, the second year period after Darius’s date of death would run from November 485 BC to November 484 BC. This means that Xerxes could have subdued Egypt as late as November 484 BC. However, such a late date for the rebellion’s end would interfere with the rest of Herodotus’s chronology. Namely: the end of Egypt’s revolt is followed by four full years of military preparations, with Xerxes’s expedition of Greece starting in the fifth year. This fifth year could not have started in November 480 BC, because it is commonly accepted that Xerxes occupied Athens in the summer of 480 BC (a problem which is noted by Depuydt, “Regnal Years,” 199 n. 34). Therefore, if one wants to maintain Herodotus’s four full years of preparation (understood as either year periods or calendar years), the latest date for the end of the Egyptian rebellion would be June 484 BC. The fifth year could then have started in June 480 BC, which coincides with Xerxes’s crossing of the Hellespont (for the latter’s date see Hammond, “Studies in Greek Chronology,” 383-384).

⁵²⁵ See n. 506 above.

⁵²⁶ See n. 507 above.

placed in 486 BC, for example, because it is thought to have begun four years after the battle of Marathon, rather than “in the fourth year.”⁵²⁷ In addition, the end of the revolt has been variously placed in 485 BC, on the assumption that it ended in the year following Darius’ exact date of death in November 486 BC; after November 485 BC, on the assumption that it ended in the second year period after Darius’ death; and in 484 BC, on the assumption that the revolt ended two years after it had begun in 486 BC.⁵²⁸ It should be clear from the previous section that such conclusions lack sufficient support from the *Histories*. If one wishes to use Herodotus to date the Egyptian revolt, the chronological framework should be 487/86 – 485/84 BC, and more specifically March 487 to June 484 BC.

The second – and more important – reason that the dates given by Egyptologists and historians of the Achaemenid Empire often differ from those by Classicists is connected to the date formulae of Egyptian texts. In the nineteenth and twentieth century, a handful of Egyptian sources were published that were dated to year thirty-six of Darius I (487/86 BC) – i.e. Darius’ last regnal year – and year two of Xerxes (485/84 BC). In particular, it became clear that the last text dated to Darius’ reign was P. Loeb 1, a demotic letter that may have been excavated at Elephantine. It was written on 17 Payni, year thirty-six (of Darius I), i.e. 5 October 486 BC.⁵²⁹ The first text dated to Xerxes’ reign was a rock inscription from the Wadi Hammamat (Posener 25). It was inscribed on 19 Thoth of year two of Xerxes, i.e. 9 January 484 BC.⁵³⁰ Some scholars assumed that these texts were (partly) contemporary with the rebellion mentioned by Herodotus.⁵³¹ Others, however, used the Egyptian date formulae to delimit the chronology of the rebellion, arguing that the revolt would have begun after P. Loeb 1 was written, and that it would have ended before Posener 25 was inscribed.⁵³² The following section takes a critical look at the latter argument. This is done in two steps. First, a detailed introduction is given to all Egyptian texts that can be dated to year thirty-six of Darius I and year two of Xerxes. This includes – but is not limited to – P. Loeb 1 and Posener 25. Second, the suitability of the texts as

⁵²⁷ See Kienitz, *Die politische Geschichte Ägyptens*, 67, Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 518, Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 236 no. 59 n. 4, and Rottpeter, “Initiaroren und Träger,” 11, 14.

⁵²⁸ See respectively Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 248 no. 7.6, Pestman, “Diospolis Parva Documents,” 147, and Rottpeter, “Initiaroren und Träger,” 15.

⁵²⁹ See Spiegelberg, “Drei demotische Schreiben,” 614-22, and 4.3.1.1 below.

⁵³⁰ See Lepsius, *Denkmäler*, 3:283 n, Posener, *La première domination perse*, 120 no. 25, and 4.3.2 below.

⁵³¹ See Kienitz, *Die politische Geschichte Ägyptens*, 67, Rottpeter, “Initiaroren und Träger,” 15-16, and Leahy, “Egypt in the Late Period,” 727

⁵³² See Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire*, 227-28, 235, Cruz-Uribe, “On the Existence of Psammetichus IV,” 37-38, and Pestman, “Diospolis Parva Documents,” 147.

termini post and *ante quem* for the Egyptian rebellion is discussed. The social background of the people who produced the texts is particularly important in this regard.

4.3.1 Egyptian sources from year 36 of Darius

4.3.1.1 A letter about a transport of grain (P. Loeb 1)

P. Loeb 1 is a demotic letter, which was written on 17 Payni of year thirty-six of a king whose name is not mentioned.⁵³³ The letter was written by a man with the Egyptian name Khnumemakhet, son of Horwennefer, and was addressed to Khnumemakhet's superior, who bore the name Farnava (Old Iranian *Farna(h)vā).⁵³⁴ The text has come down to us on a ca. 27 x 22.5 cm demotic papyrus. The papyrus was bought from an antiquities dealer in Cairo in January 1927, and currently belongs to the Institut für Ägyptologie und Koptologie in Munich.⁵³⁵ Though the provenance of the text is uncertain, it is plausible that it was found in the region of Elephantine. Key in this regard is Farnava, to whom P. Loeb 1 was addressed. A man with the same name occurs in P. Berlin 13582, a demotic papyrus dated to Pharmouthi of year thirty-five of Darius I (July/August 487 BC). The latter was excavated at Elephantine by Otto Rubensohn in 1906/07. It preserves a receipt for silver, which was paid to inaugurate a certain Djedhor son of Paibes as *wab*-priest of Khnum. The silver was deposited in the treasury of Farnava, who is described as "he of Tshetres, to whom the fortress of Syene is entrusted."⁵³⁶ As is well known, the fortress of Syene was located opposite Elephantine, on the eastern bank of the Nile. Like its neighboring settlement, Syene housed a community of soldiers, who were

⁵³³ See Martin, "Demotic Texts," 296-97 (C4). For earlier editions, see Spiegelberg, "Drei demotische Schreiben," 614-22 C, pl. 6, Spiegelberg, "Die demotischen Papyri Loeb," 97-98, pls. 13-14, and Spiegelberg, *Die demotischen Papyri Loeb*, 1-7 no. 1, pls. 1-2. For a discussion of the date, see below.

⁵³⁴ The addressee of the letter has sometimes been identified with Pherendates, satrap of Egypt during Darius I's reign; see e.g. Spiegelberg, "Die demotischen Papyri Loeb," 97-98, Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire*, 227, Kienitz, *Die politische Geschichte Ägyptens*, 67-68 n. 8, and – more recently – Rottpeter, "Initiaroren und Träger," 16, and Sternberg-el Hotabi, *Ägypten und Perser*, 57. The reading of the name has been amended from *prnt(w)* to *prnw*, however; see Hughes, "So-called Pherendates Correspondence," 75-86, and Martin, "Demotic Texts," 296-97. For the Iranian form of the name, see Schmitt and Vittmann, *Iranische Namen*, 76-77 no. 45.

⁵³⁵ See Spiegelberg, "Die demotischen Papyri Loeb," 95-96, and Martin, "Demotic Texts," 277 n. 2.

⁵³⁶ See Martin, "Demotic Texts," 374-75 (C35). For an earlier edition, see Zauzich, *Papyri von der Insel Elephantine*, 1-2.

charged with the protection of Egypt's southern border.⁵³⁷ In addition, Tshetres (*tš-št-rsy*, literally “the southern district”) was an administrative region in the south of Egypt. Its boundaries remain difficult to define, but it seems to have comprised the area between Hermonthis – just south of Thebes – and Elephantine/Syene.⁵³⁸ Farnava therefore appears to have been a high-ranking (military) official in Upper Egypt, whose seat of residence may have been located near the first cataract of the Nile. We may assume, as previous scholars have done, that this Farnava was the same man who was addressed in P. Loeb 1: the identification is supported both by the date of the papyri (year thirty-five to thirty-six of Darius I; see below), and by the authority which Farnava is suggested to have enjoyed in both texts.⁵³⁹

The contents of P. Loeb 1 can be summarized as follows: the text states that Khnumemakhet, the author of the letter, had been sent to a mountain in the accompaniment of a certain Atarpana (Old Iranian *Ātr-pāna-).⁵⁴⁰ Their task was to fetch a load of grain, which would be deposited on a nearby quay. The men were to bring the grain to Egypt, in particular to the house of a certain Usirwer. According to Khnumemakhet, Atarpana wished to deposit the grain from the quay “on the ground” (*r pꜣ itn*).⁵⁴¹ But Khnumemakhet disagreed:

P. Loeb 1, l. 6-12

“I said to him, ‘The grain, if it is deposited on this ground, without the men who will carry it to Egypt being present, (then) the brigands who are on the mountain will come for it by night (and) they will

⁵³⁷ The settlement at Syene is mostly known from the hundreds of texts that were found at Elephantine; see e.g. Porten, *Archives from Elephantine*, 28-61, and 2.4.2.2.

⁵³⁸ See Schütze, “Local Administration,” 492.

⁵³⁹ That P. Loeb 1 should be connected to Elephantine/Syene has been widely accepted since Spiegelberg's publication of the papyrus; see e.g. Spiegelberg, “Drei demotische Schreiben,” 614-22, Hughes, “So-called Pherendates Correspondence,” 85-86, Martin, “Demotic Texts,” 296-97, and Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 448. It should nevertheless be noted that Spiegelberg's edition has been improved upon over the years, and that the arguments for a connection to Elephantine/Syene given here differ from his. For example, neither Elephantine nor Syene are mentioned in P. Loeb 1: the reading “Hafen von Syene” in l. 14 of P. Loeb 1 has been amended to “einer Schiffsladung” (compare Spiegelberg, “Drei demotische Schreiben,” 616, 620 xxv, with Zauzich, “Zwei vermeintliche Ortsnamen,” 145). In addition, Spiegelberg connected P. Loeb 1 to several demotic letters from Elephantine, which were addressed to Pherendates, the satrap of Egypt under Darius I (Spiegelberg, “Drei demotische Schreiben,” 604-622). This connection can no longer be upheld, as the reading of the addressee's name has been amended to Farnava (see n. 534 above).

⁵⁴⁰ See Schmitt and Vittmann, *Iranische Namen*, 52-53 no. 18.

⁵⁴¹ Possibly to be translated as “inland”; see Martin, “Demotic Texts,” 297 n. 7.

steal it.’ We are used to seeing the brigands when they are on the mountain on the southern side opposite us. Atarpana is used to seeing them as well. It usually happens that they sit opposite us by day, but there is (a) long distance between us (and) between them. The grain, if it is brought down without armed men to guard this grain (being present), (then) the brigands will come for it by night (and) they will take it away.” (Martin, “Demotic Texts,” 297)⁵⁴²

Khnumemakhet therefore asked his superior Farnava to intervene, and to send word to Atarpana that the grain required strict protection. It is important to observe that the exact location of the mountain (*d̄w*) is unclear. It is plausible, however, that Khnumemakhet and Atarpana had been sent to (northern) Nubia, south of the first cataract: as the grain was to be transported to Egypt, the mountain evidently lay outside of Egypt proper. In addition, as the men answered to Farnava, they may have been sent from Elephantine/Syene, which was located just north of the first cataract.⁵⁴³

In the context of the Egyptian rebellion mentioned by Herodotus, the contents of P. Loeb 1 are noteworthy for two reasons. The first reason is that the letter was written on 17 Payni of year thirty-six. The only Persian kings of Egypt who enjoyed such a high regnal year were Darius I and Artaxerxes I. The paleography of the text supports a date under the earlier king.⁵⁴⁴ That the letter was written during Darius I’s reign also fits with what we know of Farnava: as mentioned above, a person with the same name and a similar level of authority is mentioned in a demotic receipt from Elephantine, which is explicitly dated to year thirty-five of Darius I.⁵⁴⁵ It is therefore likely that the Julian date of P. Loeb 1 is 5 October 486 BC.⁵⁴⁶ At present, this is the last preserved Egyptian date

⁵⁴² Martin, “Demotic Texts,” 297, gives Atrbanu rather than Atarpana; compare Schmitt and Vittmann, *Iranische Namen*, 52-53 no. 18.

⁵⁴³ Spiegelberg translated *Dw* with “Nubien” on similar grounds; see *ibid.*, “Drei demotische Schreiben,” 617 vii. That the events were located in Nubia has also been accepted by Hughes, “So-called Pherendates Correspondence,” 85-86, and Martin, “Demotic Texts,” 296. For other transports of grain to Elephantine/Syene, see Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 448.

⁵⁴⁴ See Spiegelberg, “Die demotischen Papyri Loeb,” 98-99.

⁵⁴⁵ See Martin, “Demotic Texts,” 374-75 (C35).

⁵⁴⁶ That P. Loeb 1 should be dated to the reign of Darius I has never been questioned. Note, however, that the month in which the letter was written used to be read as Mecheir, which would date the papyrus to 7 June 486 BC; see e.g. Spiegelberg, “Drei demotische Schreiben,” 616 l. 16, Cruz-Uribe, “On the Existence of Psammetichus IV,” 37, and Pestman, “Diospolis Parva Documents,” 147. The months can look quite similar in demotic (see Vleeming, Review of



Figure 12. Map of a section of southern Egypt, featuring the sites where the majority of sources from year thirty-five of Darius I to year two of Xerxes were found. (Adapted by the author from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Ancient_Egypt_map-en.svg)

for Darius’ reign. It is important to observe that the date falls shortly after Herodotus’ outermost limit for the start of the Egyptian rebellion (i.e. August/September 486 BC; see table 2 above). We may therefore conclude one of two things: either Herodotus’ chronology for the rebellion was erroneous and Egypt was still under Persian control in the early autumn of 486 BC, or P. Loeb 1 was written when the Egyptian rebellion had already begun.

The second reason that P. Loeb 1 is noteworthy is that Khnumemakhet mentions the presence of “brigands” (*rmtw nty bks*). The brigands were located on the mountain near the quay, and threatened to steal the grain if it was not properly protected. The episode is sometimes considered to be an

Tax Receipts, 155), but Payni – i.e. the second month of Shemou - appears to be the more likely reading (personal communication with Cary Martin and Joachim Quack, June 2018; see also Martin, “Demotic Texts,” 297 n. 5).

example of common thievery.⁵⁴⁷ It is important to observe, however, that Khnumemakhet's phrase can also be translated as "rebels," or more literally as "the men who rebel."⁵⁴⁸ The key word is *bks*. In the Middle Kingdom, *bks* – or *bgs* – had a general connotation of "wrongdoing."⁵⁴⁹ In wisdom texts from the New Kingdom, the word was contrasted with loyalty to the king, and may have meant insubordination.⁵⁵⁰ In demotic texts from the first millennium BC, *bks* is more specifically associated with armed strife, and even with outright rebellion: several texts use the word in connection to Chaonnophris and Haronnophris, the leaders of the southern Egyptian revolt in the late third to early second century BC.⁵⁵¹ That some scholars have nevertheless translated *rmtw nty bks* with "brigands" in P. Loeb 1 is informed less by the historical use of the verb *bks* than by the idea that "[t]here is nothing in the letter to suggest a civil uprising."⁵⁵² A similar discussion exists in connection to a group of letters that were written in the second half of the fifth century BC. As discussed in 2.4.2.2, several Aramaic letters from Elephantine and from the dossier of the satrap Arsames refer to rebellion (*mrd*) and unrest (*ywz'*, from Old Persian *yaud-*) in Egypt. Yet, the contents of the letters appear to concern local trouble in specific parts of the country rather than politically motivated uprisings. For example, one of the letters to Arsames mentions that an Egyptian called Petosiri had lost his father and the latter's entire household during *ywz'*; he therefore asked Arsames to be recognized as heir of his father's possessions.⁵⁵³ It has been suggested that such letters reflect "localised chronic problems, not major revolts."⁵⁵⁴ What is missing from this discussion is an appreciation of what rebellions looked like – or could look like – on the ground, and how contemporary witnesses, especially those who belonged to the opposing "imperial" side, may have described them.

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, the Egyptian rebellions of the sixth to fourth centuries BC were episodes of armed resistance that were aimed at the overthrow of Persian rule. They generally resulted in the installation of local rulers as kings of Egypt, and they included clashes between armies that were loyal to the Achaemenid Empire on the one hand and armies that supported rebel kings on the

⁵⁴⁷ See e.g. Hughes, "So-Called Pherendates Correspondence," 85, Briant, "Ethno-classe dominante," 142-43, and Martin, "Demotic Texts," 297 n. 8.

⁵⁴⁸ See Spiegelberg, "Drei demotische Schreiben," 619-20 xvi, and Martin, "Demotic Texts," 297 n. 8.

⁵⁴⁹ See Vittmann, "'Feinde' in den ptolemäischen Synodaldekreten," 217.

⁵⁵⁰ See *ibid.*, and Fecht, "Der Totenbrief," 126-28.

⁵⁵¹ See Spiegelberg "Eine neue Erwähnung," 53-57, Veisse, *Les "révoltes égyptiennes"*, 116, and Vittmann, "'Feinde' in den ptolemäischen Synodaldekreten," 218-19.

⁵⁵² Hughes, "So-Called Pherendates Correspondence," 85.

⁵⁵³ See Taylor, "Bodleian Letters," 38-39, and Porten and Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents*, 1:118-19 A6.11.

⁵⁵⁴ Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 722 n. 4.

other (see 2.6). As with any rebellion in history, however, the line between organized political resistance and more local, disorganized episodes of “trouble” and “brigandry” can be a blurry one.⁵⁵⁵ For example, it is possible that some groups in society used periods of political disarray as an opportunity to ambush estates and transports of foodstuffs in the knowledge that they might get away with it more easily than during periods of uncontested imperial control. On the other hand, similar attacks could be part of organized resistance against Persian rule, whereby imperial sites and goods that held symbolic and/or practical value were consciously targeted. An example of the latter is the Sidonian revolt of the fourth century BC. According to Diodorus of Sicily, the first hostile acts of the rebels against the imperial regime consisted of the destruction of a *paradeisos*, which the Persian kings had sometimes visited. In addition, they burned fodder for horses, which had been stored by the satraps and which was to be used in case of war (*Universal Library* 16.41).⁵⁵⁶ It is also important to consider that those who continued to recognize the authority of the Achaemenid regime during periods of rebellion may have referred to groups of rebels as brigands or thieves, in an attempt to undermine the political claims that these groups may have harbored.⁵⁵⁷ At the same time, outlaws and criminals may have been referred to as rebels to emphasize that their acts were contrary to the law of the king or to the will of the gods.⁵⁵⁸ It is important to appreciate this inherent ambiguity in both the acts and the vocabulary relating to crime and rebellion. In relation to P. Loeb 1, it means that the *rmtw nty bks* who were threatening the transport of grain may indeed have been brigands who had little to no connection to organized political resistance in Egypt. We should not exclude the possibility, however, that they did have some affiliation – either practical or ideological – to the rebellion mentioned by Herodotus: the grain transport in northern Nubia may have been targeted because it was organized by the imperial regime, and because it may have been destined for the military communities at Elephantine/Syene.

⁵⁵⁵ See Brice, “Insurgency and Terrorism,” 21-22.

⁵⁵⁶ See Wiesehöfer, “Fourth Century Revolts,” 101, 104. See also Henkelman, “Precarious Gifts,” 14-17, on the role of satrapal estates in times war (including Arsames’), and Johstono, “Insurgency in Ptolemaic Egypt,” 188-201, on the possible connection between various instances of “local” trouble in Ptolemaic Egypt and the Great Revolt of the late third to early second century BC.

⁵⁵⁷ See e.g. Richardson, “Insurgency and Terror,” 35-36, Melville, “Insurgency and Counterinsurgency,” 68-69, and Johstono, “Insurgency in Ptolemaic Egypt,” 186-87.

⁵⁵⁸ This ambiguity is recognized explicitly by Vittmann, “‘Feinde’ in den ptolemäischen Synodaldekreten,” 218, in relation to P. Loeb 1.

4.3.1.2 A rock inscription from the Wadi Hammamat (Posener 24)

In the same year that Khnumemakhet and Atarpana travelled to northern Nubia for a transport of grain, a Persian official from Upper Egypt made a trip to the Wadi Hammamat. The Wadi Hammamat is a dry riverbed that cuts through the mountain chains of the Eastern Desert, and that connected Coptos – a city on the eastern edge of the Qena Bend of the Nile – with the Red Sea. Today, the Wadi is primarily known as the locus of hundreds of ancient inscriptions, which have been cut into the rocks since prehistoric times. They attest to the thousands of people who have traveled to or through the Eastern Desert, sometimes as part of large-scale expeditions, sometimes as part of smaller groups. Though some of the inscriptions are elaborate and were made on behalf of the crown, most of the inscriptions are short and were the products of individuals. They mainly consist of a name, a title, and the occasional date.⁵⁵⁹ The inscription that was created in year thirty-six of Darius I is illustrative in this regard. It reads “Year 36 of the lord of the Two Lands, the beautiful god, Darius, who is given life like Re, beloved of Min the great, who resides in Coptos. (This was) made (by) the royal official of Persia, Athiyawahya (Old Iranian *Āṣiyāvahyah-), son of Artamisa (Old Iranian *Rta-miṣra-), born of the lady of the house Qandju (possibly Old Iranian *Ganjavā-).”⁵⁶⁰ As the date of the inscription is nonspecific, it may have been created at any point between 23 December 487 BC and 22 December 486 BC.

Like P. Loeb 1 discussed above, the rock inscription by Athiyawahya provides us with important evidence that some people in Egypt continued to recognize the reign of Darius I in 487/86 BC. In addition, some scholars have assumed that the inscription would have predated the rebellion that began around the same time.⁵⁶¹ An important element in this hypothesis is the purpose of

⁵⁵⁹ For introductions to the corpus and editions of many of the inscription, see Couyat and Montet, *Les inscriptions hiéroglyphiques*, Goyon, *Nouvelles inscriptions rupestres*, Bernand, *De Koptos à Kosseir*, Thissen, “Demotische Graffiti,” 63-92, Fanfoni and Israel, “Documenti achemenidi,” 75-92, and Cruz-Uribe, “Demotic Graffiti,” 26-54. The majority of the hieroglyphic inscriptions from the Achaemenid Period was first translated by Posener, *La première domination perse*, 88-130 nos. 11-35. Some have been recently republished by Obsomer, “Les inscriptions hiéroglyphiques,” 227-62.

⁵⁶⁰ See Posener, *La première domination perse*, 117-19 no. 24, and Obsomer, “Les inscriptions hiéroglyphiques,” 249 no. 12. The English translation is my own. For the etymology of the names, see Schmitt and Vittmann, *Iranische Namen*, 50-51 no. 17, 47-48 no. 13, 81-82 no. 50.

⁵⁶¹ See Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire*, 227-28. In addition, multiple scholars have assumed that a later inscription by Athiyawahya from year two of Xerxes (see below) should be interpreted as the *terminus ante quem* for the end of the rebellion; see Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire*, 235, Cruz-Uribe, “On the Existence of Psammetichus IV,” 38-39, and Pestman, “Diospolis Parva Documents,” 147.

Athiyawahya's visit to the Wadi Hammamat. There are two options to consider. First, some scholars have suggested that Athiyawahya was leading an expedition to the quarries and/or mines of the Eastern Desert: the area around the Wadi Hammamat was an important source for greywacke stone, and for heavy metals such as gold and copper.⁵⁶² Indeed, there is sufficient evidence for the material exploitation of the Wadi in the late sixth to early fifth century BC. The best-known example is a monumental statue from the reign of Darius I, which was excavated from the Achaemenid palace at Susa in 1973: analysis of the material has shown that it was made from greywacke stone.⁵⁶³ In addition, we know that an Egyptian official called Khnemibre, son of Amasissaneith, made multiple visits to the Wadi during the reign of Darius I. Khnemibre's primary title was "overseer of works" (*mr k3t*), sometimes specified as the "overseer of works of Upper and Lower Egypt," the "overseer of works of the king," and "chief of works in the entire land."⁵⁶⁴ The title is generally associated with construction works.⁵⁶⁵ In fact, in a particularly long genealogical inscription, Khnemibre seems to claim that the renown of his ancestor Rahotep – likewise an overseer of works – was greater than that of Imhotep, the legendary architect from the reign of Djoser.⁵⁶⁶ It is therefore probable that stone

⁵⁶² See Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire*, 90, 227, 235, Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 400, 481, and Rottpeter, "Initiatoren und Träger," 15-16. On the extraction of greywacke from the Wadi Hammamat, see Klemm and Klemm, *Stones and Quarries*, 297-311. There is no evidence for gold mining during the Persian Period (see Klemm, Klemm, and Murr, "Ancient Gold Mining," 218), but evidence for a Persian Period copper mine has been recently identified (see Bloxam, "A Place Full of Whispers," 799, and Bloxam, "Mineral World," 178 n. 54, with reference to a forthcoming publication).

⁵⁶³ See Yoyotte, "Egyptian Statue of Darius," 243-71, and Klemm and Klemm, *Stones and Quarries*, 302.

⁵⁶⁴ See Posener, *La première domination perse*, 88-116 nos. 11-23, and Obsomer, "Les inscriptions hiéroglyphiques," 246-49 nos. 1-10.

⁵⁶⁵ See Pressl, *Beamte und Soldaten*, 49-50.

⁵⁶⁶ See Posener, *La première domination perse*, 98-105 no. 14, and Obsomer, "Les inscriptions hiéroglyphiques," 246-47 no. 3.

Figure 13. A Wadi Hammamat inscription by Athiyawahya from year thirty-six of Darius I (487/86 BC).
(Photograph by the author)



and perhaps metal were extracted from the region around the Wadi Hammamat under Khnemibre's supervision. At present, ca. fifteen inscriptions are known that mention his name.⁵⁶⁷ Those that include a regnal year can be dated to 527 BC (year 44 of Amasis), 496 BC (the autumn of year 26 of Darius I), 495 BC (the end of winter and the summer of year 27 of Darius I), 494 (the autumn of year 28 of Darius I), and 492 BC (the spring and summer of year 30 of Darius I).⁵⁶⁸ As the last inscriptions date to 492 BC, it is possible that Athiyawahya took over Khnemibre's responsibilities at the end of Darius I's reign. If so, it is indeed questionable whether the Egyptian rebellion had already begun when Athiyawahya visited the Wadi in 487/86 BC: one may assume that the imperial regime would not have organized a quarrying or mining expedition to the desert when some parts of the country were in political turmoil.

The second option that needs to be considered, however, is that Athiyawahya was not traveling to but through the Wadi Hammamat in 487/86 BC.⁵⁶⁹ This hypothesis is based on two observations. First, like Khnemibre, Athiyawahya is known from several different rock inscriptions. The earliest inscription dates to 497/96 BC (year twenty-six of Darius I).⁵⁷⁰ It may have overlapped with one of Khnemibre's visits during the same year. The second inscription is the one from 487/86 BC (year thirty-six of Darius I; see above). The remaining six are dated to 484 BC, 481/80 BC, 477/76 BC, 475/74 BC, and 474/73 BC (winter of year 2, and years 6, 10, 12 and 13 of Xerxes).⁵⁷¹ Though the dates of the inscriptions suggest that Athiyawahya carried on Khnemibre's work, he did not bear

⁵⁶⁷ See Posener, *La première domination perse*, 88-92 nos. 11-12, 98-116 nos. 14-23, Goyon, *Nouvelles inscriptions rupestres*, 117 no. 108, and Fanfoni and Israel, "Documenti achemenidi," 77-78. Note that Goyon attributed the hieroglyphic inscription identified by him to king Amasis, but it is clearly another inscription left behind by Khnemibre (whose name was synonymous with Amasis' throne name). Yoyotte, "Egyptian Statue of Darius," 270 n. 35, has suggested that the inscription might be the bottom part of Posener, *La première domination perse*, 113 no. 20 (which is followed by Obsomer, "Les inscriptions hiéroglyphiques," 231), though the traces of the inscriptions do not quite fit together. The single inscription written in Aramaic, briefly mentioned by Posener, *La première domination perse*, 116 n. 2, will be republished by Vincent Morel (personal communication).

⁵⁶⁸ See by Posener, *La première domination perse*, 88-92 nos. 11-12, 105-13 nos. 15-19, 113-15 nos. 21-22, and Fanfoni and Israel, "Documenti achemenidi," 77-78, pl. xiv. Note that the inscription from year 44 of Amasis was made jointly by Khnemibre and his father; see Posener, *La première domination perse*, 88-91 no. 11.

⁵⁶⁹ A hypothesis considered by Posener, *La première domination perse*, 179-80, Kienitz, *Die politische Geschichte Ägyptens*, 65-66, Klotz, "Darius I and the Sabaeans," 276, and Klotz, "Persian Period," 5.

⁵⁷⁰ See Goyon, *Nouvelles inscriptions rupestres*, 118-20 no. 109. It is possible that Athiyawahya had already visited the wadi in 524 BC (year 6 of Cambyses): an inscription from 475/74 BC (year 12 of Xerxes) refers back to that year – though without comment (see Posener, *La première domination perse*, 122-23 no. 28).

⁵⁷¹ See Posener, *La première domination perse*, 120-24 nos. 25-30.

Khnemibre's titles. Instead, Athiyawahya's titles were "royal official of Persia" (*srs n Prs*), and "governor of Coptos" (*iry-p't Gbtyw*).⁵⁷² As mentioned above, the latter was a city on the eastern edge of the Qena Bend. Expeditions to the Wadi Hammamat were traditionally organized from there. Second, though expeditions to the Wadi Hammamat were often connected to the quarries and mines in the region, the Wadi also served as the shortest route from the Nile to the Red Sea: caravans could set out from Coptos, travel through the mountains of the Eastern Desert via the Wadi, and carry on their journey from a harbor on the Red Sea coast. At present, remains of a harbor that was in use from the Old to the New Kingdom have been found at Mersa Gawasis, ca. 60 km north of Quseir (the latter being the modern end-point of the Wadi Hammamat).⁵⁷³ Remains of a Ptolemaic to Roman Period port have been found at Quseir el-Qadim, ca. 8 km north of Quseir.⁵⁷⁴ Though neither site has yielded Persian Period remains, there is circumstantial evidence to suggest that the Red Sea was an important locus of traffic during the Achaemenid Period as well. As discussed in Chapter 2, a large canal that connected the Nile Valley with the Red Sea was dug during the reign of Darius I (see 2.3.3.1). The cuneiform inscriptions on the accompanying canal stelae stated that its purpose was to connect Egypt with Persia.⁵⁷⁵ The hieroglyphic inscriptions on the stelae are fragmentary, but they appear to have described a naval journey that set out from the Nile in northern Egypt, sailed through the Red Sea, went around the Arabian Peninsula, and ended in the Persian Gulf.⁵⁷⁶ During the Achaemenid Period, an important site on the Persian Gulf was Tamukkan (Greek Taoke). According to the tablets from the Persepolis Fortification Archive, hundreds of Egyptians worked at Tamukkan during the reign of

⁵⁷² The title *srs* presumably goes back to Akkadian *ša reši* (see Posener, *La première domination perse*, 118-19 d, and Obsomer, "Les inscriptions hiéroglyphiques," 237); it is mentioned in all of Athiyawahya's inscriptions. The additional title governor of Coptos is mentioned thrice; see Goyon, *Nouvelles inscriptions rupestres*, 118-20 no. 109, and Posener, *La première domination perse*, 120-21 no. 26, 124 no. 30.

⁵⁷³ See e.g. Sayed, "Discovery of the Site," 139-78, Bard and Fattovich, "Mersa/Wadi Gawasis," 81-86, and Mahfouz, "Maritime Expeditions," 51-67.

⁵⁷⁴ See Cuvigny, "Introduction," 1-35, and Peacock and Blue, *Myos Hormos*. Though the evidence is predominantly Roman, a few sources suggest that the harbor was in use from the Ptolemaic Period onwards; see Brun, "Chronologie," 188-91.

⁵⁷⁵ See Schmitt, *Die altpersische Inschriften*, 148-51, and Wasmuth, *Ägypto-persische Herrscher- und Herrschaftspräsentation*, 151-55.

⁵⁷⁶ See Posener, *La première domination perse*, 48-87 nos. 8-10, Klotz, "Darius I and the Sabaeans," 272-74, and Wasmuth, *Ägypto-persische Herrscher- und Herrschaftspräsentation*, 134-48. It is probable that a similar naval route – with connections to Myos Hormos, a port near the Wadi Hammamat – was in use during the Roman Period; see Tomber, "Beyond the Boundaries of the *Periplus*," 394-407.

Darius I, probably for the construction of a royal palace.⁵⁷⁷ Though neither the Egyptians at Tamukkan nor the canal in northern Egypt that connected the Nile to the Red Sea can be directly linked to the Wadi Hammamat, the sources should prompt us to consider that Athiyawahya and his contemporaries made trips to the Red Sea via the Eastern Desert, and possibly from there to regions as far as Persia. Within this framework, it is conceivable that the Egyptian rebellion of 487/86 BC had already begun when Athiyawahya traveled through the Wadi in year thirty-six of Darius I. As suggested by Friedrich Kienitz, the Red Sea may have become an especially important naval route during periods of rebellion, when parts of the Nile could have fallen in the hands of rebel forces, thereby cutting off the state's regular communications between the north and south of the country.⁵⁷⁸

4.3.1.3 A vase of unknown provenance (BLMJ 1979)

The third and final Egyptian source that dates to year thirty-six of Darius I is a small vase (37 x 30 cm) which is currently in the Bible Lands Museum of Jerusalem (BLMJ 1979). Its original provenance is unknown. The vase is made of a fine-grained white calcite, with a rounded bottom and a thick everted rim. It is sometimes called an "alabastron" in modern scholarship, on the assumption that it – as well as many similar vases – were made of Egyptian alabaster.⁵⁷⁹ Though so-called alabastra are known from many periods in Egypt's history, this particular specimen was inscribed with a Persian Period inscription. On one side, three horizontal bands of cuneiform text – in Old Persian, Babylonian, and Elamite – record the phrase "Darius, great king." On the other side, a vertical band of hieroglyphs reads "King of Upper and Lower Egypt, lord of the Two Lands, Darius, living forever, year 36."⁵⁸⁰ The object was first mentioned in publications from the 1990s.⁵⁸¹ As its date is nonspecific, it has not featured in discussions of the Egyptian rebellion of 487/86 BC.⁵⁸² For the

⁵⁷⁷ See Henkelman, "From Gabae to Taoce," 303-16, Henkelman, "Anhang," 278-83, 291, and the discussion in 2.3.5.

⁵⁷⁸ See Kienitz, *Die politische Geschichte Ägyptens*, 65-66.

⁵⁷⁹ See Westenholz and Stolper, "A Stone Jar with Inscriptions," 1-4, 6.

⁵⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 2, 5.

⁵⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 1 n. 1.

⁵⁸² The vase is not mentioned by Sternberg-el Hotabi, *Ägypter und Perser*, 57-58, or Rottpeter, "Initiatoren und Träger," 14-17, for example, who only discuss P. Loeb 1 and the inscriptions from the Wadi Hammamat. The same observation applies to the vases from Xerxes' reign (see below), which have rarely been mentioned in relation to the Egyptian rebellion; though see the brief comments by Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 545-47, and the discussion by Westenholz and Stolper, "A Stone Jar with Inscriptions," 7-11, who discuss the quadrilingual nature of the vase inscriptions from Xerxes' reign in relation to the Egyptian revolt.

purposes of the present discussion, however, it is useful to discuss the possible origins and function of the vase in more detail.

First, BLMJ 1979 is part of a larger corpus of alabastra that bear the names of Persian kings. More than one hundred specimens are currently known.⁵⁸³ The earliest among them date to the reign of Darius I, in particular from the second half of his reign. They are generally inscribed with monolingual hieroglyphic inscriptions.⁵⁸⁴ Two larger groups of alabastra date to the reign of Xerxes and to the reign of Artaxerxes (probably Artaxerxes I). These are generally inscribed with quadrilingual inscriptions.⁵⁸⁵ Like the text of BLMJ 1979, the inscriptions are short: they consist of the name of the king, a specific set of royal titles, and sometimes a regnal year. The text of BLMJ 1979 appears to have been the first quadrilingual inscription on vases of this type.⁵⁸⁶ Second, the majority of the vases were unearthed during excavations in the early twentieth century at Susa.⁵⁸⁷ A handful were found at other sites. An inscribed vase from the reign of Xerxes was found in the Treasury building at Persepolis, for example, while another was found in the tomb of Mausolus, the fourth century BC satrap of Caria.⁵⁸⁸ Third and finally, a few of the alabastra were inscribed with an additional inscription, which indicated the volume or holding capacity of the vase.⁵⁸⁹ On the basis of these elements, scholars have argued that the alabastra were part of the tribute or taxes that Egypt owed to Persia: the vases would have been made in Egypt from Egyptian materials, filled with a precious substance of some kind, and then transported to southwestern Iran.⁵⁹⁰ More specifically, they may

⁵⁸³ The exact number is difficult to ascertain, as many are known only from fragments. The majority have been published by Posener, *La première domination perse*, 137-51 nos. 37-99, and Qahéri, *Objets égyptiens*, 104-140 C 1.1-1.46. See also *ibid.*, 141-65 C 2.1-4.4, for a related group of Egyptian “tableware” vessels, some of which are inscribed with similar inscriptions.

⁵⁸⁴ See Posener, *La première domination perse*, 137-40 nos. 37-42, Westenholz and Stolper, “A Stone Jar with Inscriptions,” 7, and Qahéri, *Objets égyptiens*, 115 C 1.11.

⁵⁸⁵ See Posener, *La première domination perse*, 140-47 nos. 43-82, Westenholz and Stolper, “A Stone Jar with Inscriptions,” 7, and Qahéri, *Objets égyptiens*, 104-7 C 1.1-1.3, 109-12 C 1.5-1.8, 114 C 1.10, 116-18 C 1.12-1.13.

⁵⁸⁶ See Westenholz and Stolper, “A Stone Jar with Inscriptions,” 7-11.

⁵⁸⁷ See Posener, *La première domination perse*, 36, and Qahéri, *Objets égyptiens*, 101.

⁵⁸⁸ See Qahéri, *Objets égyptiens*, 116-17 C 1.12, and Posener, *La première domination perse*, 143 no. 51.

⁵⁸⁹ See Qahéri and Trehuedic, “Premier alabastron,” 4.

⁵⁹⁰ See Westenholz and Stolper, “A Stone Jar with Inscriptions,” 11-12, and Qahéri, *Objets égyptiens*, 101-2. In the absence of petrographic analysis of the vases, Qahéri allows for the possibility that some of the vessels were produced in Persia itself.

have been gifted to the king each spring, around the time of the Persian New Year.⁵⁹¹ In a second step, the king may have redistributed some of the vases to e.g. satraps and other members of the imperial elite, as a symbol of the royal favor that they enjoyed. The latter would explain their presence at non-royal sites outside of Iran, such as in the tomb of the satrap Mausolus.⁵⁹²

It is important to observe that the hypothesis that the Egyptian alabastra served as tribute or taxes to the Persian king is supported by a second group of objects: in the early twentieth century, Erich Schmidt unearthed a group of 269 objects made of green chert from the Treasury building at Persepolis.⁵⁹³ Most of the objects were found in hall 38, which also contained a sizeable group of inscribed Egyptian “tableware.”⁵⁹⁴ The majority of the green chert objects consisted of mortars, pestles, and plates; a small handful consisted of trays.⁵⁹⁵ Many of them bore Aramaic inscriptions, though of a slightly different type than the hieroglyphic and cuneiform inscriptions of the Egyptian alabastra. The texts can be summarized as follows: “In GN, the fortress, under the authority of PN1, the prefect, PN2 made this vessel under the authority of PN3, the treasurer (who is in Arachosia), before PN4, the subtreasurer, tribute, year X.”⁵⁹⁶ For the present discussion, the key words are Arachosia, tribute or tax (*’škr*, sometimes *bz*), and the regnal year, which ranges from regnal year one to year twenty-nine.⁵⁹⁷ The texts leave little doubt that the green chert vessels were brought from Arachosia to Persia as a “gift” or payment to the king on an annual basis. Aside from corroborating the tribute hypothesis of the Egyptian alabastra – a corpus that is plausibly comparable – , it should be noted that the Aramaic inscriptions on the green chert vessels also provide us with a glimpse of the administration that was charged with their production. First, it seems that the production of the vessels fell under the authority of the treasurer (*gnzbr*) of Arachosia. The Aramaic inscriptions

⁵⁹¹ During the reign of Darius I, groups of Babylonians are known to have travelled to Susa around the New Year season; the trips can be connected to taxation and the transportation of foodstuffs. See Waerzeggers, “Babylonians in Susa,” 777-813.

⁵⁹² See Westenhold and Stolper, “A Stone Jar with Inscriptions,” 12-13, and Qahéri, *Objets égyptiens*, 101-2.

⁵⁹³ See Schmidt, *Persepolis*, 1:156-200, Schmidt, *Persepolis*, 2:53-56, and Schütze, “Aramaic Texts,” 405.

⁵⁹⁴ Compare Schmidt, *Persepolis*, 2:53-54, with *ibid.*, 2:81-93. The inscribed vase from the reign of Xerxes mentioned above was found in corridor 31 (see *ibid.*, 1:177, and Qahéri, *Objets égyptiens*, 116-17 C 1.12). The exact find spot of an alabaster sherd and a handful of anepigraphic alabastra that were found at Persepolis is unknown; see Schmidt, *Persepolis*, 2:87, pl. 52 5, and Qahéri, *Objets égyptiens*, 108 C 1.4, 120 C 1.15, 122-24 C 1.17-1.19.

⁵⁹⁵ See Schmidt, *Persepolis*, 2:55.

⁵⁹⁶ Based on Schütze, “Aramaic Texts,” 407 table 2.

⁵⁹⁷ For the meaning of *’škr* and *bz*, see King, “Taxing Achaemenid Arachosia,” 195-97, and Schütze, “Aramaic Texts,” 418-19; for the regnal years – which have been attributed to Xerxes and Artaxerxes I – see *ibid.*, 408-9.

mention three different men who held the office.⁵⁹⁸ Second, the direct supervision of the production process of the vessels appears to have been the responsibility of local officials, such as the prefect (*sgn*) and in particular the subtreasurer (*'pgnzbr*). The inscriptions mention at least five prefects, and nine subtreasurers, most of whom were associated with a specific fortress or fortified town (*byrt*) within the satrapy.⁵⁹⁹ Third, the actual creation of the objects was tasked to “agents” – presumably craftsmen, though a title is never mentioned – who were connected to the same fortresses. 142 agents are mentioned.⁶⁰⁰ The majority of these men – from the treasurers to the agents – bore west Iranian names.⁶⁰¹ Whether the production process would have been similar in Egypt is unknown. At present, the Persian title *ganzabara* (Aramaic *gnzbr*) is not attested in Egyptian texts.⁶⁰² It might have been identical with the Egyptian titles *mr ḥtm* (overseer of the seal) or *mr pr-ḥd* (overseer of the house of silver), which are attested for officials with Egyptian names during the Persian Period.⁶⁰³ It is clear, however, that the vases would have been the responsibility of the imperial administration. We may therefore conclude that BLMJ 1979 was made by one or multiple craftsmen – who had both hieroglyphic and cuneiform texts at their disposal – , under the supervision of Egyptian or Iranian (sub)treasurers. Though its date of creation cannot be specified, it might have been made in the last months of year thirty-five of Darius I (487 BC), and transported to southwestern Iran in the early months of year thirty-six (487/86 BC). It could then have been presented to the king around the Persian New Year of 18 April 486 BC, when Darius I’s thirty-sixth Persian regnal year would have begun.

⁵⁹⁸ See Schütze, “Aramaic Texts,” 412-13.

⁵⁹⁹ See Schütze, “Aramaic Texts,” 409-11, 413-18, and Naveh and Shaked, “Ritual Texts,” 448-50.

⁶⁰⁰ See Schütze, “Aramaic Texts,” 411-12. Compare King, “Taxing Achaemenid Arachosia,” 189-90, 197, who prefers to identify the agents with members of the local elite, who paid anonymous craftsmen for the production of the vessels.

⁶⁰¹ See King, “Taxing Achaemenid Arachosia,” 197, and compare the names of the (sub)treasurers and prefects with the entries in Tavernier, *Iranica*.

⁶⁰² Several texts do mention *ganza*, “treasure”; see Folmer, “Taxation of Ships,” 292, and especially Taylor, “Bodleian Letters,” 42-43, and Tuplin, “Bodleian Letters,” 236-41, on an order by Arsames to transport *ganza* to Babylon.

⁶⁰³ See Pressl, *Beamte und Soldaten*, 31-34, on the titles, and Vittmann, “Ägypten zur Zeit der Perserherrschaft,” 390-92, Vittmann, “Two Administrative Letters,” 438, and Lemaire and Chauveau, “Nouveaux textes,” 146-48, for Persian Period attestations. Compare Stolper, “Ganzabara,” C, who mentions that a certain Bagasāru in Babylonia was referred to by the title *ganzabaru* as well as its Babylonian counterpart *rab kāširi*.

4.3.2 Egyptian sources from year two of Xerxes

At present, ca. five Egyptian sources can be attributed to regnal year two of Xerxes. Because the sources are similar to those of year thirty-six of Darius I, the information provided here is brief. First, among the papyri found at Elephantine by Otto Rubensohn in 1907 is a small fragment written in Aramaic. The fragment appears to have belonged to a contract. Due to the bad state of preservation, only traces of the first two lines are visible. The text can be reconstructed in comparison with other contracts found on the island: “[On day x of month y, year] 2 of Xerxes the king, said [PN son of PN, ... a Judean/an Aramean of Elephantine/Syene] of [the detachment of PN ...]” (P. Berlin 23107).⁶⁰⁴ More has not been preserved. Second, over a year after Athiyawahya inscribed his name on the rocks of the Wadi Hammamat in year thirty-six of Darius (Posener 24), the official left another inscription behind. The text can be translated as follows: “Year 2, first month of Akhet, day 19, of the beautiful god, lord of crowns, lord who accomplishes the rites, Xerxes [=9 January 484 BC]. (This was) made by the royal official of Persia, Athiyawahya” (Posener 25).⁶⁰⁵ The inscription is the only text from year two of Xerxes that preserves the month and day of writing; it has therefore been used as a *terminus ante quem* for the end of the Egyptian rebellion (see above). Third and last, among the group of inscribed alabastra that were found at Susa, three (fragmentary) specimens refer to the early reign of Xerxes (Posener 43-44 and MNI 218/13). The hieroglyphic inscriptions can be reconstructed as follows: “King of Upper and Lower Egypt, lord of the Two Lands, Xerxes, living forever, year 2.”⁶⁰⁶ At least one of the specimens featured a trilingual cuneiform inscription as well, which read “Xerxes, great king.”⁶⁰⁷

⁶⁰⁴ The reconstruction given here is a slightly adapted version of Porten and Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents*, 4:56 D2.1. Note that P. Berlin 13493, an Aramaic contract for the delivery of food products to Elephantine, was once attributed to year two of Xerxes as well (Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri*, 3-7 no. 2; Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 448-49). The date has since been amended to year three, though the reading remains tentative; see Porten and Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents*, 2: 109-11 B4.4.

⁶⁰⁵ See Posener, *La première domination perse*, 120 no. 25, and Obsomer, “Les inscriptions hiéroglyphiques,” 249 no. 13. The English translation is my own.

⁶⁰⁶ See Posener, *La première domination perse*, 140, 141 nos. 43-44 (Louvre AS 561 and AS 578), and Qahéri, *Objets égyptiens*, 101-2, 114 C 1.10 (MNI 218/13). Note that the latter was erroneously attributed to Persepolis by Qahéri, “Fragments de vaisselle inscrite,” 343 I.1 (corrected by *ibid.*, *Objets égyptiens*, 114).

⁶⁰⁷ See Posener, *La première domination perse*, 141 no. 43, and Amiet, “Decorative Arts at Susa,” 335 fig. 366.

Figure 14. A Wadi Hammamat inscription by Athiyawahya from 19 Thoth of year two of Xerxes (9 January 484 BC). (Photograph by the author)



4.3.3 *The texts as termini post and ante quem*

As should be clear from the preceding discussion, the texts from Elephantine, the inscriptions from the Wadi Hammamat, and the inscribed vases are not a homogenous group of texts. Each cluster reflects a distinct aspect of Achaemenid Egyptian society: the first group can be connected to the military protection of the country's borders (P. Loeb 1, P. Berlin 23107), the second to the exploitation of quarries and mines and/or traffic to the harbors on the Red Sea coast (Posener 24-25), and the third to the payment of tribute to the royal court in southwestern Iran (BLMJ 1979, Posener 43-44, and MNI 218/13). Having said that, it is equally clear that a common thread binds the sources together. First, Posener 24 and 25 were inscribed on the rocks of the Wadi Hammamat by a man with an Iranian name, and of ostensibly Iranian lineage. His titles identified him as a royal official of Persia, and secondarily as a governor of Coptos. Second, P. Loeb 1 and presumably P. Berlin 23107 were written by people who worked under the close supervision of military officials. In the case of P. Loeb 1, the official to whom the letter was addressed bore an Iranian name, and he appears to have had authority over a large part of southern Egypt. Third, we may assume that the craftsmen who created BLMJ 1979, Posener 43-44, and MNI 218/13 would have answered to officials who held the title of treasurer. The latter would have been responsible for the transport of the vases to the palaces in southwestern Iran. In other words, all Egyptian sources that date to year thirty-six of Darius I (487/86 BC) and year two of Xerxes (485/84 BC) stem from a layer in society that was closely connected to the imperial administration of Egypt.

Thus far, the fact that that the sources from year thirty-six of Darius I and year two of Xerxes were closely connected to Egypt's imperial administration has had little impact on the discussion of the 487/86 BC rebellion. Yet, it should prompt us to reconsider the suitability of these texts as *termini post* and *ante quem* for the revolt. It is useful to compare the 487/86 BC rebellion with the revolt led by Inaros in this regard. Greco-Roman histories indicate that Inaros' rebellion lasted from ca. 463/62 BC until 454/53 BC.⁶⁰⁸ Yet, several texts from Elephantine/Syene indicate that its population continued to recognize Artaxerxes I's reign during the period of rebellion. On 1 December 459 BC (21 Mesore of year 6 of Artaxerxes I), for example, a Judean from Elephantine ensured that his daughter and his grandchildren would receive his house by recording their rights in two contracts; and in May/June 458 BC (Mecheir of year 7 of Artaxerxes I) a troop commander from Syene

⁶⁰⁸ See Lloyd, *Herodotus: Book II*, 1:38-43; though note that Kahn, "Inaros' Rebellion," 424-40, has argued that the rebellion ended in 458/57 BC.

dedicated a shrine to a deity.⁶⁰⁹ In addition, an inscription from the Wadi Hammamat shows that Ariyawrata (possibly Old Iranian *Ariya-vraθa-), a brother of Athiyawahya, traveled through the Eastern Desert in 461/60 BC (year 5 of Artaxerxes I). He likewise recognized Artaxerxes I's reign.⁶¹⁰ As the sources from year thirty-six of Darius I and year two of Xerxes were written in a similar context, we should consider the possibility that some or all of them were contemporary with the rebellion mentioned by Herodotus.⁶¹¹ This observation especially applies to P. Loeb 1. As mentioned above, the letter was written by Khnumemakhet on 5 October 486 BC (17 Payni of year 36 (Darius I)), which means that it was written after Herodotus' outermost limit for the start of the rebellion (August/September 486 BC; see above). In addition, the letter referred to "men who rebel," who threatened to steal a load of grain if it was not properly protected. It is therefore plausible that Khnumemakhet recognized Darius' reign in his letter to Farnava, even though some of his countrymen had already declared their independence from the Persian king. Whether the other sources from year thirty-six of Darius and year two of Xerxes were contemporary with the rebellion as well is less certain, but the possibility is sufficiently feasible to undermine their credibility as *termini post* and *ante quem*.⁶¹²

4.4. The Egyptian sources: year thirty-five of Darius I

The previous section has argued that the Egyptian sources from year thirty-six of Darius I and year two of Xerxes cannot be used as reliable *termini post* and *ante quem* for the Egyptian rebellion. The result is that Herodotus' approximate dates for the event remain our basic chronological framework. To repeat: the historian appears to have dated the beginning of the revolt somewhere between March

⁶⁰⁹ See Porten and Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents*, 2:22-28 B2.3-2.4, 4:236 D17.1. For additional sources that may be dated to the period of rebellion, see *ibid.*, 2:54-57 B3.1, and Martin, "Demotic Texts," 351-55 C29 (though cf. Lüddeckens, *P. Wien D 10151*, 113 n. 76).

⁶¹⁰ See Posener, *La première domination perse*, 125-26 no. 31, and Obsomer, "Les inscriptions hiéroglyphiques," 250 no. 19. For the etymology of the name, see Schmitt and Vittmann, *Iranische Namen*, 38-39 no. 3.

⁶¹¹ This hypothesis was already entertained by Kienitz, *Die politische Geschichte Ägyptens*, 67, and followed by Rottpeter, "Initiatoren und Träger," 15-16 – though both scholars gave erroneous dates for the rebellion due to a misreading of the *Histories*.

⁶¹² It is important to note in this regard that Athiyawahya appears to have attached special significance to year thirty-six of Darius: two of his later inscriptions refer back to year thirty-six (see Posener, *La première domination perse*, 122-24 nos. 28, 30, and Obsomer, "Les inscriptions hiéroglyphiques," 249 no. 16, 250 no. 18). The only other year which is thus referred to is year six of Cambyses (see *ibid.*, 249 no. 16). Did something happen during those years to which Athiyawahya attached particular value?

487 and August/September 486 BC. He dates the end of the revolt somewhere between March 485 and June 484 BC. The difference between this chronology and one based on the aforementioned Egyptian date formulae is significant: the revolt may have started ca. one-and-a-half years earlier than what was previously assumed (March 487 BC at the earliest vs 5 October 486 BC at the earliest), and it may have ended a ca. six months later (June 484 BC at the latest vs 9 January 484 BC at the latest). In other words, our chronological scope widens once we follow the historian from Halicarnassus to the letter. Taking this into account, it is useful to make a new comparison between Herodotus' dates on the one hand and dated Egyptian sources on the other. The comparison is visualized in figure 15.

When one looks at figure 15, it should be clear that there are several Egyptian sources that fall within Herodotus' timespan which have not yet been discussed in the present chapter.⁶¹³ All of these sources date to year thirty-five of Darius I (488/87 BC). The aim of the following section is to incorporate these sources into our chronological reconstruction of the revolt. This is done in two steps. First, we take a closer look at the contents and archival context of the texts from year thirty-five of Darius I. The texts can be divided into three archives: one archive stems from Hermopolis, a second stems from Thebes, and a third stems from Hou. The archive from Hou is especially significant, as it includes texts that can be plausibly dated to a rebel king. Second, an updated comparison is made between Herodotus' chronology on the one hand and the Egyptian sources that fall within Herodotus' timespan on the other. In particular, it will be argued that year thirty-five of Darius I appears to have been marked by an archival break, and that this break may have been connected to the start of the rebellion in 487 BC.

4.4.1 Egyptian archives connected to year thirty-five of Darius I

4.4.1.1 The archive from Hermopolis

The first archive that preserves documents from year thirty-five of Darius I may have been found near the animal necropolis at Hermopolis, a sizeable town in Middle Egypt. The exact history of

⁶¹³ The exception is P. Berlin 13582, a demotic papyrus from Elephantine, which was discussed in relation to Farnava (see 4.3.1.1 above). As Elephantine and Farnava have already been discussed above, the papyrus is excluded from the discussion in 4.4.1 below.

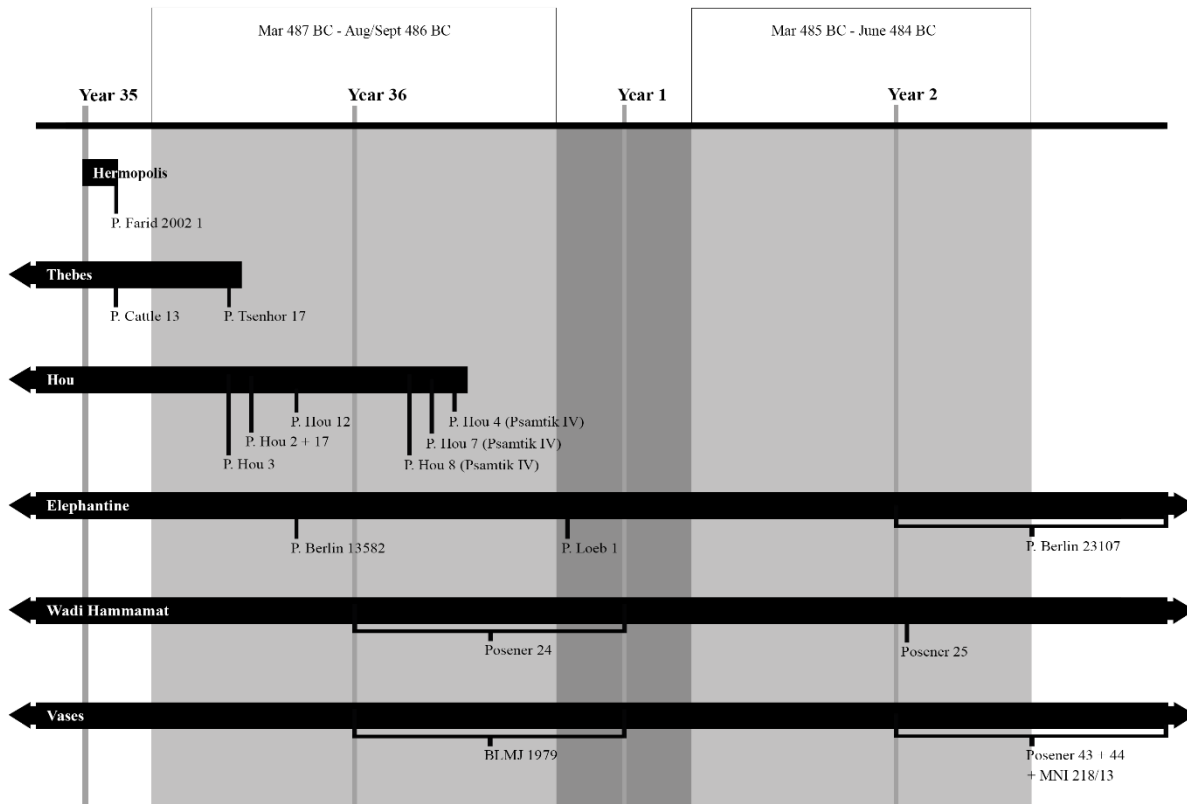


Figure 15. A comparison between Egyptian sources from year thirty-five of Darius I to year two of Xerxes, and Herodotus’ approximate timespan for the beginning (March 487 – August/September 486 BC) and end (March 485 – June 484 BC) of the rebellion. The light grey areas indicate the periods in which the revolt may have begun and ended; the dark grey area indicates the minimal period in which the revolt must have been in progress.⁶¹⁴

excavation and/or acquisition of the archive is unfortunately obscure. It is currently kept by the Penn Museum in Philadelphia, USA.⁶¹⁵ It is important to observe that “archive” – or “family archive,” as the editor Adel Farid has called it – is an optimistic term: only a handful of demotic papyrus fragments have been preserved. According to Farid, the fragments may have belonged to one papyrus on which ca. six separate texts were written, or to three papyri, each of which recorded ca. two separate texts.⁶¹⁶

⁶¹⁴ The figure has been adapted from Wijnsma, ““And in the Fourth Year,”” 45 fig. 1. Note that one source from Thebes has been omitted, as the reading of the regnal year is disputed (see 4.4.1.2 below). The attribution of P. Hou 4, 7 and 8 to year thirty-six of Darius I is hypothetical; see the discussion in 4.4.2 below.

⁶¹⁵ See Farid, “Unpublished Early Demotic Family Archive,” 187, and compare Ebeid, “Two Early Demotic Letters,” 123-24.

⁶¹⁶ See Farid, “Unpublished Early Demotic Family Archive,” 185-86, 189.

The texts in question relate to the division of a father's inheritance among two of his sons. The younger son, *P3-tj-p3-ḥb-ꜥ3*, a ship's rower, appears to have inherited the smaller share. He received a house in the southern district of Hermopolis, some plots of land, as well as three servants and their dwellings. The older son, *Dḥwtj-ir-tj=s*, likewise a ship's rower, appears to have received the rest.⁶¹⁷ The original inheritance contract is dated to Phaophi of year thirty-five of Darius, i.e. January/February 487 BC.⁶¹⁸ The other texts appear to be near-duplicates of the original.⁶¹⁹ According to Joachim Quack, it is likely that the latter were witness copies, all of which would have been written on one papyrus.⁶²⁰ Additional documents which may have belonged to the same family archive have not been identified.

4.4.1.2 The archive from Thebes

Unlike the “archive” from Hermopolis, the second archive that preserves documents from year thirty-five of Darius I is relatively large: it consists of ca. twenty-six Saite to Persian Period papyri, all of them written in demotic. The texts were bought at different times and by different individuals in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. They are accordingly kept in a variety of museum collections today.⁶²¹ Though the original find spot of the papyri is unknown, it is clear that they share a distinct social and professional setting with one another: the protagonists of the documents are so-called “choachytes” (Egyptian *w3ḥ-mw*) from Thebes. In other words, they were “libationers” who provided libations and food-offerings for the mummies who lay in the tombs of the Theban necropolis.⁶²² Though the present chapter refers to these documents as a collective, i.e. “the archive from Thebes,” it is important to observe that the documents may originally have been kept by different members of the same community. As such, they may have been part of multiple family archives, which are

⁶¹⁷ Ibid., 188-96.

⁶¹⁸ Ibid., 190-91.

⁶¹⁹ Ibid., 191-92.

⁶²⁰ Personal communication, April 2022. It is consequently unlikely that “contract four” refers to a different date than the original contract; *pace* Farid, “Unpublished Early Demotic Family Archive,” 191, who restores the fourth date formula as *ḥ3t-sp 35 ibt 3 [3ḥt]*, i.e. Hathyr of year thirty-five (February/March 487 BC). On witness copies, see e.g. Lippert, “Egyptian Law.”

⁶²¹ See Seidl, *Ägyptische Rechtsgeschichte*, 4-6, Pestman, *Archive of the Theban Choachytes*, 10-12, and Pestman, *Les papyrus démotiques de Tsenhor*, 1:3-4.

⁶²² See Pestman, *Archive of the Theban Choachytes*, 6-8, and Pestman, *Les papyrus démotiques de Tsenhor*, 1:3, 10-20.

difficult to delineate today.⁶²³ The largest and best known among them is the archive from Tsenhor. The earliest document of the Tsenhor papyri dates to Hathyr of year 15 of Amasis (March/April 555 BC), while the last dates to Phamenoth of year 35 of Darius I (June/July 487 BC).⁶²⁴ As for the non-Tsenhor group: the earliest document may likewise date to the reign of Amasis, while the last texts date to Phaophi of year thirty-five of Darius I (January/February 487 BC), and possibly to Pharmouthi of the same year (July/August 487 BC).⁶²⁵ The documents give us a glimpse of e.g. the marriages, divorces, inheritance divisions, donations of land, and sales of property – from building plots to slaves – that the choachytes were involved in.

4.4.1.3 The archive from Hou

In terms of size, the third and final archive that preserves documents from year thirty-five of Darius I occupies an intermediate position between the archives described above: it consists of thirteen demotic texts. The texts are currently in the University and State Library of Strasbourg, and in the Egyptological Institute of Munich.⁶²⁶ Wilhelm Spiegelberg acquired the papyri in different lots in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. During one of those acquisitions, the antiquities dealer Haggi Muhammad Muhasseb told Spiegelberg that the papyri had been found at Gebelein. Later scholars have argued that they were found at a different site, however: several of the texts mention a village called Nasimserkhy, as well as the town of Hou. The latter was situated on the western bank of the Nile, at the western edge of the Qena Bend. It is therefore plausible that the texts were found

⁶²³ See Seidl, *Ägyptische Rechtsgeschichte*, 4-6, and Pestman, *Les papyrus démotiques de Tsenhor*, 1:3 n. 2. Note that additional groups of texts that document the activities of choachytes in Thebes stem from the Kushite, Saite and Ptolemaic Periods. They appear to concern different families than those documented by the late Saite to early Persian Period papyri discussed here; see Seidl, *Ägyptische Rechtsgeschichte*, 6-7, Pestman, *Les papyrus démotiques de Tsenhor*, 1:3, Donker van Heel, “Abnormal Hieratic and Early Demotic Texts,” Donker van Heel, “P. Louvre E 7858,” 45, and Donker van Heel, *Archive of the Theban Choachyte Petebaste*.

⁶²⁴ See Pestman, *Les papyrus démotiques de Tsenhor*, 1:35-92. For a more recent study of Tsenhor’s life, see Donker van Heel, *Mrs. Tsenhor*.

⁶²⁵ Compare Seidl, *Ägyptische Rechtsgeschichte*, 5-6, who attributes P. Louvre 7846 to the “archive” of Tahay, with Donker van Heel, “Abnormal Hieratic and Early Demotic Texts,” 125-33 no. 9, who treats it as part of the Saite Period archive of Djekhy. For the text from Phaophi of year thirty-five of Darius I, see Cruz-Urbe, *Saite and Persian Demotic Cattle Documents*, 25-30 1.13. The text from Pharmouthi may likewise date to year thirty-five of Darius I, but the reading of the regnal year is disputed; compare Spiegelberg, *Demotische Papyrus*, 5, with Thissen, “Chronologie der frühdemotischen Papyri,” 116 n. 19.

⁶²⁶ See Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 1, 3*-16* nos. 1-13.

in that area.⁶²⁷ In contrast with the aforementioned papyri from Thebes, the papyri from Hou do not constitute a clear-cut family or business archive. The texts record cattle and land sales, loans of money and grain, and professional agreements related to the rearing geese. Many of the papyri feature different individuals, some with different professional backgrounds. Only a few of them can be connected to one another through tentative familial ties. Its most recent editor therefore preferred the term “dossier.”⁶²⁸ Nevertheless, there are sufficient interrelations between the papyri to believe that they were originally kept and disposed of together (see below).⁶²⁹

In relation to the rebellion of 487/86 BC, the archive from Hou is noteworthy because the date formulae of the texts mention two different kings. First, at least eight of the texts were dated to the reign of Darius I, in particular to regnal year twenty-five (P. Hou 5), thirty-three (P. Hou 10), thirty-four (P. Hou 1) and thirty-five (P. Hou 2-3, 12-13).⁶³⁰ Second, at least three texts were dated to the second regnal year of a pharaoh called Psamtik (P. Hou 4, 7-8).⁶³¹ Early scholars suggested that these papyri should be dated to Psamtik III, who may have enjoyed a second regnal year before Cambyses conquered Egypt.⁶³² In 1980 and 1984, however, Eugene Cruz-Uribe and Pieter Pestman argued that the Psamtik of the Hou papyri had probably ruled at the end of Darius I’s reign. Their arguments were based on paleography on the one hand, and on several prosopographical connections that linked the papyri from Psamtik’s reign to those of Darius’ on the other. Consequently, the king was dubbed “Psamtik IV,” and he was connected to the Egyptian rebellion that was mentioned by Herodotus.⁶³³ Like the sources from the reign of Petubastis Seheribre (see 3.3.2), the sources from Psamtik IV’s reign have the potential to provide us with a local perspective on Egyptian resistance. As the papyri have received little attention in modern scholarship, it is useful to repeat the Cruz-Uribe’s and

⁶²⁷ See the discussions by Pestman, “Diospolis Parva Documents,” 145-46, and Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 1-2.

⁶²⁸ See Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 5-7.

⁶²⁹ A hypothesis likewise accepted by *ibid.*, 6-7.

⁶³⁰ See *ibid.*, 3*-5*, 7*-8*, 13*-16*. P. Hou 6 was likewise dated to Darius I, but its regnal year has not been preserved; see *ibid.*, 8*-9*.

⁶³¹ See Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 6*, 10*-11*. The date formulae of two additional texts have not been preserved; see *ibid.*, 12* (P. Hou 9), and 13* (P. Hou 11).

⁶³² See Spiegelberg, *Die demotischen Papyrus der Strassburger Bibliothek*, 15-16, Griffith, *Demotic Papyri*, 24, Spiegelberg, *Die demotischen Papyri Loeb*, 70-75, and Erichsen, *Auswahl frühdemotischer Texte*, 1:29-30. For the date of Psamtik III’s (hypothetical) second regnal year, see Quack, “Zum Datum der persischen Eroberung,” 238-39.

⁶³³ See Cruz-Uribe, “On the Existence of Psammetichus,” 35-39, and Pestman, “Diospolis Parva Documents,” 145-55.

Pestman's arguments.⁶³⁴ Especially important in this regard are the arguments related to prosopography.⁶³⁵ To facilitate the following overview, the most significant prosopographical connections between the papyri from Hou are listed in table 3.

As should be clear from table 3, the papyri from Psamtik's reign are connected to those of Darius I's reign by three different men. First, a man called Pouhor son of Hor acted as a witness for P. Hou 7 (year two of Psamtik) and P. Hou 4 (year two of Psamtik). A man with the same name and patronymic acted as a witness for P. Hou 6 (reign of Darius I) and P. Hou 5 (year twenty-five of Darius I). Second, the scribe of P. Hou 7 (year two of Psamtik) was a man called Onnofri son of Tethotefonch. A man with the same name and patronymic was the scribe of P. Hou 13 (year thirty-five of Darius I) and P. Hou 12 (year thirty-five (of Darius I)). Third, a certain Petemestou son of Pouhor – who was possibly the son of the aforementioned Pouhor son of Hor – appears as Party A in P. Hou 4 (year two of Psamtik). He is identified as a “gooseherd of the Domain of Amun.” A man with the same name, patronymic and title appears as Party A in P. Hou 3 (year thirty-five of Darius I). We may plausibly assume that all seven papyri relate to the same three individuals. This especially applies to Onnofri son of Tethotefonch and Petemestou son of Pouhor, who bear the same titles in all documents. We can therefore conclude the following: if the Psamtik papyri from Hou were written during the reign of Psamtik III, both Onnofri and Petemestou would have acted in the same professional capacity for nearly forty years (from year two of Psamtik III to year thirty-five of Darius I, i.e. from 526 to 488/87 BC). In addition, the archive would have been characterized by a documentary gap of at least twenty-eight years, as the earliest papyrus from Darius' reign was only written in year twenty-five (498/97 BC).⁶³⁶ Neither phenomenon is inconceivable. Yet, the hypothesis that Psamtik ruled at the end of Darius' reign – rather than several years prior to its beginning – fits the evidence better. In this

⁶³⁴ The papyri from Hou are omitted in the studies by Briant, “Ethno-classe dominante,” 140-43, Ruzicka, *Trouble in the West*, 27-28, and Sternberg-el Hotabi, *Ägypter und Perser*, 56-57; they are mentioned skeptically by Spalinger, “Psammetichus IV,” 1174-75 (on the basis of Cruz-Uribe, “On the Existence of Psammetichus IV,” 35-39), and Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 248 7.6 n. 2; and they are mentioned only briefly by Rottpeter, “Initiatoren und Träger,” 24-25 n. 37, who doubts the significance of Psamtik's reign because Herodotus did not mention his name.

⁶³⁵ Though Cruz-Uribe used prosopography to date one of Psamtik's papyri to the end of Darius I's reign (see *ibid.*, “On the Existence of Psammetichus IV,” 37), he dated the others to Psamtik I or II and Psamtik III on the basis of paleography and an erroneous assumption regarding Egyptian regnal years (see *ibid.*, 35-36). Pestman, “Diospolis Parva Documents,” 145-55, built on Cruz-Uribe's suggestion, and dated all three documents to Psamtik III on the basis of an in-depth study of the entire group of Hou papyri. The present discussion largely follows Pestman's study.

⁶³⁶ As observed by Pestman, “Diospolis Parva Documents,” 146.

Table 3. The archive from Hou: prosopographical connections between texts dated to Darius I and texts dated to Psamtik.⁶³⁷

No.	Date	Pouhor son of Hor	Onnofri son of Tethotefonch	Petemestou son of Pouhor
P. Hou 9	[xx-xx-xx]	Witness (?)		
P. Hou 11	[xx-xx-xx]			
P. Hou 6	[xx-xx-xx] Dar I	Witness		
P. Hou 5	xx-11-25 Dar I	Witness		
P. Hou 10	xx-11-33 Dar I			
P. Hou 1	xx-11-34 Dar I			
P. Hou 3	xx-07-35 Dar I			Party A
P. Hou 13	xx-08-35 Dar I		Scribe	
P. Hou 2	17-08-35 Dar I			
P. Hou 12	xx-10-35 Dar I		Scribe	
P. Hou 8	xx-03-'02' Psk IV			
P. Hou 7	xx-'04'-02 Psk IV	Witness	Scribe	
P. Hou 4	xx-05-02 Psk IV	Witness		Party A

scenario, both Onnofri and Petemestou would have served as scribe and as gooseherd of the Domain of Amun in the region of Hou from year thirty-five of Darius I (488/87 BC) to year two of Psamtik, whereby the latter would be dated to 487/86 or 486/85 BC.⁶³⁸ In addition, the documentary gap that characterizes the archive would be reduced with twenty years (from twenty-eight years between 526 to 498/97 BC to eight years between 498/97 and 490/89 BC). Last but not least, that an Egyptian pharaoh ruled parts of Egypt at the end of Darius I's reign aligns, of course, with Herodotus' statement that the Egyptians rebelled in 487/86 BC. That Psamtik ruled in 487/86 – 486/85 BC is therefore more likely than that he ruled between 498/97 and 490/89 BC (the eight-year documentary gap).⁶³⁹ On the basis of these elements, the present study accepts the connection between the Psamtik of the Hou papyri and the rebellion mentioned by Herodotus. Incidentally, the papyri from Hou indicate that Psamtik IV's reign lasted at least four months: he would have acceded to the throne at unknown date

⁶³⁷ For other prosopographical connections see Pestman, "Diospolis Parva Documents," 150 table I, Wijnsma, "And in the Fourth Year," 52 table 2, and table 5 in Chapter 5.

⁶³⁸ Pestman, "Diospolis Parva Documents," 147-48, dated Psamtik's second regnal year to 485 BC. See 4.4.2 below for a more elaborate discussion of the chronology.

⁶³⁹ See *ibid.*, 147.

in his first regnal year (undocumented), and he would have ruled parts of Egypt until at least Tybi (April/May) of his second regnal year.

4.4.2 A new chronological reconstruction

When Cruz-Uribe and Pestman published their studies of the Hou papyri in the 1980s, they proposed to date Psamtik IV's reign to ca. 486 – 485 BC. More specifically, they argued that Psamtik's first (undocumented) regnal year would have begun in 486 BC. His second regnal year – which was attested in the Hou papyri - would have covered 485 BC, i.e. Xerxes' first regnal year.⁶⁴⁰ This chronological reconstruction of the Egyptian rebellion remains a possibility today. It is important to observe, however, that its foundations can be questioned: the reconstruction was based on the assumption that Herodotus dated the start of the rebellion to 486 BC, and on the adoption of P. Loeb 1 (5 October 486 BC) and Posener 25 (9 January 484 BC) as *termini post* and *ante quem*.⁶⁴¹ The present chapter has argued for a different approach. First, it has shown that Herodotus dated the rebellion to an aspecific period between ca. 487/86 – 485/84 BC, and in particular between March 487 to June 484 BC (see 4.2.2-4.2.2.2). In addition, it has argued that the Egyptian sources from year thirty-six of Darius I and year two of Xerxes cannot be used as reliable *termini post* and *ante quem* (see 4.3.3). The following section therefore provides an updated comparison between Herodotus' timespan for the rebellion on the one hand and all Egyptian texts that fall within this timespan on the other. The latter include the sources from year thirty-five of Darius I.

To facilitate comparison with Herodotus' chronology, let us first return to the sources displayed in figure 15. It should be clear from figure 15 that the majority of Egyptian sources that are dated between year thirty-five of Darius I and year two of Xerxes fall within Herodotus' approximate timespan for the rebellion (March 487 – June 484 BC). The exceptions are the inheritance contract from Hermopolis and the penultimate papyrus from the archive from Thebes: both of them are dated to Phaophi of year thirty-five of Darius I (January/February 487 BC).⁶⁴² In other words, the texts predate the possible start of the rebellion by less than two months. In addition, it is clear from figure

⁶⁴⁰ See Cruz-Uribe, "On the Existence of Psammetichus IV," 37-39, and Pestman, "Diospolis Parva Documents," 146. The statement that P. Strassburg 2 (=P. Hou 4) should be dated to 487 BC (see Cruz-Uribe, "On the Existence of Psammetichus IV," 39), is – in light of the discussion that precedes it – clearly a typo for 485 BC.

⁶⁴¹ Note that both Cruz-Uribe and Pestman dated P. Loeb 1 to June rather than October 486 BC; see n. 546 above.

⁶⁴² See Farid, "Unpublished Early Demotic Family Archive," 190-91, and Cruz-Uribe, *Saite and Persian Demotic Cattle Documents*, 25-30 1.13.

15 that of the sources that fall within Herodotus' timespan, P. Loeb 1 (17 Payni of year thirty-six of Darius I, i.e. 5 October 486 BC) is the only text that falls squarely within the period in which the revolt is supposed to have taken place (i.e. between September 486 BC and March 485 BC). We have seen above that this is compatible with the context in which P. Loeb 1 was written. Its author, Khnumemakhet, was connected to a military community at the southern border of the Nile Valley, which stood under the close supervision of Persian officials. It is therefore conceivable that Khnumemakhet would have recognized Darius' reign even if other people in the country had already begun to resist Persian rule (see 4.3.1.1, 4.3.3). The remaining sources that fall within Herodotus' timespan – i.e. all other sources from year thirty-five of Darius I to year two of Xerxes - can be interpreted in two different ways: either they pre- or post-dated the rebellion, or, like P. Loeb 1, they were contemporary with it. Which is the more likely option depends on a number of different factors.

Let us first take a look at the Egyptian sources from year thirty-five of Darius I. One source (P. Berlin 13582) was written at Elephantine, and mentions that silver was deposited in the treasury of Farnava. The document is dated to Pharmouthi of year thirty-five of Darius I (July/August 487 BC).⁶⁴³ We may therefore conclude that the inhabitants of Elephantine still recognized the Persian king at this point, as is to be expected on the basis of their connection to the imperial administration. All other sources from year thirty-five of Darius I stem from Hermopolis, Thebes and Hou. It is important to observe that these texts belonged to groups of Egyptians, whose main relationships appear to have been with other Egyptians. In addition, the texts have been identified as the remnants of the so-called Egyptian "middle class": its members did not occupy the highest or most prestigious posts in Egyptian society, but they were sufficiently wealthy to possess land and cattle, and to hire servants or maintain slaves in their households.⁶⁴⁴ As the papyri from Hermopolis, Thebes and Hou reflect a social environment that was distinctly different from that of the Elephantine papyri, Wadi Hammamat inscriptions, and inscribed vases – all of which were more intimately tied to non-Egyptian communities on the one hand, and to the imperial administration of the country on the other – their texts provide us with important additional evidence that Darius I's reign was recognized during a large part of 487 BC. To be specific: Darius' reign was recognized until at least Phaophi in Hermopolis (January/February 487 BC), until Phamenoth in Thebes (June/July 487 BC), and until Payni in Hou (September/October 487 BC).⁶⁴⁵ The texts do not exclude the possibility that the

⁶⁴³ See Martin, "Demotic Texts," 374-75 (C35), and the discussion in 4.3.1.1.

⁶⁴⁴ See e.g. Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 10.

⁶⁴⁵ See Farid, "Unpublished Early Demotic Family Archive," 190-91, Pestman, *Les papyrus démotiques de Tsenhor*, 1:90-92 no. 17, and Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 14*-15* (P. Hou 12).

rebellion had already begun; but if it had, it apparently did not yet affect these communities in southern Egypt.

Second, the sources from the following year – i.e. year thirty-six of Darius I – can all be linked to Elephantine, the rock inscriptions from the Wadi Hammamat, and the corpus of inscribed vases. As mentioned above, these sources indicate that Darius' reign continued to be recognized in the region around the first cataract until at least 17 Payni of year thirty-six (5 October 486 BC). In addition, Athiyawahya as well as the anonymous craftsmen of BLMJ 1979 identified Darius as king of Egypt at some point between Thoth and Mesore of the same year (23 December 487 BC to 22 December 486 BC).⁶⁴⁶ It is important to observe that this stands in contrast with the archives from Thebes and Hou: both lack documents that are dated to Darius' last regnal year.⁶⁴⁷ The omission of year thirty-six of Darius is especially noteworthy in the archive from Hou. As mentioned above, the community at Hou recognized Darius' reign until at least Payni of year thirty-five (September/October 487 BC). The earliest document thereafter dates to Hathyr (February/March) of year two of Psamtik IV.⁶⁴⁸ Pestman assumed that the latter document should be dated to 485 BC (year one of Xerxes); and that 486 BC (year thirty-six of Darius I / year one of Psamtik IV) was simply undocumented at Hou.⁶⁴⁹ However, it is equally possible that Psamtik IV had rebelled in 487 BC (year one of Psamtik IV), and was recognized at Hou in the spring of 486 BC (year two of Psamtik IV). In the latter case, the last document from Darius I's reign and the first from Psamtik IV's would be separated by only five months (September/October 487 BC – February/March 486 BC). If we adopt the latter hypothesis, we must also conclude that Posener 24 and BLMJ 1979 were contemporary with the rebellion, just like P. Loeb 1 was. The sources would thus reflect a division of political loyalties in Egypt at the end of Darius' reign: while e.g. Khnumemakhet and Athiyawahya recognized the reign of the Persian king during 486 BC, the scribe Onnofri son of Tethotefonch – and his fellows at Hou – recognized the reign of Psamtik.

At present, the hypothesis that Psamtik IV rebelled in 487 BC rather than 486 BC cannot be proven beyond reasonable doubt. Herodotus' timespan for the rebellion and the papyri from Hou allow for both possibilities. Nevertheless, it is important to observe that a 487 BC date for the rebellion finds some support in the end-date of the archives from Thebes and Hou. As shown by figure 15, the archive

⁶⁴⁶ See 4.3.1.1-4.3.1.3.

⁶⁴⁷ The same observation applies to the "archive" from Hermopolis, but as the latter appears to consist of only one papyrus (see 4.4.1.1 above) little significance can be attributed to it.

⁶⁴⁸ See Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 11* (P. Hou 8).

⁶⁴⁹ See Pestman, "Diospolis Parva Documents," 147-48.

from Thebes ended in year thirty-five of Darius I, specifically in Phamenoth (June/July 487 BC).⁶⁵⁰ The archive from Hou ended after the three documents from Psamtik IV's reign were written. The situation invites comparison with contemporary Babylonia. In July of 484 BC some communities in Babylonia rebelled against the Persian Empire. The rebellion is primarily known from the date formulae of cuneiform tablets, which show that two men with Babylonian names were recognized in northern Babylonian cities during the course of several months: Bēl-šimānī was recognized in the region of Borsippa and Dilbat from 5 August to 24 August 484 BC; and Šamaš-erība was recognized in Sippar, Borsippa, Kish, and Babylon from 26 July to 27 November 484 BC. The south of the country appears to have remained unaffected.⁶⁵¹ Significantly, around the time that the rebellions took place, thirty-three Babylonian archives came to an end. Seven of these archives included tablets that were dated to a rebel king. In addition, the archives that came to an end all belonged to a distinct layer of society, namely that of the urban elites of northern Babylonia who were intimately connected with the Babylonian temples.⁶⁵² By contrast, the handful of Babylonian archives that continued after year two of Xerxes – seven in total – belonged either to temple elites in the south, or to a social class that was more intimately tied to the Persian administration of the country.⁶⁵³ An example of the latter is the archive of Zababa-šar-ušur, the majordomo of a Babylonian estate that belonged to the Persian crown prince. The ca. fifty tablets that belong to the archive cover the period from year six of Darius I (516/15 BC) to at least year four of Xerxes (482/81 BC).⁶⁵⁴ The similarity with the sources from Egypt should be evident. Though on a much smaller scale, the Egyptian archives show a comparable break along social lines around the time of the Egyptian rebellion: two archives of the Egyptian middle class ended (Thebes and Hou) – one of which included documents dated to a rebel king (Hou) – , while an archive of Persian-dependents continued (Elephantine).⁶⁵⁵ In Babylonia, it is plausible that the archival break was the result of punitive actions and/or far-reaching administrative measures

⁶⁵⁰ On the “archive” from Hermopolis, see n. 647 above.

⁶⁵¹ See Waerzeggers, “Babylonian Revolts against Xerxes,” 150-56, and Spar and Jursa, *Ebabbar Temple Archive*, 191-92.

⁶⁵² See Waerzeggers, “Babylonian Revolts against Xerxes,” 156-59, and Waerzeggers, “Network of Resistance,” 105-6, 122-25.

⁶⁵³ See Waerzeggers, “Babylonian Revolts against Xerxes,” 156-60, and Waerzeggers, “Network of Resistance,” 129.

⁶⁵⁴ See Joannès and Lemaire, “Contrats babyloniens,” 41-60, Waerzeggers, “Babylonian Revolts against Xerxes,” 157 n. 38, 160, Jursa, *Neo-Babylonian Legal and Administrative Documents*, 151, and Zilberg, Pearce, and Jursa, “Zababa-šar-ušur,” 165-69.

⁶⁵⁵ See e.g. Porten, “Aramaic Texts,” 110-254 B9-46, 259-67 B49-52, Martin, “Demotic Texts,” 351-55 C29, and 4.3.2 above for Persian Period Elephantine documents that postdate Darius I's reign.

that were intended to reshape Babylonian society in the wake of the revolts.⁶⁵⁶ In Egypt, the evidence is insufficient to draw a similar conclusion. Yet, the break does suggest that the rebellion which was recognized at Hou had an impact at Thebes, and that this impact might be dated to (the end of) year thirty-five of Darius I.⁶⁵⁷

Finally, a comment should be made on the end date of the Egyptian rebellion. To some extent, our understanding of the rebellion's end is impeded by the termination of the archives from Thebes, and Hou: the absence of documents from these communities robs us of a more socially – as well as geographically – diverse perspective on the event. The only sources that remain stem from Elephantine, the Wadi Hammamat, and the corpus of inscribed vases. For reasons that need not be repeated, the latter sources cannot be used as strict *termini ante quem*. We are therefore dependent on Herodotus' chronology for the rebellion's defeat: the historian dates the end of the revolt between March 485 and June 484 BC, i.e. from early in Xerxes' first regnal year to the middle of his second. Last but not least, it is possible – though speculative – that a cuneiform tablet from Babylonia is connected to the rebellion's end. The tablet records the sale of an enslaved woman, who bore an Egyptian name and whose wrist was “inscribed in Egyptian.” She was sold in Sippar on 27 January 484 BC.⁶⁵⁸ This was eighteen days after Athiyawahya inscribed his name and titles on the rocks of the Wadi Hammamat on 19 Thoth of year two of Xerxes (9 January 484 BC).⁶⁵⁹ If the woman had been enslaved and/or taken captive during the Empire's reconquest of Egypt, the end of the rebellion may be placed in 485 BC. It is interesting to observe that this did not deter the Babylonians from waging their own rebellions in the summer of 484 BC.

⁶⁵⁶ See Waerzeggers, “Babylonian Revolts against Xerxes,” 160-63, and Waerzeggers, “Network of Resistance,” 89-91. Positive evidence for far-reaching changes stems from Uruk, where northern Babylonian families who had occupied positions of power were replaced with local Urukians after 484 BC; see Kessler, “Urukäische Familien versus babylonische Familien,” 237-62, and Beaulieu, “Uruk before and after Xerxes,” 189-206. Note that the extent to which the suppression of the revolt was accompanied by material destruction in Babylonia is debated: compare e.g. Baker, “Babylon in 484 BC,” 100-116, George, “Tower of Babel,” 75-95, and George, “Xerxes and the Tower of Babel,” 471-80, with Kuhrt, “Xerxes and the Babylonian Temples,” 491-94, and Henkelman, Kuhrt, Rollinger, and Wiesehöfer, “Herodotus and Babylon Reconsidered,” 449-70. An overview of the discussion's development can be found in Waerzeggers, “Introduction,” 1-7.

⁶⁵⁷ The possible impact of the rebellion at Thebes is further explored in Chapter 5.

⁶⁵⁸ See Stolper, “Inscribed in Egyptian,” 138-43, and the discussion in 2.5.2.

⁶⁵⁹ See Posener, *La première domination perse*, 120 no. 25, and Obsomer, “Les inscriptions hiéroglyphiques,” 249 no. 13.

4.5 Conclusion

According to Herodotus, Egypt rebelled against Darius I in the fourth year after the battle of Marathon. Xerxes defeated the uprising in the second or next year after Darius I's death. Though our understanding of Herodotus' chronology remains incomplete, the present chapter has shown that Herodotus probably dated the revolt to ca. 487/86 – 485/84 BC, and more specifically between March 487 and June 484 BC (see 4.2-4.2.2.2). At times, scholars have tried to refine this chronology with reference to Egyptian date formulae. They have argued that the rebellion must have begun after the last Egyptian text dated to Darius I's reign, and before the first text dated to Xerxes. The former is P. Loeb 1, a demotic letter dated to 5 October 486 BC (17 Payni of year thirty-six). The latter is Posener 25, a rock inscription from the Wadi Hammamat dated to 9 January 484 BC (19 Thoth of year two of Xerxes). The present chapter has argued, however, that these sources were written by people who were intimately connected to the imperial administration of the country, or even by Persian officials themselves. The same observation applies to all other Egyptian texts from year thirty-six of Darius I and year two of Xerxes. Consequently, they cannot be used as reliable *termini post* and *ante quem* for the revolt, as one would expect the individuals in question to have remained loyal to the imperial regime during periods of political conflict. The dates for the rebellion therefore remain 487/86 – 485/84 BC (see 4.3-4.3.3). When one compares these dates to Egyptian texts, it becomes apparent that year thirty-five of Darius I (488/87 BC) may have been a significant year. On the one hand, texts from four different Egyptian archives show that Darius I's reign continued to be recognized during a large part of 487 BC; on the other hand, at least one demotic archive ended during that year, while another – an archive from Hou - shows that its archive holders began to recognize the reign of a rebel king called Psamtik IV before it, too, came to an end. The only archive that continued after year thirty-five of Darius I, and which includes texts dated to year thirty-six of that king, is connected to the military community at Elephantine. The present chapter has compared this to the “end of archives” in contemporary Babylonia. Building on this comparison, it has argued that the Egyptian rebellion may have begun during 487 BC (year thirty-five of Darius I), and that the second regnal year of Psamtik IV – which is the only regnal-year attested for this king – may be dated to 486 BC (year thirty-six of Darius I). If accepted, then all sources dated to year thirty-six of Darius I were contemporary with the rebellion. This means that the Egyptian sources reflect a division of political loyalties in Egypt at the end of Darius I's reign, with some Egyptians – especially in the area of Hou – who recognized a rebel king, and others – especially those connected to the imperial administration – who continued to support the reign of the Persian kings. When the rebellion would have been

defeated exactly remains unknown, but it might have been accomplished during 485 BC (year one of Xerxes; 4.4-4.4.2).

Chapter 5

The Origins, Geographical Reach and Support Base of the First Two Egyptian Rebellions

5.1 Introduction

The best-known Egyptian rebellion against Persian rule is undoubtedly the rebellion of Inaros. The rebellion has already been discussed in sections 1.2 and 2.2.2 above. In short, Inaros was a Libyan king, who rebelled against Persian rule in the early reign of Artaxerxes I. He began his rebellion in Marea, a town in the western Delta. Soon thereafter, he requested the help of the Athenians in his struggle against the Persians. The latter obliged and sailed to Egypt with several of their Greek allies. Eventually, Inaros, his Egyptian supporters, and the Greek soldiers who had sailed to Egypt occupied Memphis and large parts of the Nile. The battles that were fought between the Persian forces on the one hand and the Libyo-Egyptian and Greek armies on the other were largely located near the Mediterranean coast and in the marshes of the Delta. It took the Persians at least six years to gain the upper hand. In the end, many of Inaros' and Athens' soldiers were killed; and Inaros himself was captured and crucified. As is well known, this reconstruction of Inaros' rebellion is heavily based on Greco-Roman authors (see e.g. Herodotus, *Histories* 3.12, 3.15, 7.7; Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War* 1.104, 1.109-10; Ctesias, *Persica* F14 §36-39).⁶⁶⁰ Their interest in and knowledge of the rebellion was probably due to Athens' military involvement. As a result, Inaros is the first rebel king of Persian Period Egypt whose name is supplied by Greco-Roman texts, whose ethnicity and original base of power is mentioned, whose cooperation with foreign powers is described, and whose fate – i.e. execution – is explicitly noted.⁶⁶¹

As should be clear from Chapters 2 to 4, the two Egyptian rebellions that preceded Inaros' have received far less attention in Greco-Roman works. The sources are silent, for example, about the names of the rebellions' leaders, their original bases of power, or the extent to which their reigns were recognized throughout Egypt.⁶⁶² Consequently, modern scholars have paid relatively little attention to these issues as well. It is often assumed that the first two rebellions were comparable to Inaros',

⁶⁶⁰ For further references, see 2.2.2.

⁶⁶¹ Compare 2.2.1.

⁶⁶² See 2.2.1, 3.4.1, and 4.2-4.2.2.

and that they came from – or were even confined to – the Delta.⁶⁶³ If we wish to study the origins, geographical reach and support base of the first (ca. 521 BC) and second (ca. 487/86 BC) Egyptian rebellions, however, the Egyptian sources that can now be attributed to these periods provide us with valuable information. They supply us with the name(s) of the rebel kings in question, and indicate which parts of Egypt fell under their sway. In addition, the demotic texts that were written during their reigns provide us with a glimpse of the individuals who recognized the rebel kings. The present chapter discusses these topics in depth. This is done in two parts: the Egyptian rebellion of the Bisitun crisis is discussed first (5.2.); the rebellion of 487/86 BC is discussed thereafter (5.3). An important conclusion of both parts is that the rebellions clearly gained a foothold in southern Egypt, and that they may not have been as closely connected to the Delta as Inaros' rebellion was.

5.2 The rebellion of Petubastis Seheribre

The first rebellion of Persian-Period Egypt began in the early months of 521 BC. As discussed in Chapter 3, this was a time when the legitimacy of the Persian crown was widely contested: Cambyses died in unknown circumstances in 522 BC; a king called Bardiya ruled the Empire for a short period of time; then Darius I killed Bardiya and claimed the Persian throne for himself. In the months that followed, numerous rebellions broke out against Darius' reign. The rebellion in Egypt was one of them.⁶⁶⁴ By April 521 BC, the first regnal year of a pharaoh called Petubastis Seheribre was recognized in (parts of) the Nile Valley. As Darius was preoccupied with rebellions closer to Persia, Seheribre's reign may have lasted several years – perhaps until the summer of 518 BC.⁶⁶⁵ At present, ca. thirteen Egyptian artefacts can be attributed to this timespan: two fragments of a wooden shrine, both of unknown provenance; a royal name scarab of unknown provenance; two seal impressions – one of unknown provenance, and one that was found with three demotic papyri in the rubbish of the Meydum pyramid; and five temple blocks from Amheida, a town in the Dakhla Oasis. All of them can be attributed to the reign of Petubastis Seheribre.⁶⁶⁶

⁶⁶³ See e.g. Kienitz, *Die politische Geschichte Ägyptens*, 67-68, Ray, "Egypt 525 - 404 B.C.," 275-77, Rottmeter, "Initiatoren und Träger," 24-28, Ruzicka, *Trouble in the West*, 23, 27-28, Colburn, *Archaeology of Empire*, 246-47, and Leahy, "Egypt in the Late Period," 727.

⁶⁶⁴ See 3.2-3.2.2.3.

⁶⁶⁵ See 3.3.2.5.2-3.4.2.

⁶⁶⁶ See 3.3.2-3.3.2.4.

For the purposes of the present chapter, only the seal impressions, papyri and temple blocks from Seheribre's reign are relevant. The find spots of this group of sources, as well as several references in the papyri, give us an indication of the geographical reach of the rebellion. In addition, the papyri and seal impressions refer to individuals who worked for the Egyptian rebel king. The following section discusses both topics in depth. This is done in two steps: first, we take a closer look at the location where Seheribre may have begun his rebellion (5.2.1); second, we discuss the areas in Egypt which may eventually have fallen under Seheribre's sway, and the individuals who supported the rebel king's rule, or who – at the very least – fell under his hegemony in the early months of 521 BC (5.2.2).

5.2.1 *Petubastis Seheribre's original base of power*

The sources from Petubastis Seheribre's reign were first connected to the Bisitun crisis in 1972.⁶⁶⁷ At the time, Jean Yoyotte suggested that the king may have stemmed from Bubastis (modern Tell Basta), a city in the southeastern part of the Delta.⁶⁶⁸ Later scholars have sometimes adopted this suggestion. In 2012, for example, Stephen Ruzicka wrote that "Delta dynasts wasted no time in challenging Persian authority after Cambyses' death"; and that "[o]ne of them, Petubastis of Bubastis, may have declared himself king."⁶⁶⁹ Though not explicitly stated, the reason for connecting Petubastis Seheribre to Bubastis is probably threefold. First, it has long been assumed that all Egyptian rebellions of the sixth to fourth centuries BC were connected to the Delta.⁶⁷⁰ Second, Seheribre's birth name – i.e. Petubastis (*P3-di-B3stt*) – can be translated as "The one whom Bastet has given." Third, his birth name was sometimes accompanied by the epithet "son of Bastet" (*s3-B3stt*).⁶⁷¹ As is well known, Bastet was the tutelary deity of Bubastis. In the early first millennium BC, several kings from Bubastis

⁶⁶⁷ See 3.3.2.

⁶⁶⁸ See Yoyotte, "Pétoubastis III," 223.

⁶⁶⁹ Ruzicka, *Trouble in the West*, 23. See also Quack, "Egypt," 557. Moje, *Herrschaftsräume und Herrschaftswissen*, 19 1.1.5, 28, and Leahy, "Egypt in the Late Period," 727, attribute Seheribre's reign to the Delta as well – though curiously to the western rather than eastern Delta.

⁶⁷⁰ See n. 663 above.

⁶⁷¹ Seheribre's birth name is recorded on the shrine fragment from the Louvre, the scarab, and one temple block from Amheida; see Yoyotte, "Pétoubastis III," 216-17 nos. 1-2, and Kaper, "Petubastis IV," 136 fig. 8. The epithet can be read on the shrine and the scarab, on the assumption that *B3stt* has to be read twice (Yoyotte, "Pétoubastis III," 216 n. 2). Whether the *s3*-sign on the temple block is part of the divine name *B3stt*, or should also be read as part of the epithet is less clear (for a comparative example, see Jurman, "Ein bisher unbekannter König," 92-93).

honored their city's deity by attaching the epithet "son of Bastet" to their birth names. This observation applies to Osorkon II, Shoshenq III, Pami and Shoshenq V.⁶⁷² One may compare its use with the epithet "son of Neith." The latter was sometimes used by kings of the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty, who hailed from the western Delta town of Sais, Neith's primary cult center.⁶⁷³ Bubastis was therefore a plausible location of origins for Petubastis(-son-of-Bastet) Seheribre. According to Yoyotte, Seheribre would have controlled little else: though there were indications that the king had a connection to Memphis and Heracleopolis, Yoyotte emphasized that "Pétoubastis ne dut jouir que d'un pouvoir précaire et territorialement restreint."⁶⁷⁴

In recent years, the discussion on Petubastis Seheribre's origins has taken a significantly different turn. In 2015, Olaf Kaper argued that the king had come from the Dakhla Oasis, a location several hundred kilometers south of the Delta. Kaper's argument was based on five temple blocks that bear Seheribre's names, and that were excavated at Amheida, a town in the Dakhla Oasis, between 2005 and 2014 (Amheida 16362, 16512, 2078, 2076, 16357).⁶⁷⁵ One of the relief blocks belonged to a temple scene, which originally showed the figure of the king. The preserved traces of the figure indicate that it would have been slightly smaller than life size (see figure 16).⁶⁷⁶ The other four blocks belonged to a temple gateway.⁶⁷⁷ The blocks record several lines of hieroglyphic text, which provide us with some of Seheribre's titles (Lord of Rituals, Lord of [Appearances]), royal names (Petubastis Seheribre, the Horus name Sementawy and the Two Ladies name Shedjerperu), as well as the name of the divine recipient of the temple (Thoth of Amheida). The remains indicate that Petubastis Seheribre had rebuilt – or added a building to – the pre-existing temple of Thoth at Amheida.⁶⁷⁸ Consequently, Olaf Kaper argued that "[t]he Dakhla oasis could very well have been a powerbase for Petubastis, from where he organized his rebellion. That would explain the extraordinary building activity there, as an expression of his attachment or even gratitude to the region and its gods."⁶⁷⁹

⁶⁷² See Muhs, "Partisan Royal Epithets," 221.

⁶⁷³ See *ibid.*, 221.

⁶⁷⁴ Yoyotte, "Pétoubastis III," 223. See also Ruzicka, *Trouble in the West*, 23. For Seheribre's connection to Memphis and Heracleopolis, see 5.2.2 below.

⁶⁷⁵ See Kaper, "Petubastis IV," 125-49.

⁶⁷⁶ See *ibid.*, 135.

⁶⁷⁷ See *ibid.*, 129-34. For photographs of the temple blocks, see *ibid.*, 130-32 figs. 2-6, 136 figs. 8-9.

⁶⁷⁸ For the temple's history, see below.

⁶⁷⁹ See *ibid.*, 139. The argument has been adopted by Sternberg-el Hotabi, *Ägypten und Perser*, 18, and Colburn, *Archaeology of Empire*, 99.

Figure 16. A temple block from Amheida (no. 2076), inscribed with the birth name Petubastis (right) and traces of a royal crown (left). (Photograph by B. Bazzani, published in Kaper, “Petubastis IV,” 136 fig. 8)



Kaper did not engage with the question of Seheribre's possible connection to Bubastis, however. The following section therefore takes a closer look at Kaper's argument and compares it with the aforementioned references to Bastet. In order to properly contextualize Seheribre's building activity at Amheida, the section starts with a review of Saite to early Persian-Period construction work in the Western Desert.

5.2.1.1 The oases from the Saite Period to the reign of Petubastis Seheribre

As briefly discussed in Chapter 3, a temple complex dedicated to the ibis-headed god Thoth is known to have existed at Amheida before the reign of Petubastis Seheribre. At present, the oldest reference to the temple appears in a stela from the reign of Seti II (ca. 1202-1198 BC). The latter was excavated at Amheida in 2014, and depicts the king, who offers goods to Thoth and Horus. The fragmentary inscription on the stele refers to a "girdle wall" (*shty*), which we may suppose Seti II had built around a sanctuary.⁶⁸⁰ The oldest building block from the temple can be ascribed to the New Kingdom as well: a small relief fragment found at the site of Amheida preserves the traces of a royal figure who has his arms raised in a gesture of offering; it bears the throne name of Ramesses IX (ca. 1129 – 1111 BC). According to Kaper, the relief may have "decorated the jamb or lintel of a temple doorway."⁶⁸¹ In the centuries thereafter, three (fragments of) stelae from the Third Intermediate Period attest to the sanctuary's continued activity. One of the stelae records a donation to the temple by a man called Esdhuti, who is likewise known from a stele found at Mut el-Kharab.⁶⁸² However, the most extensive (pre-Roman Period) building works at Amheida can be ascribed to the seventh to sixth centuries BC. During this period, at least three kings of the Saite Dynasty (re)constructed parts of the sanctuary: both Necho II and Psamtik II appear to have built a temple gateway;⁶⁸³ Amasis, whose royal names appear on numerous temple blocks, seems to have constructed an entire chapel or temple building.⁶⁸⁴ The inscriptions on the latter celebrate Thoth, the Twice-Great, Lord of Amheida, in a similar vein as the temple blocks from Seheribre's reign.⁶⁸⁵

⁶⁸⁰ See Kaper, "Temple Building," 223-25.

⁶⁸¹ See *ibid.*, 229-30.

⁶⁸² See Kaper and Demarée, "A Donation Stela," 19-37, Kaper, "Dakhleh Oasis in the Libyan Period," 149-59, and Kaper, "Textual and Decorative Evidence," 45-46.

⁶⁸³ See Kaper, "Dakhleh Oasis in the Late Period," 169-71, and Kaper, "Temples of the Late Period," 48-49.

⁶⁸⁴ See Kaper, "Dakhleh Oasis in the Late Period," 169-71, and Kaper, "Temples of the Late Period," 46-50.

⁶⁸⁵ See Kaper, "Dakhleh Oasis in the Late Period," 170-71, and Kaper, "Temples of the Late Period," 49-50.

The construction works at Amheida carried out by the kings of the Saite Dynasty were part of a larger development of the oases of the Western Desert. This development is indicated by the presence of significant Saite-Period remains at numerous sites in the Dakhla Oasis, many of which were not or barely occupied in the preceding period.⁶⁸⁶ One of the most prominent Saite-Period sites is the temple at Mut el-Kharab. The temple was dedicated to Seth and Amun-Re jointly. Like the temple at Amheida, it had a history stretching back to the New Kingdom, but the temple was significantly expanded in the seventh to sixth centuries BC. At least one structure was added by Psamtik I, whose figure and royal names feature on a large relief block. A temple gateway was added by Psamtik II.⁶⁸⁷ A comparable rise of pharaonic interest is visible in the oases of Bahariya and Siwa to the far north of Dakhla. In Bahariya Oasis Saite-Period investment is reflected in a temple compound near Qaret el-Toub, where a chapel bears the name of Apries.⁶⁸⁸ At ‘Ayn el-Mouftella four chapels were constructed under the reign of Amasis.⁶⁸⁹ In Siwa Oasis a large temple building at Aghurmi bears the name of Amasis as well. In the latter case, it is the earliest evidence for pharaonic construction works in the region.⁶⁹⁰

The motivations behind the expansion of Saite control in the “islands” of the Western Desert – as the oases were called by Strabo in the first century AD (*Geography* 17.1.5) - were probably multiple. One simple motivation may have been economic in nature. Since at least the New Kingdom, the

⁶⁸⁶ See e.g. Hubschmann, “Dakhleh Oasis in the Late Period,” 265-73, esp. 271 tables 1-2. For general discussions of the expansion of Saite control in the oases, see *ibid.*, 273-74, Klotz, “Administration of the Deserts and Oases,” 903-5, and Kaper, “Dakhleh Oasis in the Late Period,” 172-74. Note that Saite-Period activity in the Kharga Oasis, which lies just to the east of Dakhla, is debated. It is probable that the temples at Hibis and Qasr el-Ghueita were (largely) built in the Persian rather than Saite Period; see Darnell, “Antiquity of Ghueita Temple,” 29-40, and Colburn, “Pioneers of the Western Desert,” 94-102.

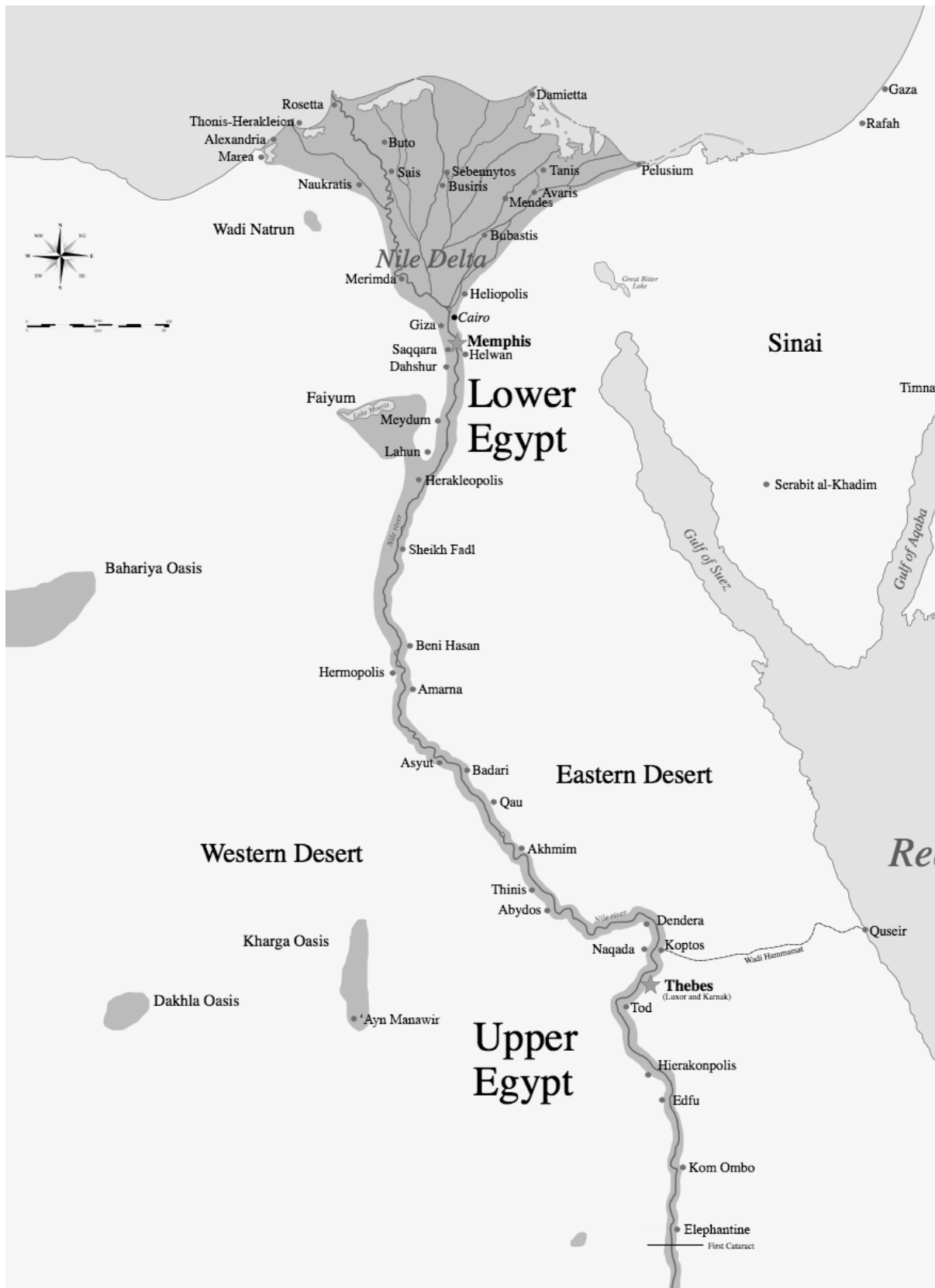
⁶⁸⁷ See Kaper, “Dakhleh Oasis in the Late Period,” 167-69. For New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period activity at the site, see Hope and Kaper, “Egyptian Interest in the Oases,” 219-36, Long, “Egypt’s Western Oases during the New Kingdom,” 225-35, Kaper, “Dakhleh Oasis in the Libyan Period,” 149-50, 153-58, and Long, “Egypt’s Western Oases during the Third Intermediate Period,” 241-53.

⁶⁸⁸ See Fakhry, “Die Kapelle aus der Zeit Apries,” 97-100, and Fakhry, *Bahriya and Farafra Oases*, 78-80.

⁶⁸⁹ See Fakhry, *Bahriya and Farafra Oases*, 80-85, Labrique, “Le catalogue divin,” 327-57, and Labrique, “Un culte d’Osiris-arbre,” 213-23. For additional Saite remains in Bahariya see e.g. Fakhry, *Bahriya and Farafra Oases*, 125-36, and Colin, “Qasr Allam,” 30-33.

⁶⁹⁰ See Fakhry, *Siwa Oasis*, 77-79, 153-61, Kuhlmann, *Das Ammoneion*, 42-43. For the general development of Siwa Oasis, see Fakhry, *Siwa Oasis*, 70-92, Colin, “Les fondateurs du sanctuaire d’Amon,” and Kuhlmann, “Realm of ‘Two Deserts,’” 133-66.

Figure 17. Map of ancient Egypt, including the Dakhla, Kharga and Bahariya oases. (Adapted by the author from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Ancient_Egypt_map-en.svg)



Southern Oasis – which included both Dakhla and Kharga – and Bahariya Oasis were well known for their vineyards. The regions produced a steady flow of wine, which was bottled locally and then distributed throughout Egypt. The remains of oasite ceramics have been found at e.g. Memphis, Amarna, Thebes, and Elephantine.⁶⁹¹ In addition, the oases provided access to important caravan routes that would have facilitated interregional trade. These routes connected the oases with one another, with the Nile Valley, and with more distant destinations in the western and southern Sahara. The Abu Ballas trail is a well-known example: since at least the Old Kingdom, this “highway” connected Dakhla with the Gilf Kebir. Ultimately, the route may have led to the Jebel Ouenat, and from there to sub-Saharan regions in modern Chad or Sudan. It probably served to import luxury goods such as incense, ivory and ebony to Egypt.⁶⁹² A second motivation for Saite interest in the oases is closely connected to these desert routes. In the centuries preceding the Saite Dynasty, the Western Desert had occasionally played an important role in Egyptian politics. On the one hand, there are indications that the oases were occupied by “Libyan” tribes who dwelt in the Sahara, and who used them as staging grounds for raids in the Nile Valley.⁶⁹³ On the other hand, the desert routes that connected the oases with the Nile, with one another, and with more distant destinations were of strategic interest to Egyptian rulers: if parts of the Nile Valley were occupied by an opposing political group, the caravan routes could serve as alternative lines of communication and mobility.⁶⁹⁴ All of these aspects will have informed the decision of the Saite kings to expand their presence in what were otherwise peripheral outposts in a largely barren landscape.

When Egypt was conquered by Cambyses in 526 BC, it seems that the importance of the oases continued to be recognized. Our main information stems from the *Histories* of Herodotus. According to the historian, Cambyses planned three additional campaigns to consolidate his hold on North Africa after he had captured Memphis. One part of his army would invade Carthage in northern Libya,

⁶⁹¹ See Marchand and Tallet, “Ayn Asil,” 322, 338-39, Kaper, “Temple Building,” 226-31, and Hubschmann, “Dakhleh Oasis,” 273.

⁶⁹² See Förster, “Beyond Dakhla,” 297-337, and Förster, *Der Abu Ballas-Weg*. For an overview of Egyptian desert routes, see Darnell, *Egypt and the Desert*, 7-15.

⁶⁹³ See Kaper, “Dakhleh Oasis in the Late Period,” 173, Hubschmann, “Searching for an Oasis Identity,” 64, and Kaper, “Temple Building,” 230, 232-36. On “Libyans” in Egypt, see n. 801 below.

⁶⁹⁴ A stele from the mid-second millennium BC is a well-known example of a (failed) attempt to bypass the Nile Valley in a time of political fragmentation: it states that a messenger had been sent to Kush by the Hyksos ruler of northern Egypt; the Theban ruler Kamose, however, intercepted the messenger in the oasis region. See Colin, “Kamose et les Hyksos,” 35-47, Förster, “Beyond Dakhla,” 321-22, and Darnell, *Egypt and the Desert*, 26-27. For other such examples of desert travel see e.g. Darnell, “Opening the Narrow Doors,” 140-43, and Förster, “Beyond Dakhla,” 312-13.

another part – led by the king himself – would invade Ethiopia, and a third part would try to capture the oasis of “the Ammonians,” who were called thus due to their worship of the Egyptian god Amun (*Histories* 3.17-25). The oasis in which the Ammonians lived was probably Dakhla: elsewhere in the *Histories*, the Ammonians are said to have lived at a ten-day’s journey from Thebes (*Histories* 4.181). This fits with the distance between Thebes and the Dakhla Oasis (ca. 300 km as the crow flies).⁶⁹⁵ In addition, the Persian soldiers who set out from Thebes are said to have reached an oasis city that lay at a seven-day’s journey from the Nile Valley, before they pushed on to the Ammonians (*Histories* 3.26). The location of this rest stop fits with that of the Kharga Oasis (ca. 200 km from Thebes as the crow flies).⁶⁹⁶ If true, the story suggests that Cambyses recognized the strategic and economic advantages of the Southern Oasis as outlined above. Nevertheless, Herodotus claims that Cambyses never managed to conquer the region: the soldiers disappeared at some point along their march; and the Ammonians themselves allegedly said that the army had vanished in a sandstorm (*Histories* 3.25). It goes without saying that the narrative of this failed campaign should be taken with a grain of salt. It is part of a larger story in which Herodotus portrays Cambyses as an incompetent – and even mad – king.⁶⁹⁷ It is no coincidence that the other two campaigns are said to have failed as well: the campaign against Carthage was blown off because the Phoenicians in Cambyses’ army refused to fight against a people that they saw as their own kin (*Histories* 3.19); and the campaign against the Ethiopians ended in a disastrous retreat, during which Cambyses’ hungry soldiers would have resorted to cannibalism (*Histories* 3.25). Nevertheless, whether Cambyses ever controlled the oases remains unclear. Numerous temple inscriptions show that an extensive building program was carried out in the Southern Oasis during the reign of Darius I, in a similar vein as what the kings of the Saite Dynasty had done;⁶⁹⁸ but no inscriptions have been found that can be attributed to the reign of Cambyses. It is therefore conceivable that Cambyses was unable to gain full control of the Western Desert during his four-year reign of Egypt.

⁶⁹⁵ See Kaper, “Petubastis IV,” 139-40.

⁶⁹⁶ See *ibid.*, 140. It is important to note that there is evidence for a cult of Amun in the Dakhla Oasis (see *ibid.*). In addition, Herodotus’ emphasis on the connection between the oasis inhabitants and Amun may have been colored by later, Persian-Period developments: worship of Amun is abundantly attested during the reign of Darius I, especially in the Kharga Oasis (see e.g. Klotz, *Adoration of the Ram*, 9-10).

⁶⁹⁷ See e.g. Brown, “Herodotus’ Portrait,” 387-403, and Munson, “Madness of Cambyses,” 43-65.

⁶⁹⁸ See Kaper, “Epigraphic Evidence from Dakhleh Oasis in the Late Period,” 171-72, Kaper, “Temples of the Late Period,” 53, Darnell, “Antiquity of Ghueita Temple,” 29-40, Wasmuth, *Ägypto-persische Herrscher- und Herrschaftspräsentation*, 224-39, and Colburn, *Archaeology of Empire*, 112-23.

Due to the absence of inscriptions in the Western Desert that refer to Cambyses, the temple blocks from Amheida that refer to Petubastis Seheribre are all the more remarkable. To recap, Cambyses died in the first half of 522 BC. He was eventually succeeded by Darius I, who struggled with several rebellions in 522 – 521 BC. In or shortly after January 521 BC, Petubastis Seheribre had claimed the throne of Egypt. It is possible that Darius I did not defeat the Egyptian rebel king until the middle of 518 BC.⁶⁹⁹ During this ca. three-year period, we may assume that Seheribre had to contend with Persian military forces that would have been settled in Egypt under Cambyses, as well as with Darius I's attempts to reintegrate the country as a province of the Empire. Nevertheless, Seheribre apparently enjoyed the liberty to rebuild a monumental sanctuary at the western edge of the Southern Oasis. Moreover, unlike his Saite predecessors and Achaemenid successor, there is no evidence that the king reconstructed any sanctuaries in the Delta or Nile Valley.⁷⁰⁰ Taking everything into account, it is plausible that the Dakhla Oasis was an important center of power during Seheribre's reign. It may indeed have been *the* power base of Seheribre's rebellion, as argued by Kaper.⁷⁰¹ We can subsequently ask ourselves how this evidence fits with the references to Bastet in Seheribre's birth name, and with the occasional epithet that was attached to the latter. There are two hypotheses to consider in this regard.

First, it is possible that Petubastis Seheribre had lived in the Delta or Nile Valley when Cambyses conquered Egypt. One of the cities where he may have lived is the Delta city of Bubastis. At a later point in time, Seheribre could have travelled to the Southern Oasis – which, as discussed above, might have been beyond Cambyses' grasp. This relatively isolated region could have afforded him the opportunity to build up a rebellion against Persian rule.⁷⁰² When Seheribre claimed to be king of Egypt in 521 BC, he may have used the epithet “son of Bastet” as a reference to his original hometown in the Delta. In other words, Yoyotte's suggestion regarding Seheribre's origins is theoretically compatible with the idea that the Dakhla Oasis was an important center of power during Seheribre's reign. Second, it is possible that Seheribre was already connected to the Dakhla Oasis before the Persians conquered Egypt. This hypothesis was implicitly supported by Kaper.⁷⁰³ Though not

⁶⁹⁹ See chapter 3.

⁷⁰⁰ Compare Arnold, *Temples of the Last Pharaohs*, 63-91, 317-18, and Jansen-Winkel, *Die 26. Dynastie*, v-vi, xiv-xxviii, xxxii, for building works under the Saite kings, and 2.4.1.1 for building works under Darius I.

⁷⁰¹ See Kaper, “Petubastis IV,” 135-39.

⁷⁰² That the Southern Oasis may have been used for strategic reasons by Persian-Period rebels has also been considered by Colburn, *Archaeology of Empire*, 99-100.

⁷⁰³ See Kaper, “Petubastis IV,” 125-49, who assumes that Petubastis Seheribre already enjoyed a level of authority in the Dakhla Oasis during the reign of Cambyses. Kaper's assumption is largely based on the “sandstorm story” in the *Histories*

discussed by the latter, neither the name “Petubastis” nor the epithet “son of Bastet” undermine this suggestion. First, names and epithets that referred to Bastet were not used exclusively by people from Bubastis. Exceptions to the rule include Petubastis I from Tanis and Nectanebo II from Mendes, both of whom used the epithet “son of Bastet” on particular occasions.⁷⁰⁴ In addition, the Kushite king Piankhy is known to have used it as well: the epithet “son of Bastet” features on several temple blocks from Jebel Barkal, a site in northern Sudan.⁷⁰⁵ Second, and more importantly, a cult of Bastet is known to have existed in the oases in the mid-first millennium BC. Individuals whose names refer to Bastet are accordingly attested in the Western Desert.⁷⁰⁶ Petubastis-son-of-Bastet Seheribre could have been one of them.

As a final remark, if Petubastis Seheribre had already been connected to the Dakhla Oasis before he claimed the throne of Egypt, we might go one step further and entertain the possibility that the would-be king had occupied a position of authority in the region before the Bisitun crisis began. It is conceivable, for example, that Seheribre had been the governor of Dakhla Oasis during the reign of Amasis and/or Cambyses. This post would have provided him with a considerable degree of power.⁷⁰⁷ To illustrate: in the late third millennium BC, some of the governors of Dakhla Oasis “enjoyed an unparalleled prosperity.”⁷⁰⁸ They lived at 'Ayn Aseel, a site near modern-day Balat, where excavations have uncovered a large palatial complex. The complex included the governor’s residence, administrative buildings, and memorial chapels for governors who had passed away.⁷⁰⁹ In addition, the governors sponsored “impressive monuments” in the city, and were buried in large mastabas in

of Herodotus (see above). In short, Kaper argues that the sandstorm story was created by the Persian regime to conceal the fact that Cambyses’ army had been defeated by Petubastis Seheribre near Dakhla (see Kaper, “Petubastis IV,” 139-42). This is very speculative. Nevertheless, there are other reasons to entertain the possibility that Seheribre had indeed enjoyed a position of authority in the Dakhla Oasis before the Bisitun crisis began (see below).

⁷⁰⁴ See Muhs, “Partisan Royal Epithets,” 221-22.

⁷⁰⁵ See *ibid.*, 222, and Dunham, *Barkal Temples*, 55 fig. 40.

⁷⁰⁶ For the cult to Bastet, see Ginsberg, “*Felis libyca balatensis*,” 259-71, and Hubschmann, “Dakhleh Oasis in the Late Period,” 270, on the Dakhla Oasis, and Labrique, “Le catalogue divin,” 336-37, on Bahariya Oasis. For oasis names with the element “Bastet,” see e.g. Kaper, “Statue of Penbast,” 231-33, and Labrique, “Le catalogue divin,” 336 n. 41.

⁷⁰⁷ For the almost royal authority of oasisite governors, see e.g. Pantalacci, “Forty Years Later,” 187-90, on governors of Dakhla in the third millennium BC; Fakhry, “Die Kapelle aus der Zeit Apries,” 97-100, Fakhry, *Bahriya and Farafra Oases*, 78-85, Labrique, “Le catalogue divin,” 327-57, “The Man Who Would Be King,” 16-23, and Labrique, “Un culte d’Osiris-arbre,” 213-23, on the Saite-Period governor of the Bahariya Oasis; and Fakhry, *Siwa Oasis*, 156-61, Kuhlmann, *Das Ammonion*, 102-6, and Kuhlmann, “Realm of ‘Two Deserts,’” 152, 157, on the rulers of the Siwa Oasis.

⁷⁰⁸ See Pantalacci, “Forty Years Later,” 190.

⁷⁰⁹ See *ibid.*, 187-90.

the necropolis.⁷¹⁰ Closer in time to Seheribre's reign, the Saite governors of Bahariya Oasis seem to have enjoyed a considerable degree of autonomy as well. The best-known individual is Djedkhonsuiuefankh, a governor who served under Apries and Amasis. Djedkhonsuiuefankh constructed a monumental tomb for himself, and was involved in the construction of several religious chapels. The latter featured the names of the Saite kings whom he served, as well as his own figure, name, and genealogy.⁷¹¹ In light of Seheribre's royal aspirations in the 520s BC, it is tempting to ascribe a similar position of authority to him. Unfortunately, it is not possible to verify this suggestion: in contrast with Bahariya Oasis, the identities of those who governed the Dakhla Oasis in the Saite to Persian Period are unknown.⁷¹²

5.2.2 From the Southern Oasis to the Nile Valley

If we accept the hypothesis that the Dakhla Oasis was Petubastis Seheribre's primary base of power, we may assume that he mobilized a military force in the Western Desert in ca. 522/521 BC. The king would have subsequently attempted to expand his rule to the rest of Egypt. In terms of logistics, the desert routes that would have connected Seheribre to the Nile Valley were multiple. One possible route led from the Southern Oasis to the Qena Bend, where one could enter the Nile Valley in the region of Abydos.⁷¹³ Another route led to the region of Asyut, either via the Darb et-Tawil or via the

⁷¹⁰ See Pantalacci, "Forty Years Later," 190.

⁷¹¹ For the tomb, see "The Man Who Would Be King," 16-23. For the chapels, see the references given in n. 670-71 above. A discussion of some of Djedkhonsuiuefankh's inscriptions can be found in Colin and Labrique, "*Semenekh oudjat*," 59-72. Note that the autonomy of local rulers was even more pronounced at Siwa Oasis, where some individuals claimed titles such as "chief of the two deserts," and were depicted in a similar fashion as Egyptian pharaohs (see Fakhry, *Siwa Oasis*, 156-61, Kuhlmann, *Das Ammoneion*, 102-6, and Kuhlmann, "Realm of 'Two Deserts,'" 152, 157). In light of Siwa's distance from the Nile Valley and much more recent integration in the Egyptian state, however, it is less suited for comparison with the Southern Oasis.

⁷¹² An exception might be an individual called Amunpaden, whose title "governor of the Southern Oasis" features on a faience plaque that probably stems from Kom es-Sultan. The object has been tentatively dated to the Saite Dynasty, though a date in the Twenty-Eighth Dynasty has also been suggested; see Chassinat, "Petits monuments," 161-62, and Limme, "Les oasis de Khargeh et Dakhleh," 49, 57 n. 74. Otherwise, the absence of securely dateable evidence for Saite-Period governors in the Southern Oasis might indicate that the region was administered in a different way than Bahariya (see Kaper, "Dakhleh Oasis in the Late Period," 174). For the governance of Dakhla and Kharga before the Saite Period, see e.g. Limme, "Les oasis de Khargeh et Dakhleh," 41-49, and Klotz, "Administration of the Deserts," 901-3.

⁷¹³ Darnell, "Narrow Doors," 105-6. Alternatively, one could enter the Nile Valley near Thebes by taking the Farshut road in the Qena Bend, or by traveling from Baris, in the south of Kharg Oasis, to Armant. These trips would have taken longer than the aforementioned route, however; see Darnell, "Narrow Doors," 106.

northern part of the Darb el-Arba'in.⁷¹⁴ A third route led from the Southern Oasis to Farafra and Bahariya, and via the Faiyum Oasis to the region of Heracleopolis.⁷¹⁵ Though it is unknown which route(s) Seheribre would have taken, it is clear that he managed to gain a foothold in parts of the Nile Valley within four months of his accession. This is indicated by three demotic letters and two associated seal impressions which were excavated by William Flinders Petrie in the early twentieth century. As discussed in Chapter 3, two of the letters – P. Ashmolean 1984.87 and 1984.89 – are dated to 6 and 17 Choiak of regnal year one. Though the name of the king is not mentioned, “regnal year one” most probably refers to Petubasis Seheribre. A crucial source in this regard is UC13098, the bulla which sealed P. Ashmolean 1984.87. The impression on the bulla shows that the seal with which the letter was sealed was inscribed with a hieroglyphic inscription, which featured the throne name of the rebel king. The dates of the letters can therefore be translated as 5 and 16 April 521 BC.⁷¹⁶

Unlike the temple blocks from Amheida, the find spot of P. Ashmolean 1984.87, 1984.88 and 1984.89 does not necessarily indicate that Seheribre controlled that part of Egypt. This is because the artefacts were found in the “rubbish” of the Meydum pyramid.⁷¹⁷ The remains of the step pyramid of Meydum lie in the depression of the Faiyum Oasis, ca. 75 km south of Cairo. The monument was probably built by Snefru, a pharaoh of Dynasty Four (ca. 2613 – 2498 BC).⁷¹⁸ In the centuries that followed its construction, a large cemetery grew up around the pyramid's edges. Excavations in the area have revealed that the site continued to be used in the first millennium BC: in the North Cemetery, several Saite-Period graves were built into a mastaba of Old Kingdom date; and in the Far South(-West) Cemetery, several coffins were excavated that have been dated to the Saite to Thirtieth Dynasties.⁷¹⁹ Yet, the remains of first millennium BC burials at the site does not explain how three letters ended up in “the rubbish” of Snefru's monumental grave. It is therefore more likely that the letters were found in a secondary context. Indeed, the letters themselves indicate that the Meydum pyramid was neither the place at which the papyri were written nor the location at which they were meant to be

⁷¹⁴ See Darnell, *Egypt and the Desert*, 9-10 maps 1-2, 20.

⁷¹⁵ See *ibid.*, 9-11, and Gasperini and Pethen, “Roads From Bahariya,” 181-97.

⁷¹⁶ See Cruz-Uribe, “Early Demotic Texts,” 61 l. 5, 65 l. 6, Vittmann, “Two Administrative Letters,” 437 l. 5, 446 l. 6, and the discussions in 3.3.2.3 and 3.3.2.5. The date of P. Ashmolean 1984.88 is not preserved; see Cruz-Uribe, “Early Demotic Texts,” 64 l. 5.

⁷¹⁷ See Petrie, Mackay, and Wainwright, *Meydum and Memphis*, 43, pl. 37 nos. 43-44, and Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 217 n. 3. The exact circumstances of the find are unknown.

⁷¹⁸ See Wildung, “Meidum,” 9-13, and Warden, “Meidum,” 4416-17.

⁷¹⁹ See Wildung, “Meidum,” 12, and Porter and Moss, *Lower and Middle Egypt*, 95.

kept. The texts point to two different localities. The following section provides an introduction to the contents of the letters, and discusses what they reveal about their original destination and place of writing. In a second step, we take a closer look at what the letters reveal about Seheribre's control of the Nile Valley and, more specifically, about the people who recognized his reign.

5.2.2.1 The origin(s) and destination of the Meydum letters

P. Ashmolean 1984.87, 1984.88 and 1984.89 are only partially preserved. The first letter is largely complete, with the exception of a few small lacunae; the second letter consists of twelve small fragments, some of which are barely legible; while the third letter consists of several larger pieces that can be joined together, save for a few significant gaps that affect the body of the text.⁷²⁰ It is only in the case of P. Ashmolean 1984.87 that an exterior address can still be read on the verso of the papyrus. As is common in demotic epistolography, this address focuses on the name, title and/or patronymic of the correspondents, rather than the location to which the letter was sent.⁷²¹ It reads “(To) Hormaakheru son of Pasheriah by the Overseer of the Seal.”⁷²² We may assume that the addresses of P. Ashmolean 1984.88 and 1984.89 would have been similar. In the absence of explicit geographical data, one has to rely on indirect indicators within the body of the texts to reconstruct both the origin of the letters and their intended destination. These indicators draw our attention to two different locations. The first location is Heracleopolis, which was probably the destination of all three letters. The second location is Memphis, the administrative capital of Achaemenid Egypt. Though tentative, it is plausible that at least one of the letters was sent from the latter locale.

5.2.2.1.1 Destination: Heracleopolis

That P. Ashmolean 1984.87, 1984.88 and 1984.89 have a connection to Heracleopolis has been known since 1910. Shortly after the papyri were found, William Flinders Petrie described two of the letters as follows: “The document, and another, relate to a sale of land by a certain Harmakhri, and they are despatched by the keeper of the seal Psamtik. The land was 104 aruras, in a village in the

⁷²⁰ See Cruz-Urbe, “Early Demotic Texts,” 59-66, and Vittmann, “Two Administrative Letters,” 433-50.

⁷²¹ For a survey of exterior addresses in demotic letters, see Depauw, *Demotic Letter*, 113-27.

⁷²² See Vittmann, “Two Administrative Letters,” 437, verso, who translates “treasurer” rather than the more literal “Overseer of the Seal.”

nome of Heracleopolis.”⁷²³ A full edition of the letters had to wait until 2004, however.⁷²⁴ The better preserved letters – i.e. P. Ashmolean 1984.87 and 1984.89 – were republished in 2015.⁷²⁵ It goes without saying that the latter editions have improved our understanding of the texts. First, we now know that P. Ashmolean 1984.87 was sent by an Overseer of the Seal, who ordered another man to distribute plots of land among a handful of people. The land was indeed located in the nome of Heracleopolis (*pꜣ tš Ht-nn-nsw*).⁷²⁶ P. Ashmolean 1984.88 was likewise sent by an Overseer of the Seal – presumably the same Overseer who sent P. Ashmolean 1984.87 - and appears to have concerned plots of land in the same nome.⁷²⁷ The contents of P. Ashmolean 1984.89 are slightly different: as far as the fragments allow us to reconstruct, the letter was sent by another Overseer called Pefheriheter, and concerned a man called Peteese. The latter was sent to do something in (the nome of) Heracleopolis. The location is mentioned thrice in the body of the letter.⁷²⁸ Though the contents of the three papyri differ, it is important to observe that both P. Ashmolean 1984.87 and P. Ashmolean 1984.89 were sent to a man called Hormaakheru. Whereas the former characterizes Hormaakheru as a “son of Pasheriah,” the latter describes him as “him of Heracleopolis” (*pa Ht-nn-nsw*).⁷²⁹ We may assume that the two letters refer to one and the same individual. The addressee of the third letter has not been preserved.⁷³⁰ Be that as it may, the frequency with which Heracleopolis is mentioned in all three letters indicates that P. Ashmolean 1984.87, 1984.88 and 1984.89 were originally sent to the Heracleopolite nome, and that at least two of the letters were addressed to an official in that nome.⁷³¹ That all three letters were sent to the same location, and possibly to the same person, fits with the fact that they were found together – albeit in a secondary context.

⁷²³ See Petrie, Mackay, and Wainwright, *Meydum and Memphis*, 43.

⁷²⁴ See Cruz-Uribe, “Early Demotic Texts,” 59-66.

⁷²⁵ See Vittmann, “Two Administrative Letters,” 433-50.

⁷²⁶ See Cruz-Uribe, “Early Demotic Texts,” 61-63, and Vittmann, “Two Administrative Letters,” 434-43. Note that the letter also mentions the “town of Hut-uben.” The location of this settlement remains unknown; see Cruz-Uribe, “Early Demotic Texts,” 63, and Vittmann, “Two Administrative Letters,” 443 y. For the recipients of the plots of land, see 5.2.2.2.4 below.

⁷²⁷ See Cruz-Uribe, “Early Demotic Texts,” 64-65, and Vittmann, “Two Administrative Letters,” 438 n. 6, 440-41 g m n.

⁷²⁸ See Cruz-Uribe, “Early Demotic Texts,” 65-66, and Vittmann, “Two Administrative Letters,” 444-48.

⁷²⁹ See Vittmann, “Two Administrative Letters,” 437, 446-47 c-e. The title “him of Heracleopolis” was not recognized by Cruz-Uribe, “Early Demotic Texts,” 65, who read “Hormaakheru son of Panakhtpefiab” in P. Ashmolean 1984.89.

⁷³⁰ See Cruz-Uribe, “Early Demotic Texts,” 64 l. 1.

⁷³¹ For Hormaakheru’s social standing, see 5.2.2.2.3 below.

5.2.2.1.2 Place of writing: Memphis(?)

In contrast with the intended destination of the letters, the location from which they were sent is more difficult to reconstruct. In 1972, Jean Yoyotte suggested that the Overseer of the Seal who sent P. Ashmolean 1984.87 and 1984.88 may have been located at Memphis.⁷³² A connection between Petubastis Seheribre's rebellion and Memphis was subsequently adopted by Stephen Ruzicka and Olaf Kaper.⁷³³ However, Yoyotte did not explain why he located the Overseer of the Seal in that city.⁷³⁴ When one looks at the 2004 and 2015 editions of the letters, it is clear that the letters which were sent by the Overseer of the Seal reveal nothing about their place of origin. On the other hand, P. Ashmolean 1984.89 – the letter which was sent by another Overseer called Pefheriheter – does provide us with a brief indication of a place of writing. The opening lines of the letter can be quoted in full: “The overseer(?) ... Pefheriheter(?) greets Hormaakheru him of Heracleopolis before Ptah that he may give you [praise and] love(?) before Pharaoh [...] Oh may [Re] cause [his lifetime to be long!] I sent Peteese son of ...(?) [...]” (P. Ashmolean 1984.89, 1. 1-2).⁷³⁵ It is important to observe that lines 1 and 2 follow greeting formulae that are widely attested in demotic correspondence. The wish for a long life, reconstructed in line 2, can be summarized as *i dy DN ky pꜣy-f ꜥhꜥ*. The most prominent deity in this formula was Re, regardless of the location from which the letter was sent.⁷³⁶ The formula in line 1 can be summarized as PN1 *smꜥ r* PN2 *m-bꜣh DN*. Unlike the formula in line 2, the deity invoked in this formula was usually the most prominent god in the region or settlement where the letter was written. Residents of Thebes would generally refer to Amun, residents of Elephantine to Khnum, and residents of Hermopolis to Thoth.⁷³⁷ If we take this rule into account, we may assume that P. Ashmolean 1984.89, with its explicit invocation of Ptah, was written in Memphis, the city that housed Ptah's most prominent sanctuary. Incidentally, this assumption is strengthened by the clay bulla which sealed the letter: it, too, referred to Ptah - though in a phrase that remains

⁷³² See Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 223.

⁷³³ See Ruzicka, *Trouble in the West*, 23, 237 n. 41, and Kaper, “Petubastis IV,” 128, 137-38, 142, 144.

⁷³⁴ Yoyotte's suggestion may have followed from the fact that the Overseer of the Seal could be connected to a grave at Saqqara; see Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 220, and the discussion in 5.2.2.2.1 below.

⁷³⁵ See Vittmann, “Two Administrative Letters,” 446. According to *ibid.*, 446 a, “[t]he rather faint and unclear traces of writing preceding the name of the sender possibly indicate a title beginning with *mr*, but, for reasons of space, hardly again *mr-htm* as in P. Ashmolean 1984.87.” Note that the name “Pefheriheter” was not recognized by Cruz-Urbe, “Early Demotic Texts,” 65, who translated it as “his great chief.”

⁷³⁶ See Depauw, *Demotic Letter*, 191-92.

⁷³⁷ See *ibid.*, 175-77. For the transliteration *smꜥ* rather than *smꜣ*, see Quack, “Bemerkungen zur Struktur der demotischen Schrift,” 234.

difficult to translate.⁷³⁸ Whether P. Ashmolean 1984.87 and 1984.88 were written in the same city remains an open question.

Table 4. The Meydum letters: summary of contents.

	P. Ashmolean 1984.87	P. Ashmolean 1984.88	P. Ashmolean 1984.89
Sender	Overseer of the Seal	Overseer of the Seal	Overseer [...] Pefheriheter
Addressee	Hormaakheru son of Pasheriah	[...]	Hormaakheru, him of Heracleopolis
Subject	Land in Heracleopolis	Land in Heracleopolis	[...] in Heracleopolis
Date	6 Choiak, year 1	[...]	17 Choiak, year 1
Seal inscription	“Protection of Seheribre; the Overseer of the Seal Psamtik”	-	“Ptahhetepher”
Sent from	-	-	Memphis(?)
Sent to	Heracleopolis	Heracleopolis	Heracleopolis

5.2.2.2 The individuals connected to the Meydum letters

In addition to providing us with two locations in Egypt that may have been connected to Petubastis Seheribre’s rebellion (see below), P. Ashmolean 1984.87, 1984.88 and 1984.89 give us our first and only clue regarding the individuals who recognized Petubastis Seheribre’s reign. To “recognize” a king’s reign is understood here as the practical act of acknowledging a king’s authority over a specific region or group of people. In Egyptian sources – and Persian-Period sources in general – , such recognition is most often shown by the fact that people dated their texts to the regnal years of the king in question. As discussed in Chapter 3 and 5.2.2 above, the name of the king is not mentioned in the date formulae of the Meydum letters. This was a common omission in demotic epistolography. Nevertheless, it is highly likely that 6 Choiak of regnal year one in P. Ashmolean 1984.87 and 17 Choiak of regnal year one in P. Ashmolean 1984.89 referred to the reign of Petubastis Seheribre.⁷³⁹

⁷³⁸ A drawing of the seal impression can be found in Petrie, Mackay, and Wainwright, *Meydum and Memphis*, pl. 37 no. 44; a photograph is given in Knobel, Midgley, Milne, and Petrie, *Historical Studies*, pl. 20 no. 269. Petrie transliterated the hieroglyphs on the seal as “Ptah-hotep-her” (Petrie, Mackay, and Wainwright, *Meydum and Memphis*, 43 no. 44), though this disregards the two ankh(?) -signs that stand on either side of the divine figure. See also Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 218 n. 1, who calls the inscription “cryptographique.”

⁷³⁹ See 3.3.2.3 and 3.3.2.5.

We may therefore conclude that the Overseer of the Seal who sent P. Ashmolean 1984.87 – and probably P. Ashmolean 1984.88 -, and the Overseer Pefheriheter who sent P. Ashmolean 1984.89 recognized Seheribre’s reign. By extension, we may assume that the official to whom the letters were addressed, a person called Hormaakheru, also recognized Seheribre’s reign. If he had recognized the reign of Darius I, after all, officials who recognized Seheribre’s reign would not have had the authority to delegate tasks to him – an authority which the Overseer of the Seal of P. Ashmolean 1984.87 clearly did enjoy.⁷⁴⁰

The conclusion that the senders and recipient(s) of the Meydum letters recognized the reign of the Egyptian rebel king is significant for two reasons. First, it allows us to reconstruct the geographical spread of Seheribre’s rebellion in more detail. As discussed above, it is clear that Hormaakheru was located in Heracleopolis, and that Pefheriheter may have been located in Memphis. We may therefore conclude that Seheribre had expanded his control from the Dakhla Oasis to these cities in the Nile Valley by the time that the Meydum letters were written, i.e. by 5 and 16 April 521 BC (6 and 17 Choiak of regnal year one). Second, the letters give us a glimpse – however small – of the people that ended up recognizing the reign of Petubastis Seheribre rather than the reign of Darius I during the politically fraught year of 521 BC. It is important to emphasize that “to recognize” a king’s reign is not the same as actively supporting that king’s political aims. For example, it is possible that Petubastis Seheribre wrested parts of Egypt from the Persians by force, and that the inhabitants of those regions subsequently recognized Seheribre as the *de facto* ruler. This does not imply that those inhabitants had had an active hand in the rebellion.⁷⁴¹ This observation also applies to the senders and recipient(s) of the Meydum letters. Despite this caveat, the information which the Meydum letters provide on the profession and social standing of some of the people who fell under Seheribre’s hegemony in 521 BC is valuable in and of itself: it allows us to go beyond generic statements such as “the Egyptians” rebelled, or the occasionally voiced assumption that the rebellions enjoyed little recognition.⁷⁴² It is noteworthy, for example, that the senders and one of the recipients of the Meydum letters – who recognized Seheribre’s reign within four months of his accession – were high-ranking

⁷⁴⁰ See Vittmann, “Two Administrative Letters,” 437, and 5.2.2.1.1 above.

⁷⁴¹ This observation especially applies to several individuals who are mentioned in the Meydum letters, but who had no hand in the creation of the documents (see 5.2.2.2.4 below): the letters indicate that they were subordinate to the men who sent and received the letters, and hence fell under Seheribre’s ultimate authority; but on the basis of this fact alone, it is impossible to tell whether they themselves supported Seheribre’s reign in any active sense of the word.

⁷⁴² See e.g. Ray, “Egypt 525 – 404 B.C.,” 276-77, Rottpeter, “Initiatoren und Träger,” 27-28, and Ruzicka, *Trouble in the West*, 23.

Egyptian state officials, some of whom may have enjoyed considerable wealth and authority. As this aspect has been little highlighted, the following sections discuss the individuals connected to the letters in more detail.⁷⁴³ The first three sections focus on the senders and recipient of the texts; the fourth discusses some the people over whom they exercised their authority.

5.2.2.2.1 The Overseer of the Seal Psamtik (P. Ashmolean 1984.87 and 1984.88)

To repeat, two of the Meydum letters – P. Ashmolean 1984.87 and 1984.88 – were sent by an Overseer of the Seal (*mr htm*). Overseers of the Seal, or “treasurers,” were generally high court officials who were involved in the management of the state’s financial resources.⁷⁴⁴ The letters from the Meydum pyramid show that this particular Overseer had the authority to distribute land in the nome of Heracleopolis, and to delegate the task to a local official called Hormaakheru.⁷⁴⁵ In Chapter 3, we discussed that the Overseer of the Seal of the Meydum papyri is likely to be identified with the Overseer of the Seal called Psamtik. The latter’s name and title feature on the seal impression that was attached to P. Ashmolean 1984.87 (UC13098).⁷⁴⁶ In 1972, Jean Yoyotte suggested that another Egyptian source may be connected to this Overseer as well. The source in question is a tomb chamber that was excavated by Auguste Mariette in the mid-nineteenth century.⁷⁴⁷ As the latter has the potential to shed more light on one of Petubastis Seheribre’s highest officials, the following paragraphs explore the connection in greater depth.

The tomb that was excavated by Mariette was located at Saqqara, the vast necropolis near Memphis. More specifically, it was located several hundred meters southeast of the pyramid of Unas. Though the tomb was never published in its entirety, it seems that it consisted of a large vertical shaft which led to a number of burial chambers. A selection of funerary texts, which included copies of the Pyramid Texts, adorned the walls of the main chamber. A handful of biographical texts were inscribed on the northern, western and southern walls. The latter indicate that the tomb was originally built for

⁷⁴³ Thus far, the individuals mentioned in the Meydum letters have received only brief comments by Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 218-20, (in the case of the Overseer of the Seal), and by the editors of the papyri (see Cruz-Uribe, “Early Demotic Texts,” 59-66, and Vittmann, “Two Administrative Letters,” 433-50).

⁷⁴⁴ See Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 218-19, Vernus, “Observations,” 251-60, and Pressl, *Beamte und Soldaten*, 32-34.

⁷⁴⁵ For Hormaakheru, see 5.2.2.2.1 below.

⁷⁴⁶ See Petrie, Mackay, and Wainwright, *Meydum and Memphis*, 43, pl. 37 no. 43, Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 217 no. 3, and the discussion in 3.3.2.3.

⁷⁴⁷ See Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 220.

a man called Psamtik, the son of a woman called Meretneith.⁷⁴⁸ As was common for Egyptian officials, Psamtik son of Meretneith had occupied several different civil posts during his career. His titles included, for example, Director of the Palace (*hrp ḥ*), Overseer of the Great House (*mr pr wr*), Overseer of the Armoury (*mr pr-ḥz*), and Overseer of the Scribes of the Royal Repast (*mr sšw ḥbw nsw*). He was also a Mayor (*ḥzty-ḥ*) and a Sole Friend (*smr wḥty*). Psamtik's most important title, however, was Overseer of the Seal: this title was mentioned first in all three biographical texts, and it was additionally mentioned last on the northern and southern walls.⁷⁴⁹

Though the identification between the Overseer of the Seal Psamtik at Saqqara and the Overseer of the Seal Psamtik of the Meydum papyri is tentative in the absence of information on the latter's parentage, the assumption that they were the same individual is plausible.⁷⁵⁰ There are two indications in this regard. The first indication is the date of Psamtik's tomb. Before it was suggested that Psamtik may have recognized Petubastis Seheribre's reign, multiple scholars had already dated his grave to the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty – and even to the (late) reign of Amasis. The date was based on the inscriptions in the tomb chamber, as well the style of several artefacts that were found within it.⁷⁵¹ A

⁷⁴⁸ Several brief comments on the tomb and the objects that were found within it were published by Mariette, *Notice des principaux monuments*, 157-58 no. 385-87, 179 no. 446, 204 no. 560, 228 no. 711-14, and by *ibid.*, *Monuments divers*, 26, pl. 77i, 29, pl. 95-96. The inscriptions were published by Daressy, "Inscriptions du tombeau de Psametik," 17-24. More recent descriptions of the tomb include Porter and Moss, *Memphis*, 2:670-71, map 62, and Gestermann, *Die Überlieferung ausgewählter Texte*, 95-100. Due to the tomb's incomplete publication, it is unclear whether it was a Saite-Persian shaft tomb, as suggested by Stammers, *Elite Late Period Egyptian Tombs*, 115.

⁷⁴⁹ See Daressy, "Inscriptions du tombeau de Psametik," 17 ("Mur nord"), 19 ("Mur est, au nord de la porte"), 20 ("Mur ouest"), 21 ("Mur sud"), 24 ("Mur est, au sud de la porte"). Some of Psamtik's titles are listed in Pressl, *Beamte und Soldaten*, 164-67, and Stammers, *Elite Late Period Egyptian Tombs*, 168-69. It is important to note, however, that the latter publications have confused some of Psamtik's titles with those of another Psamtik (as already observed by Vittmann, "Two Administrative Letters," 438 n. 7). The sarcophagus of the latter individual, "Psamtik B," was found in the same tomb, but he was the son of Meramuntabas rather than Meretneith. In addition, Psamtik B's primary title was Overseer of the Scribes of the Royal Repast rather than Overseer of the Seal. The latter title is, in fact, not attested for Psamtik B. For the text on Psamtik B's sarcophagus, see Daressy, "Inscriptions du tombeau de Psametik," 24-25.

⁷⁵⁰ Note that it has been suggested that a certain "Psamtik son of Tjahapimu" mentioned in l. 3 of P. Ashmolean 1984.87 could be the Overseer of the Seal; see Cruz-Urbe, "Early Demotic Texts," 63, and Vittmann, "Two Administrative Letters," 442 w. If this identification is correct, however, we would still be unable to compare the parentage of both Psamtiks, as Tjahapimu is a patronymic and Meretneith a matronymic.

⁷⁵¹ See e.g. Schäfer and Andrae, *Die Kunst des Alten Orients*, 660 no. 435, Meulenaere, "Trois personnages saïtes," 253-55 n. 6, Bothmer, *Egyptian Sculpture*, 64, and Yoyotte "Pétoubastis III," 220. The artefacts in question are an offering table and three statues; see Mariette, *Monuments divers*, 26, pl. 77i, 29, pl. 95-96. At least one of objects (the Hathor statue) mentions the Overseer of the Seal Psamtik. The others highlight the title "Overseer of the Scribes of the Royal

second indication is the title that the two men shared. At present, ca. eight Overseers of the Seal are attested for the Saite Dynasty. One of them, a certain *Pth-nfr*, can be ascribed to the reign of Psamtik I.⁷⁵² Another, a man called *Hr*, can be ascribed to the reign of Psamtik II or Apries.⁷⁵³ Three of them, called *W3h-ib-r^c-m-3ht*, *W3h-ib-r^c-wn-nfr*, and *P3-di-n-3st*, probably held office during reign of Amasis.⁷⁵⁴ An additional three, by the name of *W3h-ib-r^c-mr-nt*, *P3y=f-t3w-di-hnsw*, and *Hr-s3-3st*, have been dated approximately to the seventh to sixth centuries BC.⁷⁵⁵ That the Overseer of the Seal who was buried at Saqqara and the Overseer of the Seal who sent P. Ashmolean 1984.87 and 1984.88 are the only treasurers from this time period who went by the name of “Psamtik” suggests that we are dealing with one individual.

Repast,” which could refer to the Overseer of the Seal Psamtik (as has been assumed by most scholars) or to Psamtik B (see n. 749 above). It should be noted that a Thirtieth Dynasty date for the tomb has been considered as well; see e.g. Daressy, “Inscriptions du tombeau de Psametik,” 17. This is largely due to the fact that a statuette inscribed with the name of Nectanebo II – rather than Nectanebo I, as Mariette stated – was found inside the grave; see Mariette, *Notice des principaux monuments*, 204 no. 560, *ibid.*, *Monuments divers*, 29, pl. 95 b, and Vittmann, “Zwei Königinnen,” 44-45. It is possible, however, that the grave was used for several generations, as was the case with several other “Saite” tombs; see Bareš, *Shaft Tomb of Udjahorresnet*, 29, and Bareš, “Lesser Burial Chambers,” 87-94, esp. 91. The existence of multiple chambers in Psamtik’s tomb, the find of “mummies en assez grand nombre,” and the remains of two sarcophagi – one belonging to Psamtik B, the other to a lady called Khedebnetjerbonit – support this interpretation; see Mariette, *Notice des principaux monuments*, 157-58 no. 385, 204 no. 560, 228 no. 711-14, and Daressy, “Inscriptions du tombeau de Psametik,” 24-25.

⁷⁵² See Malinine, Posener, and Vercoutter, *Catalogues des stèles*, 148-49 no. 194-95, and Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 219 n. 1 A.

⁷⁵³ See De Meulenaere, *Le surnom égyptien*, 17-18 no. 56, Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 119 n. 1 B, and Pressl, *Beamte und Soldaten*, 235-36 E8.

⁷⁵⁴ See Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 119 n. 1 D, E, and Pressl, *Beamte und Soldaten*, 252-54 F6, 255 F8, 260-61 F12. In light of Amasis’ forty-four-year reign, it is probable that these men were successors of one another. It is possible, however, that some Overseers of the Seal held the office at the same time. The second seal impression from Petubastis Seheribre’s reign features an Overseer of the Seal called *Hr-wd3*, for example (Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 217 no. 4; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Museum Associates, accessed January 16, 2020, <https://collections.lacma.org/node/245442>). In light of Seheribre’s short reign, it is likely that *Hr-wd3* was the colleague – rather than predecessor or successor – of the Overseer of the Seal Psamtik. Regrettably, nothing else is known about *Hr-wd3*.

⁷⁵⁵ See Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 119 n. 1 C, H, I, and Pressl, *Beamte und Soldaten*, 285-86 S22, 289 S31, 311 S81. A ninth Overseer of the Seal, possibly called *Sⁿh-w3h-ib-r^c*, may have been buried at Heliopolis; see Vittmann, “Two Administrative Letters,” 438 n. 11, and Bickel and Tallet, “La nécropole saïte,” 79.

If the identification between the Psamtik of the Meydum papyri and the Psamtik of the tomb is accepted, it is possible to go a step further in our interpretation of the sources – though it is important to observe that we enter the realm of speculation here. For example, we might entertain the possibility that the Overseer of the Seal Psamtik was already in office before Petubastis Seheribre came to power. His long list of titles is suggestive in this regard. In addition, monumental tombs such as his took considerable resources, and were generally built years in advance of someone’s expected demise. The tomb of the well-known Saite-Persian-Period official Udjahorresnet is illustrative in this regard. When Udjahorresnet’s grave at Abusir was discovered in the 1990s, numerous demotic inscriptions were found within the tomb, some of which dated to year forty-one and forty-two of Amasis (529/28 – 528/27 BC). They were probably left behind while the grave was being constructed.⁷⁵⁶ The inscriptions on Udjahorresnet’s well-known statue in the Vatican, however, show that he held office during the reign of Amasis, as well as during the reigns of Psamtik III, Cambyses, and Darius I.⁷⁵⁷ In other words, his grave must have been built years before his death. In a similar vein, it is conceivable that Psamtik’s tomb would have been constructed at the end of the Saite Period or very beginning of the Persian Period as well. If so, it would be a small but important indication that the Overseer of the Seal Psamtik was a member of the “ancien régime,” rather than a homo novus who owed his position to Petubastis Seheribre alone.

5.2.2.2.2 The Overseer(?) Pefheriheter (P. Ashmolean 1984.89)

The third letter from the Meydum pyramid, P. Ashmolean 1984.89, was sent by another Overseer (*mr*), whose exact title is regrettably illegible.⁷⁵⁸ The Overseer’s name was Pefheriheter. Aside from the enigmatic seal impression that sealed P. Ashmolean 1984.89, no additional sources can be attributed to this official.⁷⁵⁹ This makes it difficult to evaluate his standing. What we do know is that Pefheriheter must have had some degree of authority, as he had the ability to send someone to Heracleopolis (P. Ashmolean 1984.89, l. 2). In addition, it can be suggested that he was of lower rank than Hormaakheru, the person to whom he sent the letter. Suggestive in this regard is the introductory formula of P. Ashmolean 1984.89: as discussed above, the letter greeted Hormaakheru “before Ptah

⁷⁵⁶ See Bareš, “Demotic Sources,” 35-38. The foundation deposits in the tomb likewise refer to Amasis, though without indication of regnal years; see Bareš, “Foundation Deposits,” 1-3.

⁷⁵⁷ See Posener, *La première domination perse*, 1-26 no. 1, and Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 117-22 4.11.

⁷⁵⁸ See Vittmann, “Two Administrative Letters,” 446 a.

⁷⁵⁹ For the seal, see 5.2.2.1.2 above.

that he may give you [praise and] love(?) before Pharaoh” (l. 1).⁷⁶⁰ According to Mark Depauw, to greet someone before a deity was common in “polite formal letters and friendly informal ones,” yet absent “in letters from superiors to their subordinates.”⁷⁶¹ In addition, to wish praise and love to someone was restricted to “polite formal letters from subordinates to superiors.”⁷⁶² By extension, we may assume that Pefheriheter was of lower standing than the Overseer of the Seal Psamtik, as the latter was of sufficiently high rank to give orders to Hormaakheru.

5.2.2.2.3 Hormaakheru of Heracleopolis (P. Ashmolean 1984.87 and 1984.89)

At least two of the Meydum letters – namely P. Ashmolean 1984.87, which was sent by the Overseer of the Seal Psamtik, and P. Ashmolean 1984.89, which was sent by Pefheriheter – were sent to a man called Hormaakheru. P. Ashmolean 1984.87 calls Hormaakheru a “son of Pasheriah,” while P. Ashmolean 1984.89 calls him “him of Heracleopolis.”⁷⁶³ As mentioned above, both letters concern affairs regarding the nome of Heracleopolis, which Hormaakheru was expected to arrange. It is therefore safe to assume that we are dealing with one individual, who happened to be addressed in two different ways.⁷⁶⁴ This individual, Hormaakheru son of Pasheriah, an official of Heracleopolis, is not known from other sources. If we wish to understand his position, however, the appellation “him of Heracleopolis” (*pa Ht-nn-nsw*) is important.

In the Saite to Persian Period, the formula “him of GN” (*pa GN*) is attested as a paraphrase for a title. It may originally have stood for “Mayor of GN” (*h3ty-ꜥ n GN*), or “Chief of GN” (*hry n GN*).⁷⁶⁵ The specific variant *pa Ht-nn-nsw* is attested as well. The title occurs several times in P. Rylands 9, a long demotic text written in the reign of Darius I. In short, P. Rylands 9 records a petition – perhaps literary rather than legal – that was written by a certain Peteese (III). The petition claims that Peteese’s family had held priestly rights in the temple of Amun at Teudjoi – a town ca. 45 kilometers south of Heracleopolis – since the early Saite period. However, their rights had been infringed upon for years

⁷⁶⁰ See Vittmann, “Two Administrative Letters,” 446.

⁷⁶¹ See Depauw, *Demotic Letter*, 179. See also *ibid.*, 136-37. 190

⁷⁶² See *ibid.*, 190.

⁷⁶³ See Vittmann, “Two Administrative Letters,” 437, 446.

⁷⁶⁴ See *ibid.*, 446 c. It is possible that P. Ashmolean 1984.88 was sent to Hormaakheru as well, but the addressee of the letter falls in a lacuna; see Cruz-Uribe, “Early Demotic Texts,” 64.

⁷⁶⁵ See Vittmann, “Two Administrative Letters,” 446 d, Vittmann, *Der demotische Papyrus Rylands 9*, 2:507-8, 551-52, and Vittmann, “Eine demotische Erwähnung,” 126-27.

by a variety of individuals, and both Peteese and his ancestors had tried (and failed) to receive justice with the help of high-standing officials.⁷⁶⁶ Within this story, the rulers of Heracleopolis play a prominent role: some had appropriated the rights in the temple to themselves, while others were called upon to mediate in the conflict at Teudjoi. The earliest such rulers were Peteese and his son Somtutefnakht. Both held the title Master of Shipping (*ꜥ n mryt*) during the reign of Psamtik I. Other Egyptian sources have shown that Somtutefnakht was a historical figure, and that he also held the title Overseer of Upper Egypt (*mr šmꜥ*).⁷⁶⁷ According to P. Rylands 9, Peteese (I) – the ancestor of Peteese (III), and not to be confused with Peteese the Master of Shipping – was chief of Heracleopolis (*hry n Ht-nn-nsw*) at the time. This post appears to have been second in importance only to the Master of Shipping.⁷⁶⁸ In the years that followed, however, the office of Master of Shipping – which may have involved authority over the entirety of southern Egypt – seems to have disappeared.⁷⁶⁹ Consequently, the highest official in the Herakleopolite nome was the chief (*hry*). P. Rylands 9 suggests that Peteese III’s family had lost this office by the reign of Psamtik II, when a certain Horwedja son of Herkheb was the chief of Heracleopolis.⁷⁷⁰ In the reign of Amasis, the same office seems to have been held by a certain Herbes son of Paneferiu, who is described as “him of Heracleopolis” (*pa Ht-nn-nsw*).⁷⁷¹ It is clear from context that these men held a type of governorship over the entire nome, and that they had the authority to e.g. intervene with local temple affairs, and to command (small) groups of soldiers.⁷⁷² Though Hormaakheru son of Pasheriah – the *pa Ht-nn-nsw* in April 521 BC – is not mentioned in P. Rylands 9, we may assume that he was the successor of Horwedja son of Herkheb, and that he enjoyed comparable privileges.⁷⁷³ As is the case with the

⁷⁶⁶ For a summary of P. Rylands 9 and its probable date of writing (which lies somewhere after year nine of Darius I), see Griffith, *Catalogue of the Demotic Papyri*, 60-65, and Vittmann, *Der demotische Papyrus Rylands 9*, 1:204-12, 2:686.

⁷⁶⁷ See *ibid.*, 2:708.

⁷⁶⁸ See *ibid.*, 2:709.

⁷⁶⁹ See *ibid.*, 2:709-12.

⁷⁷⁰ See *ibid.*, 2:713.

⁷⁷¹ See Vittmann, *Der demotische Papyrus Rylands 9*, 2:713.

⁷⁷² See e.g. *ibid.*, 1:164-67 15.2-7, 180-89 19.8-21.2. The official may not have been the highest “in command,” however: when Herbes was chief, a certain Psamtikawyneit was general (*mr mꜥ*) in the nome of Heracleopolis (see *ibid.*, 1:182-83 19.13). It is not clear from the text whether he was subordinate to Herbes.

⁷⁷³ See Vittmann, “Two Administrative Letters,” 446 d. The suggestion that Hormaakheru son of Pasheriah was a descendant of a certain Hormaakheru son of Ptahirdites, a man of uncertain rank who, according to P. Rylands 9, 16, lived in the (early) reign of Amasis, is tentative (*pace ibid.*, 446 n. 45).

Overseer of the Seal Psamtik, it is possible – though speculative – that Hormaakheru already held this position before Petubastis Seheribre came to power.

5.2.2.2.4 Other individuals (P. Ashmolean 1984.87, 1984.88 and 1984.89)

Aside from the senders and recipient of the letters, P. Ashmolean 1984.87, 1984.88 and 1984.89 mention ca. eight additional individuals. Two of them had an active hand in the letters: Wahibresaptah was the scribe of P. Ashmolean 1984.87, and Horsedjem was the scribe of P. Ashmolean 1984.89.⁷⁷⁴ The other six individuals are only briefly referred to. In P. Ashmolean 1984.87, for example, we hear that an anonymous “scribe of accounts” (*sh-ḫw=f-ip*) had made a document regarding land distribution in the nome of Heracleopolis. The document stated that 140 arouras of land were to be given to five people. Of those five people, the names of Imhotep son of Peteese, Peteese son of Pefheriheter, and a son of Wahibre have been preserved. In addition, a man called Psamtik son of Tjahapimu was not allowed to do something – perhaps he was not allowed to intervene with the distribution.⁷⁷⁵ In P. Ashmolean 1984.88, the name Naneferibre is mentioned in a broken context.⁷⁷⁶ In P. Ashmolean 1984.89, a man called Peteese – evidently a common name at the time – was sent to Heracleopolis. None of these individuals can be confidently identified with individuals known from other sources.⁷⁷⁷ Nevertheless, three of them deserve to be highlighted. The men in question are the aforementioned Imhotep son of Peteese, Peteese son of Pefheriheter, and a son of Wahibre whose name falls in a lacuna.

According to P. Ashmolean 1984.87, Imhotep, Peteese, and the anonymous son of Wahibre were each to receive thirty arouras of arable land in the nome of Heracleopolis. The men are identified as “hermotybian” (*rmṯ-dm*). The profession of the hermotybian is probably best known from the *Histories* of Herodotus. In a story about the civil war between Apries and Amasis, the historian from Halicarnassus divided the society of Late Period Egypt into seven classes. One of these classes consisted of warriors, who were further divided into 160.000 hermotybian and 250.000 kalasirian. Neither practiced any common trade, as they were dedicated entirely to the military (*Histories* 2.164-67). At a later point in the *Histories*, it is claimed that the hermotybian and kalasirian served the

⁷⁷⁴ See Vittmann, “Two Administrative Letters,” 437, 446.

⁷⁷⁵ See *ibid.*, 437-443.

⁷⁷⁶ See Cruz-Urbe, “Early Demotic Texts,” 64.

⁷⁷⁷ Compare Cruz-Urbe, “Early Demotic Texts,” 60 n. 8, 62, who suggests that two people might be identified with individuals attested in P. Rylands 9, with Vittmann, “Two Administrative Letters,” 437 l. 3, 441 o.

Persian Empire, for example during the battle at Plataea in 479 BC (*Histories* 9.32).⁷⁷⁸ At first sight, that some Egyptian warriors received land in the Heracleopolite nome in the 520s BC is not particularly noteworthy. It is clear from P. Rylands 9 that hermotybianes were present in the nome during the Saite Period, and that they answered to the chief of Heracleopolis on the one hand, and to a general (*mr mšꜥ*) on the other.⁷⁷⁹ In addition, demotic texts from the late sixth and fifth century BC continue to document the presence of a general and of land-holding hermotybianes and kalasirians in the area of Heracleopolis.⁷⁸⁰ The significance of P. Ashmolean 1984.87 rather lies in the fact that some of these soldiers were working within Petubastis Seheribre's jurisdiction in April 521 BC. As discussed above, we cannot be certain whether these people would have actively supported the rebellion; but it is safe to assume that the land they received in the Heracleopolite nome was given in exchange for military service. At present, this is the only glimpse that contemporary sources provide us of the army with which Seheribre would have fought the Persian Empire.

5.2.3 Conclusion

The Egyptian sources from Petubastis Seheribre's reign provide us with several clues on both the geographical reach and the "supporters" of the Egyptian rebellion that began in 521 BC. First, the temple blocks from Amheida indicate that Seheribre controlled the Dakhla Oasis – and probably the entire Southern Oasis – in the 520s BC. The fact that he did, and that he chose to rebuild a sanctuary in a remote oasis rather than in the Nile Valley, suggests that his rebellion started in the Western Desert. Seheribre might even have occupied a position of authority there before the Bisitun crisis began. It is important to observe that this suggestion is compatible with the references to Bastet that are included in Seheribre's birth name and epithet: a cult to Bastet is known to have existed in the oases in the mid-first millennium BC, and was certainly not exclusive to the eastern Delta city of Bubastis (5.2.1-5.2.1.1). Second, the papyri from the Meydum pyramid show that Seheribre's reign was eventually recognized in the nome of Heracleopolis. In addition, it might have been recognized at Memphis, the capital of Achaemenid Egypt (5.2.2.1). The individuals who recognized his reign

⁷⁷⁸ For a discussion of this "class," and its attestation in Egyptian sources, see Fischer-Bovet, "Egyptian Warriors," 210-19.

⁷⁷⁹ See Vittmann, *Der demotische Papyrus Rylands 9*, 1:183 19.13. See also *ibid.*, 1:151 11.12, for kalasirians in a village near Teudjoi.

⁷⁸⁰ See Tuplin, "Military Environment," 307, 309-10, 315, and Smith, Martin and Tuplin, "Egyptian Documents," 296-97 iv.

included three (high-ranking) Egyptian state officials: an Overseer of the Seal called Psamtik, who may be connected to a monumental tomb at Saqqara, an Overseer of uncertain standing called Pefheriheter, and a high official in – and probably the “chief” of – Heracleopolis, called Hormaakheru son of Pasheriah. None are known from sources that can be definitively dated to the reigns of other kings. It is conceivable, however, that they would have occupied high-level government posts before the reign of Seheribre began. In addition, the Meydum letters show that a handful of soldiers, who received land in the Heracleopolis nome on Psamtik’s orders, were at Seheribre’s disposal. As the papyri are dated to April 521 BC (Choiak of year one), we can conclude that the rebellion must have spread from the Dakhla Oasis to Heracleopolis and (possibly) to Memphis within four months of Seheribre’s accession (5.2.2.2-5.2.2.2.4). In light of this, we can no longer state that Petubastis Seheribre merely enjoyed a “pouvoir précaire et territorialement restreint.”⁷⁸¹ On the contrary, the rebellion was relatively widespread, enjoyed military support from Egyptian soldiers, and was quickly recognized by high-ranking Egyptian officials.

As a final remark, it is important to emphasize that the aforementioned reconstruction is based on the Egyptian sources that are presently at our disposal. As these sources are not very numerous, our reconstruction of the rebellion is necessarily incomplete. What happened after April 521 BC, and what happened in other parts of the country, remains unknown. It may be useful to highlight these gaps in our knowledge. First, as discussed in Chapter 3, Seheribre’s reign may have lasted until 518 BC, when Darius I finally had the time and resources to reconquer Egypt.⁷⁸² It is conceivable that Seheribre’s rule would have been recognized in other parts of the country before that time. However, as the naos fragments, the scarab, and one of the seal impressions that bear Seheribre’s name(s) are of unknown provenance, this cannot be verified.⁷⁸³ Second, it is likewise unknown whether some parts of Egypt remained under Persian control from 521 to 518 BC, as is known to have happened during the rebellion of 487/86 BC.⁷⁸⁴ As discussed in Chapter 3, a papyrus from Edfu refers to year three of Darius I (520/19 BC). If the papyrus was written during that year, it could indicate that some Egyptians in southern Egypt recognized the reign of the Persian king while others may still have recognized Seheribre. However, as it is likely that “year three” was a retroactive date, the papyrus cannot be used to reconstruct the political situation at Edfu in 520/19 BC.⁷⁸⁵ Other texts that are dated

⁷⁸¹ Yoyotte, “Pétoubastis III,” 223.

⁷⁸² See 3.4.

⁷⁸³ See 5.2.

⁷⁸⁴ See 5.3 below.

⁷⁸⁵ See 3.3.1.2.

to Persian kings all pre- or post-date the rebellion.⁷⁸⁶ Third and finally, it is unknown what happened with Petubastis Seheribre, and with officials like Psamtik, Pefheriheter and Hormaakheru, when Darius I regained control over the Nile Valley. Darius' Bisitun inscription claims that numerous rebel kings were executed on his orders, so we may assume that Seheribre suffered a similar fate.⁷⁸⁷ What would have happened to Seheribre's officials is less certain. All three – and especially Psamtik and Hormaakheru – occupied high positions of authority in Seheribre's government. As such, we might entertain the possibility that they were members of his “foremost followers” – a phrase which is used in the Bisitun inscription to refer to the inner circle of the rebel kings of the 520s BC. These followers numbered between ca. 46 and 80 people, and were often executed with the rebel king in question.⁷⁸⁸ However, as we cannot be certain why and in what circumstances these officials began to recognize Seheribre's reign, this remains necessarily hypothetical.⁷⁸⁹ Alternatively, we know that some Egyptian officials whose careers had begun during Amasis' reign remained in office under Darius I. Udjahorresnet is the best-known example.⁷⁹⁰ Yet, whether these officials had recognized the reign of Petubastis Seheribre between 521 and 518 BC – just like Psamtik, Pefheriheter and Hormaakheru had done – is unknown. It may be significant that the inscriptions on Udjahorresnet's statue do not mention Seheribre, though they explicitly mention Amasis, Psamtik III, Cambyses, and Darius I.⁷⁹¹ Then again, as the statue was created during the later reign of Darius I, Udjahorresnet's “retroactive” autobiography may have omitted Seheribre's reign for political reasons that had little to do with which king he factually recognized during the fraught years that followed the Bisitun crisis.

⁷⁸⁶ See 3.3.1.1 and 3.3.1.3.

⁷⁸⁷ See 3.2.1.2.

⁷⁸⁸ See Bae, “Comparative Studies,” 144-46, 172-73, 180-81, 185-88, Hyland, “Casualty Figures,” 177, and table 1 in Chapter 3.

⁷⁸⁹ See 5.2.2.2.

⁷⁹⁰ See Posener, *La première domination perse*, 1-26 no. 1, Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 117-22 4.11, and the discussion in 5.2.2.2.1. The other official who is known to have remained in office from Amasis to Darius I's reign is the Overseer of Works Khnemibre; see the discussion in 4.3.2.1.

⁷⁹¹ See Posener, *La première domination perse*, 1-26 no. 1, and Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 117-22 4.11. Whether one passage on the statue, which speaks of a great disaster in Egypt, is an oblique reference to the rebellion is debated: see e.g. Posener, *La première domination perse*, 169, Cameron, “Darius, Egypt, and the ‘Lands Beyond the Sea,’” 310-11, Lloyd, “Inscription of Udjahorresnet,” 176-78, Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 56-57, and Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 120 n. 14.

5.3 The rebellion of Psamtik IV

In Egypt, the years of the Bisitun crisis were followed by a relatively long period of political tranquility. As discussed in Chapter 4, Darius I was recognized as the undisputed ruler of the country for ca. thirty years. During this period, Darius erected numerous Egyptian and Egypto-Persian monuments in the Nile Valley. Among them were the monumental canal stelae in the eastern Delta, which emphasized that the king had conquered Egypt from Persia.⁷⁹² Nevertheless, at the end of Darius' reign the Persian king was again faced with the threat of an Egyptian secession. According to Herodotus, Egypt rebelled in ca. 487/86 BC, a few years after the Persians' defeat at Marathon (*Histories* 7.1). Darius passed away before he could the thwart the unrest, so the rebellion was defeated by Xerxes in ca. 485/84 BC (*Histories* 7.4, 7.7).⁷⁹³ The Egyptian sources that can be dated to this timespan are relatively numerous: they consist of ca. ten papyri, two rock inscriptions from the Wadi Hammamat, and four inscribed vases.⁷⁹⁴ Of these sources, three demotic contracts from Hou are explicitly dated to the reign of Psamtik IV, a rebel king who ruled at the end of Darius I's reign.⁷⁹⁵ The remainder are dated to the reigns of Darius I and Xerxes, though one of them – a demotic letter from Elephantine – mentions “men who rebel” at the country's southern border.⁷⁹⁶

Like the sources from Petubastis Seheribre's reign discussed above, the sources from 487/86 – 485/84 BC – and especially the aforementioned demotic papyri – are significant for two reasons: first, they indicate the geographical extent of the rebellion; second, they provide us with a glimpse of the people who recognized the reign of an Egyptian rebel king rather than a Persian Great King in ca. 486 BC. The following section discusses both topics in depth. Before we get there, however, it is necessary to address a particular claim that is sometimes made regarding the second rebellion. This the claim that the rebellion originated in – and was confined to – the Delta of Egypt.

5.3.1 A Delta rebellion?

The idea that the Egyptian rebellion of 487/86 BC had its focal point in the Delta can be traced back to the nineteenth century. At the time, the idea was influenced by the fact that pharaoh Khababash, a rebel king of the Persian Period, was thought to be connected to the rebellion: the sources from

⁷⁹² See 4.1, and the discussion in 2.3.3.1 and 2.4.1.1.

⁷⁹³ For Herodotus' chronology for the event, see 4.2.

⁷⁹⁴ See 4.3-4.4, and figure 15.

⁷⁹⁵ See Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 6*, 10*-11* (P. Hou 4, 7-8), and 4.4.1.3.

⁷⁹⁶ See Martin, “Demotic Texts,” 296-97 (C4), and 4.3.1.1-4.3.1.3, 4.3.2, 4.4.1.1-4.4.1.2.

Khababash's reign indicated that he had controlled Memphis and the Delta town of Buto.⁷⁹⁷ In 1907, however, Wilhelm Spiegelberg re-dated Khababash's reign to the fourth century BC, on the basis of a prosopographical connection between two papyri from Thebes.⁷⁹⁸ Subsequently, the only Egyptian evidence for the rebellion of 487/86 BC consisted of several sources that were dated to Persian kings.⁷⁹⁹ In the 1980s, this evidence was enlarged by three papyri from the southern Nile Valley, which were dated to Psamtik IV.⁸⁰⁰ Though a documented link between the rebellion and sites in northern Egypt had disappeared, the idea of the rebellion's connection to the north persisted. Several scholars in the second half of the twentieth and early twenty-first century have stated that the rebellion began in the Delta, for example, and/or that the (southern) Nile Valley remained under Persian control. In addition, the rebellion has sometimes been connected to Libyans, who are believed to have roamed in the western part of or just to the west of the Delta.⁸⁰¹ Though the reason for connecting the second Egyptian rebellion to the Delta and/or Libyans is not always explained, the hypothesis is essentially based on two elements. Both are discussed below. To anticipate this section's conclusions: it will be argued that neither element is sufficiently convincing; it therefore remains an open question whether the rebellion of 487/86 BC had any connection to the north of Egypt, let alone whether it originated there.

⁷⁹⁷ See e.g. Wiedemann, *Geschichte Aegyptens*, 245-48, Maspero, *Les empires*, 713-14, and Petrie, *From the XIXth to the XXXth Dynasties*, 365-66, 368-69.

⁷⁹⁸ See Spiegelberg, *Der Papyrus Libbey*, 1-6, and Burstein, "Prelude to Alexander," 150.

⁷⁹⁹ Most important among them were P. Loeb 1, Posener 24 and Posener 25; see Martin, "Demotic Texts," 296-97 (C4), Posener, *La première domination perse*, 117-20 nos. 24-25, and 4.3.

⁸⁰⁰ See Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 6*, 10*-11* (P. Hou 4, 7-8), and 4.4.1.3.

⁸⁰¹ See Kienitz, *Die politische Geschichte Ägyptens*, 67-68, Ray, "Egypt 525 – 404 B.C.," 275-77, Rottpeter, "Initiatoren und Träger," 15-16, Perdu, "Saites and Persians," 152, Yoyotte, "Egyptian Statue of Darius," 257, Ruzicka, *Trouble in the West*, 27-28, and Leahy, "Egypt in the Late Period," 727. Note that "Libyan" is an umbrella-term for various (semi-)nomadic groups who lived to the west of Egypt. They became an increasingly prominent presence within Egypt from the late second millennium BC onwards, so much so that parts of Egypt – including the Delta – were ruled by Libyan kings in the early first millennium BC; see e.g. O'Connor, "Nature of Tjemhu (Libyan) Society," 29-113, Snape, "Emergence of Libya," 93-106, and Naunton, "Libyans and Nubians," 120-39. It is important to observe that there was a lot of acculturation between "Libyans" on the one hand and "Egyptians" on the other, which makes it difficult to identify the former in texts or material culture from Egypt; see e.g. Naunton, "Libyans and Nubians," 133-34. A rare piece of Persian Period evidence on the Libyan population of Egypt is Herodotus, *Histories* 2.18, who notes that the inhabitants of Marea in the western Delta, a town from which the Libyan king Inaros would later launch his rebellion, thought of themselves as "Libyans" and not "Egyptians."

5.3.1.1 The Delta, Libyans, and “Psamtik”

As is the case with the rebellion of Petubastis Seheribre, the idea that the second Egyptian rebellion began in and may have been confined to the Delta is partly the result of what we know of later Egyptian rebellions. Especially important in this regard is the rebellion of Inaros in the mid-fifth century BC. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, Inaros was a Libyan king, who rebelled against Persian rule from Marea, a town in the western Delta. Greco-Roman authors largely localize the rebellion near the Mediterranean coast and in the marshes of northern Egypt (see Herodotus, *Histories* 3.12, 3.15, 7.7; Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War* 1.104, 1.109-10; Ctesias, *Persica* F14 §36-39). In 1953, Friedrich Kienitz voiced the assumption that the rebellion of 487/86 BC would have been a broadly comparable episode. In Kienitz’s words: “Im Jahre 486 brach in Ägypten ein Aufstand aus. (...) Vermutlich haben sich die Dinge genau so wie 25 Jahre später abgespielt. Nicht die eigentlichen Ägypter, sondern die Libyer des Westdeltas haben den Aufstand unternommen und Unterägypten den Persern entrissen. Der persische Hauptstützpunkt, Memphis, wird sich aber gehalten und dadurch den Aufständischen das seinerseits völlig passive Oberägypten solange verschlossen haben, bis das Entsatzheer aus Persien eingetroffen war.”⁸⁰² In the 1950s, Kienitz’s hypothesis lacked explicit support.⁸⁰³ However, it received new attention in the 1980s. Key in this regard were the three papyri from Hou.

As discussed in Chapter 4, three papyri from Hou, a site at the western edge of the Qena Bend, are dated to the second regnal year of a king called Psamtik. For a large part of the twentieth century, the papyri were attributed to the reign of Psamtik II or to the reign of Psamtik III. In the 1980s, however, Eugene Cruz-Uribe and Pieter Pestman argued that the papyri should be attributed to Psamtik “IV.” The latter was a previously unidentified rebel king who ruled at the end of Darius I’s reign.⁸⁰⁴ Since the sources from Khababash’s reign had been separated from the second Egyptian rebellion in the early twentieth century (see above), the papyri from Hou provided scholars with a first glimpse of the identity of the man who may have led the revolt of the 480s BC. The date formulae of the Hou papyri revealed little more than that the man had adopted the title “pharaoh,” and that his birth name was

⁸⁰² Kienitz, *Die politische Geschichte Ägyptens*, 67-68.

⁸⁰³ The idea was partially supported by the hypothesis that southern Egypt had remained under Persian control, which could indicate that the rebellion was confined to the Delta – but this hypothesis can no longer be upheld; see 5.3.1.2 below.

⁸⁰⁴ See Cruz-Uribe, “On the Existence of Psammetichus IV,” 36-39, and Pestman, “Diospolis Parva Documents,” 145-48.

“Psamtik.”⁸⁰⁵ Nevertheless, the latter element was thought to be significant. First, “Psamtik” may originally have been a Libyan name.⁸⁰⁶ Second, Libyan rulers from the fifth century BC were sometimes called Psamtik. The best-known example is the father of Inaros, whom both Herodotus and Thucydides call “Psammetichos” (Herodotus, *Histories* 7.7; Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War* 1.104).⁸⁰⁷ Some scholars therefore suggested that Psamtik IV was a Libyan man, and even that he might be identified with Inaros’ father.⁸⁰⁸

Today, the papyri from Hou are still important sources for the reconstruction of the 487/86 BC rebellion. As such, they have been elaborately discussed in Chapter 4, and they will be discussed in more detail below. Whether the papyri can be used to argue that the rebellion was connected to the Delta and/or Libyans is questionable, however. One can make two important counterarguments in this regard. First, although Psamtik may have been a Libyan name, the name cannot be connected to a particular region in Egypt or to the ethnicity of its bearer. As discussed in Chapter 3, “Psamtik” became a popular name in Egypt from the seventh century BC onwards. This popularity was probably the result of its connection to royalty: it was the birth name of Psamtik I Wahibre, Psamtik II Neferibre, and Psamtik III Ankhkaenre. Men who were called “Psamtik,” or variants thereof, are subsequently attested throughout the Saite to Persian Period, and in different parts of the country. One example from the Persian Period is the Overseer of the Seal Psamtik, who served Petubastis Seheribre in 521 BC.⁸⁰⁹ Second, “Psamtik” seems to have become an especially popular name among rebel kings of the fifth century BC. The name was born by an obscure ruler who may have had authority in Egypt in the 440s BC (Philochorus, *Atthis* 328 F 119; Plutarch, *Pericles* 37). It was also born by a pharaoh in ca. 400 BC, whose reign is attested in demotic ostraca from the Kharga Oasis, and by a pharaoh called “Psamtik Amasis,” whose reign is attested by sistrum handle and by a private

⁸⁰⁵ See Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 6*, 10*-11* (P. Hou 4, 7-8).

⁸⁰⁶ See e.g. Jansen-Winkeln, “Die Fremdherrschaften in Ägypten,” 16. The Libyan etymology of the name is not undisputed, however; see e.g. Ray, “The Names Psammetichus and Takheta,” 196-97, and Colin, “Les Libyens en Égypte,” 121.

⁸⁰⁷ That the name of Inaros’ father was Psamtik – or that he claimed it to be so (see below) – is supported by a Greek inscription from Samos; see Dunst, “Archaische Inschriften,” 153-55 XXIV, pl. 60 no. 1-2, and 2.5.1.

⁸⁰⁸ See e.g. Huss, *Ägypten in hellenistischer Zeit*, 36, and Yoyotte, “Egyptian Statue of Darius,” 257. The possibility that Psamtik IV was Inaros’ father was first entertained by Cruz-Uribe, “On the Existence of Psammetichus IV,” 38-39, though he stressed its uncertainty. Confusingly, Inaros’ father is sometimes called “Psamtik IV,” even when no explicit connection is made between him and the Psamtik from the Hou papyri; see e.g. Spalinger, “Psammetichus IV,” 1173-75, and Moje, *Herrschaftsräume und Herrschaftswissen*, 269.

⁸⁰⁹ See 3.3.2.3.1.

statue that was excavated at Mit Rahina.⁸¹⁰ Scholars have rightfully wondered whether all of these kings were originally called Psamtik, or whether they had adopted the name in order to connect themselves to the kings of the Saite Dynasty.⁸¹¹ When one considers these phenomena, it should be clear that we cannot assume that Psamtik IV was necessarily a Libyan man from the (western) Delta. In fact, it is equally plausible that Psamtik IV was a man from the southern Nile Valley, who had either been called “Psamtik” by his parents – just like many of his countrymen – , or who had adopted the name for propagandistic purposes.

5.3.1.2 Persian control of southern Egypt

Aside from the alleged connection between the Psamtik of the Hou papyri and the Libyans of the Delta, the idea that the rebellion of 487/86 BC was closely connected to northern Egypt has also been supported with reference to several Egyptian texts that are dated to Persian kings. Especially important in this regard are P. Loeb 1, a letter from Elephantine that was written on 17 Payni of year thirty-six of Darius I (5 October 486 BC).⁸¹² Equally important is Posener 25, a rock inscription from the Wadi Hammamat, which was inscribed on 19 Akhet of year two of Xerxes (9 January 484 BC).⁸¹³ As discussed in Chapter 4, both sources have been used as *termini post* and *ante quem* for the 487/86 BC rebellion. Specifically, some scholars have argued that the revolt would have begun after P. Loeb 1 was written (5 October 486 BC), and that it would have ended before Posener 25 was inscribed on the rocks of the Wadi Hammamat (9 January 484 BC).⁸¹⁴ However, an alternative approach to the sources has been in circulation as well: some scholars have assumed that P. Loeb 1 and Posener 25 were contemporary with the rebellion. In addition, they have pointed out that the sources were written

⁸¹⁰ See Spalinger, “Psammetichus V,” 1175, Chauveau, “Les archives d’un temple,” 44-47, Gauthier, “Un roi Amasis-Psammétique,” 187-90, and Jansen-Winkel, *Die 26. Dynastie*, 583 no. 4, 584 no. 9. The latter attributes the sources from Psamtik Amasis to Psamtik III. As Psamtik III’s throne name was Ankhkaenra, it is more likely that Psamtik Amasis was a different Egyptian king. He might have been identical with one of the fifth century BC rebel kings called Psamtik.

⁸¹¹ See e.g. Cruz-Urbe, “On the Existence of Psammetichus IV,” 39, Spalinger, “Psammetichus IV,” 1174, and Chauveau, “Les archives d’un temple,” 44-47. Similar doubts have been expressed about Inaros’ lineage: was his father actually called Psamtik, or did Inaros favor such a patronymic in light of the name’s connection to the Saites? See e.g. Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 322 n. 2, and Waters, *Ancient Persia*, 159.

⁸¹² See Martin, “Demotic Texts,” 296-97 (C4).

⁸¹³ See Posener, *La première domination perse*, 120 no. 25, and Obsomer, “Les inscriptions hiéroglyphiques,” 249 no. 13.

⁸¹⁴ See e.g. Pestman, “Diospolis Parva Documents,” 147, and the discussion in 4.3. Note that Pestman dated to P. Loeb 1 to 7 June 486 BC; the date has since been amended (see Martin, “Demotic Texts,” 296).

in southern Egypt: Elephantine was an island at Egypt's southern border, just north of the first cataract, and the Wadi Hammamat was located near the Qena Bend of the Nile, in Egypt's Eastern Desert. As the texts are dated to Persian kings, their southern origin might be used to argue that Upper Egypt remained under Persian control during 487/86 – 485/84 BC. The rebellion would thus have been confined to northern Egypt. P. Loeb 1 and Posener 25 were used as such by Friedrich Kienitz in 1953, and more recently by John Ray in 1988, Marc Rottpeter in 2007, and Tony Leahy in 2020.⁸¹⁵

As discussed in Chapter 4, the present study accepts the hypothesis that P. Loeb 1 and – with less certainty – Posener 25 may have been contemporary with the 480s BC rebellion. Chapter 4 has shown that both sources were written by people who were closely connected to the imperial government. This observation also applies to other Egyptian sources from year thirty-six of Darius I and year two of Xerxes. It is therefore plausible that their authors would have continued to date their texts to Persian kings, even if the rebellion already affected other parts of the country.⁸¹⁶ However, the present study does not accept the conclusion that the entirety of southern Egypt would have remained under Persian control. The fact that the aforementioned sources were written by a specific group of people who were closely connected to the imperial administration of Egypt render such generalizations suspect.⁸¹⁷ More importantly, P. Loeb 1 itself speaks of “rebels” at Egypt's southern border; and when the papyri from Hou were connected to the rebellion in the 1980s, it became clear that it must have extended to Upper Egypt (on which more below). Whether the rebellion was recognized in the Delta, on the other hand, remains unknown.⁸¹⁸ The possibility that the rebellion had originated in southern Egypt is therefore just as plausible – if not more so – than that it had originated in the Egyptian Delta.

⁸¹⁵ See Kienitz, *Die politische Geschichte Ägyptens*, 67, Ray, “Egypt 525 – 404 B.C.,” 276-77, Rottpeter, “Initiatoren und Träger,” 15-16, and Leahy, “Egypt in the Late Period,” 727. Inscriptions from the Wadi Hammamat and papyri from Elephantine are often used in a similar vein in discussions of Inaros' revolt in the mid-fifth century BC; see e.g. Ray, “Egypt 525 – 404 B.C.,” 276-77, Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 575, and Leahy, “Egypt in the Late Period,” 727.

⁸¹⁶ See 4.3.3.

⁸¹⁷ The same observation applies to Inaros' rebellion (see n. 815 above). Indeed, a demotic ostrakon from Ayn Manawir, published in 2004, shows that Inaros' reign was recognized by some inhabitants of the Southern Oasis; see Chauveau, “Inarôs, prince des rebelles,” 39-46.

⁸¹⁸ At present, the only evidence for the rebellion's impact in the Delta stems from Tell el-Maskhuta, a border site in northeastern Egypt. Its remains indicate that the site may have been partly destroyed in the early fifth century BC. This might have been the result of the Persian invasion of the country in 485/84 BC. If so, the destruction suggests that the site was a locus of conflict, and hence that the rebellion had reached the eastern Delta; see Holladay, *Tell el-Maskhuta*, 25-26, and the discussion in 2.4.3.1.

5.3.2 *The rebellion in the (southern) Nile Valley*

Though it is unknown where the rebellion of 487/86 BC began, it is clear that it eventually had an impact in southern Egypt. As mentioned above, this impact is borne out by P. Loeb 1, which mentions “rebels” at Egypt’s southern border, and by three papyri from Hou, which are dated to the reign of Psamtik IV. Chapter 4 has argued that the rebellion had probably begun in (the last months of) 487 BC. As the papyri from Hou were written in Hathyr, Choiak and Tybi of Psamtik IV’s second regnal year, they can be dated to the spring of 486 BC. Posener 25, a rock inscription from the Wadi Hammamat dated to year thirty-six of Darius I, and P. Loeb 1 itself, dated to 5 October 486 BC (17 Payni of year thirty-six of Darius I), will therefore have been contemporary with the revolt.⁸¹⁹ To be specific: the “rebels” mentioned in P. Loeb 1 will have been spotted near Egypt’s southern border ca. seven months after the inhabitants of Hou first recognized the reign of Psamtik IV. In keeping with this chronology, the following section discusses the Hou papyri first, and P. Loeb 1 second. Its purpose is as follows: by taking an in-depth look at the relevant texts, the section aims to identify the social profile of the people who recognized the reign of a rebel king rather than that of a Persian Great King in 486 BC. In addition, it aims to throw new light on the geographical spread of the rebellion. The latter element is especially relevant in the case of the Hou papyri: the latter suggest that the rebellion may have been connected to Thebes as well as Hou; and they nuance our understanding of the inscriptions from the Wadi Hammamat.

5.3.2.1 The rebellion at Hou and (possibly) Thebes

The archive from Hou was first introduced in Chapter 4 in relation to the chronology of the rebellion. In short, the archive consists of thirteen texts, which were bought by Wilhelm Spiegelberg in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.⁸²⁰ Three of the papyri have lost the entirety or part of their date formulae (P. Hou 6, 9, and 11); seven of the papyri are dated to the late reign of Darius I (P. Hou 1-3, 5, 10, and 12-13); and the remaining three are dated to the second regnal year of Psamtik IV (P. Hou 4, 7, and 8). In chronological order, the latter consist of a contract involving a female donkey (P. Hou 8), a contract about the collective ownership of a cow (P. Hou 7), and a receipt for delivered geese (P. Hou 4).⁸²¹ Though the group of thirteen texts does not form a coherent family or business archive, it is clear that there are interconnections. Several of the individuals mentioned in the

⁸¹⁹ See figure 15 in 4.4, and the discussion in 4.4.2.

⁸²⁰ See Pestman, “Diospolis Parva Documents,” 145-46, and Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 1-2.

⁸²¹ See *ibid.*, 3*-16*, esp. 6* (P. Hou 4), 10* (P. Hou 7) and 11* (P. Hou 8).

documents recur multiple times as e.g. scribes, witnesses, and contracting parties, and the terms “geese” and “gooseherd” can be found in nine of the thirteen texts (see table 5). In addition, the settlements of Hou and Nasimserkhy, a village in the vicinity of Hou, are mentioned in three of the thirteen papyri (P. Hou 1-3).⁸²² The texts are therefore known as the “gooseherd” archive from Hou.

Table 5. The gooseherds archive from Hou: prosopographical interconnections.⁸²³

No.	Mention of Gooseherds	<i>ḥḥ-p3-ḥrd/ P3-dī-ḥs.t</i> ⁸²⁴	<i>Wn-nfr/ Dd-ḡḥwt- tw.f-ḥḥ</i>	<i>P3-whr/ Ḥr</i>	<i>P3-ḥr-ḥnsw/ Ns-in-ḥr</i>	<i>P3-dī-ḥmn/ Dd-ḥr</i>	<i>P3-dī-ḥmn- nsw-t3wy/ P3-whr</i>
P. Hou 9				Witness (?)			
P. Hou 11	x						
P. Hou 6	x	Witness		Witness			
P. Hou 5				Witness			
P. Hou 10	x						
P. Hou 1	x				Scribe (?)		
P. Hou 3	x				Witness		Party A
P. Hou 13	x	Witness	Scribe				
P. Hou 2	x				Scribe (?)		
P. Hou 12	x	Witness (?)	Scribe				
P. Hou 8						Witness	
P. Hou 7			Scribe	Witness			
P. Hou 4	x			Witness		Witness	Party A

As mentioned above, the papyri from Hou are significant for the study of the second Egyptian rebellion because they give us a glimpse of the individuals who recognized a rebel king in 486 BC. They are similar in this regard to the letters from the Meydum pyramid, which throw light on some of Petubastis Seheribre’s “supporters” in 521 BC. In connection to the latter, it was observed that “to

⁸²² See Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 3*-5* (P. Hou 1-3).

⁸²³ The table is adapted from Pestman, “Diospolis Parva Documents,” 150 table I (see also Wijnsma, ““And in the Fourth Year,”” 52 table 2). Pestman’s table includes individuals who may have been father and son. However, these identifications are often uncertain, so they have been excluded from the present table. Also excluded is *Ḥr* son of *P3-dī-b3st.t*, who appears as a witness in P. Hou 5 and who possibly appears as a witness in P. Hou 9 (where the patronymic is broken: *Ḥr s3 P3-dī-[b3st.t]*). Uncertain attestations of individuals who appear more than twice in the archive are marked by “(?)” in the present table.

⁸²⁴ The relationship “PN1 son of PN2” is shortened to “PN1/PN2.”

recognize” a king’s reign is not the same as actively supporting that king’s political aims. For example, it is possible that Psamtik IV had seized the region of Hou from the Persians, after which the inhabitants of Hou may have had little choice but to recognize the reign of the rebel king.⁸²⁵ Nevertheless, it is interesting to compare these individuals with the people who continued to recognize Persian rulers in 487/86 – 485/84 BC. As discussed in Chapter 4, the latter group mainly consisted of Egyptians and foreign residents who were closely connected to the imperial government.⁸²⁶ The people who appear in the Hou papyri, by contrast, show a different social profile: all of them bear Egyptian names and Egyptian patronymics; the possessions and/or professional titles of some individuals indicate that they belonged to the “middle class” of Egyptian society; and there is no evidence that they were connected to the imperial administration or to foreign residents in any way. The following pages discuss this in further depth. For simplicity’s sake, the discussion is structured per papyrus and in chronological order, i.e. from P. Hou 8 (February/March 486 BC) to P. Hou 7 (March/April 486 BC) and finally to P. Hou 4 (April/May 486 BC). In the latter case, we also explore the possibility that the rebellion may have been connected to Thebes.

5.3.2.1.1 P. Hou 8 (xx-03-02 Psk IV)

P. Hou 8 is the earliest document at our disposal that is dated to the reign of Psamtik IV. It was written in Hathyr of the king’s second regnal year, i.e. between the end of February and the end of March of 486 BC.⁸²⁷ The text is separated by a period of several months from the last text of the archive dated to Darius I (P. Hou 12, dated to September/October 487 BC).⁸²⁸ Though politically significant, the contents of P. Hou 8 do not provide us with much information about the individuals who feature in the document. In short, the document states that a certain *ʿIr-ḥꜣt-w-n-ḥr*, son of *Wꜣḥ-ib-rꜥ* and *Ta-ḥbs*,

⁸²⁵ Compare 5.2.2.2. Strictly speaking, one could claim that only the scribes of the Hou papyri “recognized” Psamtik IV, as they – and not the parties to the contracts or the witnesses – drafted the documents, and wrote down the relevant date formulae. However, the present study assumes that the scribes would have dated the contracts that they drafted only to a king whose authority was recognized in the area in which they lived or by the community for whom they performed their work. The following pages therefore speak of “recognition” not only in the case of the scribes, but also in the case of the other individuals who appear in the Hou papyri.

⁸²⁶ See 4.3-4.3.3.

⁸²⁷ See Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 126-41, 11*. Note that the reading of the regnal year is uncertain; it may also have been “one” or “three.” However, as the other documents from Psamtik IV’s reign both date to year two, “two” seems the most likely reading (Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 128 a).

⁸²⁸ See *ibid.*, 14*-15*.

was “far from” the rights of a black female donkey, which was branded in his name. The donkey was presumably sold by him at an earlier date to the second party of P. Hou 8. The latter’s name has not been preserved, but his father’s name was *ʿIr.t-ḥr-r=w*. The *raison d’être* of the text appears to be the fact that *ʿIr-ḥst=w-n-ḥr* had claimed ownership of the donkey after it had already come into the possession of the son of *ʿIr.t-ḥr-r=w*. This was a breach of the latter’s ownership rights. Thus, “A [= *ʿIr-ḥst=w-n-ḥr*] was forced to renounce his claim formally, and to acknowledge B [= son of *ʿIr.t-ḥr-r=w*] as the rightful owner of the donkey and its young.”⁸²⁹ The scribe of the resulting cession was a certain *P3-di-ḥr-p3-ḥrd* son of *Dd-ḥr*. The text was witnessed by four different men. It is important to note that none of the individuals mentioned in P. Hou 8 are identified by a professional title. It is therefore difficult to say much about their background. As it stands, the second of P. Hou 8’s witnesses, *P3-di-ʿImn* son of *Dd-ḥr*, is the only individual who may be identified in another papyrus: the third witness of P. Hou 4, which was written ca. two months later in Tybi of Psamtik IV’s second regnal year (April/May 486 BC), bears the same name and patronymic.⁸³⁰

5.3.2.1.2 P. Hou 7 (xx-04-02 Psk IV)

P. Hou 7 was written in the month after P. Hou 8. More specifically, it was written in Choiak of the second regnal year of Psamtik IV, i.e. in March/April of 486 BC.⁸³¹ Like its predecessor, P. Hou 7 is a legal document concerning livestock that was concluded between two individuals. In this case, the document stipulates that a certain *St3-imm-gwy*, son of *Ns-p3-ḥrd* and *Rwrw*, and *Dd-imm-iw=f-ḥnḥ*, son of *P3-di-ḥr-n-py* and *T3-šr-mḥy*, shared the ownership of a red female cow. Half of the cow, and any young that it might bear, belonged to one party; the other half belonged to the second party. The text was signed by *St3-imm-gwy* himself, witnessed by four different men, and written by a certain *Wn-nfr* son of *Dd-dḥwt-iw=f-ḥnḥ*. Unlike P. Hou 8, some of the individuals mentioned in P. Hou 7 form a solid connection with other papyri in the archive. The scribe *Wn-nfr*, for example, also wrote P. Hou 12 (September/October 487 BC) and P. Hou 13 (July/August 487 BC).⁸³² The first witness of P. Hou 7, *P3-whr* son of *Ḥr*, also witnessed P. Hou 4 (April/May 486 BC), 5 (October/November 497 BC) and 6 (reign of Darius I; regnal year not preserved), and possibly P. Hou 9 (date not preserved).⁸³³

⁸²⁹ Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 127.

⁸³⁰ See Pestman, “Diospolis Parva Documents,” 150 f, and Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 141 rr.

⁸³¹ See *ibid.*, 109-25, 10*.

⁸³² See Pestman, “Diospolis Parva Documents,” 150 c, and Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 111-12, 123 mm.

⁸³³ See Pestman, “Diospolis Parva Documents,” 150 b, and Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 69 nn, 125 oo.

Having said that, the most significant element of P. Hou 7 is undoubtedly the professional title which the principal parties of the document bear: in the first lines of the contract both *St̄z-ḫmn-gwy* and *Dd-ḫmn-ḫw=f-ḥnh* are identified as a “kalasirian of the nome” (*gr-šr tš*).

As discussed in connection to the Meydum papyri, a kalasirian was an Egyptian soldier. The profession is best known from the *Histories* of Herodotus, where the warrior class of Egypt is said to have consisted of 250.000 kalasirians and 160.000 hermotybian. Both “may practice no trade but only war, which is their hereditary calling” (*Histories* 2.166).⁸³⁴ In this case, the title “kalasirian of the nome” indicates that *St̄z-ḫmn-gwy* and *Dd-ḫmn-ḫw=f-ḥnh* were specifically connected to the region of Hou. It is possible that they were members of the nome’s standard police force.⁸³⁵ Though neither of them appears in documents from the reign of Darius I, it is important to note that some of their colleagues do. P. Hou 6, for example, shows the presence of a hermotybian in an unrecorded year of Darius’ reign. The text states that the soldier bought a donkey foal from a gooseherd of the Domain of Amun.⁸³⁶ A second hermotybian features in P. Hou 9. Though fragmentary, the text appears to record the sale of a bovine.⁸³⁷ Presumably, all of these men possessed livestock as well as land in the region of Hou. The political importance of P. Hou 7 lies in the fact that at least some of these soldiers fell under the jurisdiction of Psamtik IV in 486 BC. Unfortunately, it is unknown how large their original contingent would have been.⁸³⁸

⁸³⁴ See Godley, *Herodotus*, 1:480-81. For studies of these warriors, and of kalasirians in particular, see Winnicki, “Die Kalasirier,” 257-68, Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 114-15, Winnicki, “Zur Bedeutung,” 1503-7, and Fischer-Bovet, “Egyptian Warriors,” 210-19.

⁸³⁵ Kalasirians could be connected to specific nomes, settlements, or temples. See e.g. Winnicki, “Die Kalasirier,” 261 (three additional attestations of nome kalasirians), Kaplony-Heckel, “Ein neuer demotischer Papyrus,” 5-20 (a kalasirian of the Domain of Amun), and Vittmann, *Der demotische Papyrus Rylands* 9, 1:151 XI.12, 2:471-72 (a kalasirian of the settlement of Ta-Qehy).

⁸³⁶ See Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 8*-9*. Note that Vleeming did not recognize the title “*rmt-ḫm*” as a reference to a hermotybian (*ibid.*, 97 cc); the two phrases were only equated by Thissen, “Varia Onomastica,” 89-91, in 1994.

⁸³⁷ See Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 145 ee, 12*.

⁸³⁸ A papyrus from the fifth to fourth century BC shows that no less than 2.200 kalasirians were registered for food in an anonymous nome of Egypt (Vleeming, “P. Meermanno - Westreenianum 44,” 257-69, esp. 263-65). It is unknown whether this was standard procedure, however.

5.3.2.1.3 P. Hou 4 (xx-05-02 Psk IV)

P. Hou 4 is the third and final text that is dated to the reign of Psamtik IV. The text was written in the month after P. Hou 7, i.e. in Tybi of Psamtik's second regnal year (April/May of 486 BC).⁸³⁹ In short, the text is a receipt, which records that a certain *P3-di-Imn-nsw-t3wy* son of *P3-whr* delivered twenty-one geese to three other men. The document was written by *Ir.t-hr-r-w* son of *P3-šr-n-ic'h*. It was witnessed by four different individuals. As mentioned above, several of the individuals who feature in P. Hou 4 can be connected to other papyri in the archive. The third witness, *P3-di-Imn* son of *Dd-hr*, also witnessed P. Hou 8 (March/April 486 BC).⁸⁴⁰ The fourth witness, *P3-whr* son of *Hr*, previously witnessed P. Hou 5 (October/November 497 BC), 6 (reign of Darius I; regnal year not preserved), 7 (February/March 486 BC), and possibly P. Hou 9 (date not preserved).⁸⁴¹ Having said that, the most important person in P. Hou 4 is undoubtedly *P3-di-Imn-nsw-t3wy* son of *P3-whr*. Aside from the present text, *P3-di-Imn-nsw-t3wy* also appears as the first party in P. Hou 3 (June/July 487 BC).⁸⁴² In addition, both he and the three men to whom he gave the geese in P. Hou 4 are identified as gooseherds of the domain of Amun (*mni 3pd pr Imn*).⁸⁴³ The latter element brings us to that part of the archive which has lent it its modern name, i.e. to the gooseherds of Hou. To understand the significance of P. Hou 4, the present section gives a brief overview of what we know of these gooseherds, and of their possible connection to a larger institution in Upper Egypt.

Men who are identified as “gooseherd of the Domain of Amun” appear in nine of the thirteen texts from Hou (P. Hou 1-4, 6, 10-13). They include perhaps fifteen different individuals.⁸⁴⁴ From what we can gather from their texts, the gooseherds belonged to the so-called “middle class” of Egyptian society. That is to say, they were of lower standing than the Overseer of the Seal and the chief of Heracleopolis who appear in the Meydum papyri, but they were sufficiently wealthy to possess land, to trade in livestock, and to loan silver to their fellow colleagues (P. Hou 3, 6, 10, and 12).⁸⁴⁵ In addition, it seems that the gooseherds of Hou were divided into two distinct groups: one group consisted of men who tended to the geese (“caretakers”); another group consisted of men who may

⁸³⁹ See Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 60-69, 6*.

⁸⁴⁰ See Pestman, “Diospolis Parva Documents,” 150 f, and Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 141 rr.

⁸⁴¹ See Pestman, “Diospolis Parva Documents,” 150 b, and Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 69 nn, 125 oo.

⁸⁴² See Pestman, “Diospolis Parva Documents,” 150 a, and Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 5, 63 bb.

⁸⁴³ The same title is attributed to *P3-di-Imn-nsw-t3wy* in P. Hou 3; see Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 5*.

⁸⁴⁴ In several cases, the title or name of the individual is (partly) illegible, which precludes a certain identification with other gooseherds in the archive. See Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 35 dd, 154, 159 bb-cc.

⁸⁴⁵ See *ibid.*, 9-10, 5*, 8*-9*, 13*-14*.

not have been physically involved in the animals' care but who did bear responsibility for them, who transferred them to the right caretakers, and who paid the taxes that were levied on the flocks ("managers").⁸⁴⁶ *P3-di-Imn-nsw-t3wy* son of *P3-whr*, the first party of P. Hou 4, belonged to the second category. As noted above, he transferred a flock of geese to three gooseherds who would tend to them in the spring of Psamtik IV's second regnal year.⁸⁴⁷ On his turn, *P3-di-Imn-nsw-t3wy* had to answer to a higher authority, to whom he paid a tax on a flock of geese in P. Hou 3 (June/July 487 BC).⁸⁴⁸ This higher authority brings us to the wider institution with which the gooseherds of Hou were involved.

As their titles suggest, the institution with which the gooseherds were involved was called "the Domain of Amun" (*pr Imn*). The word "domain" (*pr*) is generally understood to refer to a temple, as well as to a temple's estate.⁸⁴⁹ Temple estates could include, among other things, agricultural fields, herds of cattle, and flocks of birds. From what we can gather from the Hou papyri, the gooseherds of Hou specifically took care of flocks of greylag geese that belonged to a temple estate of Amun.⁸⁵⁰ The revenue that accrued from these geese – as well as from other parts of the temple's estate – was called the "God's Offering of Amun" (*htp-ntr n Imn*).⁸⁵¹ Though the administration of the God's Offering is only partially visible in the Hou papyri, P. Hou 1 to 4 give us a glimpse of its inner workings. In P. Hou 2, 3 and 4, for example, geese are said to have been delivered to the God's Offering of Amun.⁸⁵² In P. Hou 1, ten greylag geese are said to have belonged to "the God's Offering of Amun which are established in the village of [Nasi]mserkhy" (*htp-ntr n Imn nty grg dmy [N3-s]m-srhi*).⁸⁵³ From P. Hou 2 we learn that the God's Offering of Amun in the village of Nasimserkhy was administered by a son of a certain [*P3-di-Imn-nsw-t3wy*].⁸⁵⁴ On its part, the division in Nasimserkhy

⁸⁴⁶ See Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 8, 25 ll-mm.

⁸⁴⁷ See *ibid.*, 63 bb, 65 gg.

⁸⁴⁸ See *ibid.*, 55 hh, 5*.

⁸⁴⁹ See Pestman, *Les papyrus démotiques de Tsenhor*, 1:69 III, and Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 21 cc.

⁸⁵⁰ See *ibid.*, 23 gg.

⁸⁵¹ See Hughes, *Saite Demotic Land Leases*, 21 j, and Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 21 cc, 25 ii.

⁸⁵² See *ibid.*, 4* l. 2, 5* l. 7, 6* l. 2-3.

⁸⁵³ See *ibid.*, 3* l. 3, 25 kk.

⁸⁵⁴ See *ibid.*, 40-41 hh, 4* l. 3-4. Whether this man was the son of *P3-di-Imn-nsw-t3wy* son of *P3-whr* is unknown; see *ibid.*, 5-6, 35 ee.

Figure 19. Reconstruction of the administration of the God’s Offering of Amun at Hou as reflected by the Hou papyri.⁸⁵⁵

The Domain of Amun	
Head of the God’s Offering of Amun	
-	
Head of the God’s Offering of Amun in the district of Hou	
<i>Dd-ḥr/P3-ḥr-ḥnsw</i> (P. Hou 3)	
Head of (the geese of) the God’s Offering of Amun in the village of Nasimserkhy	
[xxx/P3-dī-]imn-nsw-t3wy (P. Hou 2)	
Gooseherds of the Domain of Amun (“managers”)	Gooseherds of the Domain of Amun (unclassified)
<i>P3-dī-imn-nsw-t3wy/P3-whr</i> (P. Hou 3-4)	<i>Pth-i(.ir-dī.t)-s/P3-dī-imn-nsw-t3wy</i> and <i>Nḥm-s-is.t</i> (P. Hou 13)
[...]/ <i>Ir.t-ḥr-r-w</i> (P. Hou 2)	[<i>P3-dī-ḥ</i>]- <i>sḏm.f/ir.t-ḥr-r-w</i> and <i>T3-[dī]-thi</i> (P. Hou 12)
<i>Ir.t-ḥr-r-w/Dd-ḥr</i> and <i>Nb-ḥw.t-thy</i> (P. Hou 1)	[... / <i>Ir.t-ḥr-r-w</i> and <i>Bst.t-i.ir-ir</i> (P. Hou 12)
<i>Ḥnsw-i(.ir-dī.t)-s/Ir.t-ḥr-r-w</i> (P. Hou 1)	[...] (P. Hou 11)
Gooseherds of the Domain of Amun (“caretakers”)	[<i>Dd-ḥr/ir.t-ḥr-[r-w]</i>] (P. Hou 10)
<i>Wsir-i(.ir-dī.t)-s/P3-dī-imn</i> (P. Hou 4)	<i>Ḥnsw-i(.ir-dī.t)-s/Hr</i> and <i>T3-dī-ḥ-sḏm.f</i> (P. Hou 6)
<i>P3-dī-is.t/Wḏ3-ḥr</i> (P. Hou 4)	
<i>P3-dī-ḥm^c-rs/Dd-ḥr</i> (P. Hou 4)	
<i>P3-dī-ḥ-sḏm.f/ir.t-ḥr-r-w</i> (P. Hou 1)	
<i>Ḥnsw-t3y.f-nht/ir.t.w-r-w</i> (P. Hou 1)	

⁸⁵⁵ See also Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 10-11. The reconstruction is necessarily hypothetical. It is not clear whether all gooseherds that appear in the Hou papyri were connected to Nasimserkhy, for example.

was part of a wider administration called the “Localities of the God’s Offering of Amun that are in the district of Hou” (*n3 ʕ.wy.w (n) p3 ḥtp-ntr (n) ’Imn nty (n) t3 kḥi (n) Ḥw(.t)*) (P. Hou 2-3).⁸⁵⁶ The latter was headed by a God’s Father called *Dd-ḥr* son of *P3-ḥr-ḥnsw* (P. Hou 3).⁸⁵⁷ Ultimately, we may assume that Dd-Hr transferred (part of) the God’s Offering of Amun in the region Hou – of which the greylag geese in the area of Nasimserkhy would have been a small part – to the relevant temple of Amun. This latter step, however, is undocumented in the papyri at our disposal.

Though the temple of Amun which the gooseherds of Hou worked for is not directly visible in the archive, the question of its identification is important for the present discussion. One possibility is that the temple was located in Hou or in its immediate surroundings. This hypothesis is difficult to verify, however, as pharaonic temple remains have not been excavated in the area.⁸⁵⁸ Another possibility is that the Domain of Amun of the Hou papyri was identical with the best-known Domain of Amun in Egypt, i.e. that of the Amun temple at Thebes. This is the hypothesis that Sven Vleeming supported in 1991.⁸⁵⁹ Indeed, there are three arguments that could support the latter position. First, it is well known that the Theban temple of Amun held possessions outside of its own nome. In the late Ramesside period the temple owned large tracts of land as far north as Heracleopolis.⁸⁶⁰ In the early Saite period the temple still owned cattle and flocks of geese as far north as Oxyrhynchus, and it seems to have sent Theban officials to the north to administer its revenue.⁸⁶¹ Second, it is clear that Thebes and Hou specifically were closely connected to one another. The two settlements lay on opposite sides of the Qena Bend. They were connected by the Nile, as well as by the Wadi el-Hol (see figure 20). In the New Kingdom officials who were connected to the Domain of Amun are known to have travelled through the Wadi el-Hol, possibly to inspect and transfer the revenues from Amun’s estate at Hou to Amun’s temple at Thebes.⁸⁶² This connection likely lies behind the Greco-Roman name for Hou as well: the town was called “Diospolis Mikra” or “Diospolis Parva,” i.e. Little Zeus-

⁸⁵⁶ See *ibid.*, 36-37 ff, 4* l. 4-5, 5* l. 8.

⁸⁵⁷ See Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 53 gg, 5* l. 7-9.

⁸⁵⁸ See Bednarski, “Diospolis Parva,” 2143.

⁸⁵⁹ See Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 8, 21 cc.

⁸⁶⁰ See Gardiner, *Wilbour Papyrus*, 2:11, and Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 22 cc.

⁸⁶¹ See Griffith, *Catalogue of the Demotic Papyri*, 82 n. 7-9, Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 10-11, 21 cc, and Vittmann, *Der demotische Papyrus Rylands 9*, 2:427-28. In the eighth to seventh centuries BC, the Theban temple of Amun appears to have had a foothold in the Bahariya Oasis as well; see Colin, “Le ‘Domaine d’Amon’ à Bahariya,” 47-84.

⁸⁶² See Darnell, *Gebel Tjauti Rock Inscriptions*, 89–162, esp. 92 no. 1, 154-55 no. 39-40, 159-60 no. 44. For officials from Hou in the Wadi el-Hol, see *ibid.*, 136-37 no. 19.

City, a variant of “Diospolis Magna,” i.e. Thebes.⁸⁶³ Third and finally, the papyri from Hou refer to the “Localities of the God’s Offering of Amun that are in the district of Hou.”⁸⁶⁴ As observed by Vleeming, the clause “that are in the district of Hou” suggests that the “Localities of the God’s Offering of Amun” were part of supra-regional institution, a small part of which is documented by the Hou papyri.⁸⁶⁵ The phrase is perhaps comparable to one found in the choachyte papyri from Thebes. Many of the sixth to fifth century BC choachyte texts are concerned with land and officials of the Domain of Amun (*pr Ḳmn*) and the God’s Offering of Amun (*ḥtp-nṯr (n) Ḳmn*). This was evidently the domain that belonged to Karnak.⁸⁶⁶ However, a handful refers to land and officials of the “Domain of Amun in the district of Coptos” (*pr Ḳmn n t3 kḥi gbt*).⁸⁶⁷ One may safely assume that the latter refers to a subdivision of the domain of Karnak. It is not much of a leap to assume that the same applied to the Domain of Amun in the district of Hou, which bordered on the Coptite nome.

When we return to P. Hou 4, it should be observed that the possible connection between Karnak on the one hand and the gooseherds of Hou on the other is an important element in our reconstruction of Psamtik IV’s rebellion. After all, the text shows that gooseherd *P3-di-Ḳmn-nsw-t3wy* and some of his colleagues recognized the reign of the rebel king in 486 BC, rather than that of Darius I. In addition, the text is directly related to their work for the Domain of Amun. Though unexplored by Vleeming, the connection should prompt us to consider two different hypotheses. On the one hand, it is possible that Psamtik IV had occupied the region of Hou before the spring of 486 BC. The inhabitants of Hou would have subsequently recognized Psamtik IV’s reign, including those people who worked for the Hou-branch of the Domain of Amun. On the other hand, it is possible that Psamtik IV had occupied Thebes in 486 BC. The inhabitants of Thebes, including the administration of Karnak, would then have recognized Psamtik IV’s reign. By extension, this recognition may have trickled down to Karnak’s subdivision at Hou, e.g. via God’s Father *Dd-ḥr*, whom *P3-di-Ḳmn-nsw-t3wy* had direct

⁸⁶³ See Sauneron, *Villes et légendes*. 87-88, and Bednarski, “Diospolis Parva,” 2143.

⁸⁶⁴ See Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 36-37 ff, 4* l. 4-5 (P. Hou 2), 5* l. 8 (P. Hou 3).

⁸⁶⁵ See Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 8, 36-37 ff.

⁸⁶⁶ For explicit references to the Domain and the God’s Offering of Amun, see Donker van Heel, “Abnormal Hieratic and Early Demotic Texts,” 101-15 (P. Eisenlohr 5-6), 169-75 (P. Eisenlohr 12), 183-96 (P. Eisenlohr 14-17), 200-209 (P. Eisenlohr 19), 216-25 (P. Eisenlohr 21-22), and Pestman, *Les papyrus démotiques de Tsenhor*, 1:71-73 (P. Tsenhor 10). See also the discussion by Donker van Heel, “Abnormal Hieratic and Early Demotic Texts,” 37-47.

⁸⁶⁷ See Donker van Heel, “Abnormal Hieratic and Early Demotic Texts,” 169-75 (P. Eisenlohr 12), 183-91 (P. Eisenlohr 14-16), 200-215 (P. Eisenlohr 19-20), and Pestman, *Les papyrus démotiques de Tsenhor*, 1:36-42 (P. Tsenhor 1).



Figure 20. Map of a section of southern Egypt, featuring Hou, Thebes and Coptos. (Adapted by the author from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Ancient_Egypt_map-en.svg)

dealings with in P. Hou 3. The latter hypothesis is admittedly speculative. However, that the rebellion had reached Thebes as well as Hou is plausible in light of the close geographical connection between the two cities (see above). In addition, the hypothesis aligns with the aforementioned papyri from Thebes. As discussed in Chapter 4, the archive of the Saite-Persian choachytes from Thebes ended in year thirty-five of Darius I. The archive from Hou ended a year later, after P. Hou 8, 7 and 4 were written. By comparing these archives with contemporary evidence from Babylonia, it was argued that their end may have been connected to the impact of the rebellion in the relevant territories.⁸⁶⁸ Taking

⁸⁶⁸ See 4.4.2.

this into account, it is plausible that the region of Thebes – as well as its most powerful religious institution – fell under the jurisdiction of Psamtik IV in the spring of 486 BC.⁸⁶⁹

As a final remark, it should be observed that the rebellion’s documented impact at Hou, as well as its possible connection to Thebes, can change our understanding of two other Egyptian sources from 487/86 – 485/84 BC. The sources in question are Posener 24 and Posener 25, two rock inscriptions from the Wadi Hammamat. The former was inscribed in year thirty-six of Darius I (487/86 BC), the latter on 19 Thoth of year two of Xerxes (9 January 484 BC).⁸⁷⁰ As discussed in Chapter 4, the author of the inscriptions was Athiyawahya, a royal official from Persia. Other inscriptions from his hand identify Athiyawahya as the “governor of Coptos” (*iry-pꜣt Gbtyw*).⁸⁷¹ The city of Coptos was often the starting point for expeditions to the Eastern Desert. These expeditions were either aimed at the quarries and mines of the Wadi Hammamat, or at the harbors on the Red Sea coast, which could be quickly reached via the wadi.⁸⁷² As discussed above, because Athiyawahya’s inscriptions are dated to the reigns of Persian kings, they have sometimes been used as evidence that the population of southern Egypt remained politically “passive” in the 480s BC.⁸⁷³ The papyri from Hou indicate, however, that Athiyawahya’s seat of governance was located in close proximity to a region that had fallen into the hands of rebel forces. If the connection between Hou and Thebes is accepted, Coptos may even have been “sandwiched” between two rebel-controlled territories (see figure 20). This reconstruction reinforces the idea that Athiyawahya was travelling through the Wadi Hammamat during the period of rebellion – rather than overseeing a mining or quarrying expedition in the Eastern Desert.⁸⁷⁴ Unfortunately, whether Athiyawahya was travelling with a small group or with a larger number of (armed?) people, and whether he was travelling from Coptos to the Red Sea or the other way around is unknown.

⁸⁶⁹ It should be mentioned that Cruz-Uribe, “On the Existence of Psammetichus IV,” 38, already suggested that the rebellion had an impact at Thebes. However, his suggestion was based on the mistaken assumption that P. Hou 4 (formerly P. Strassburg 2) came from Thebes; see Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 2.

⁸⁷⁰ See Posener, *La première domination perse*, 117-20 nos. 24-25, and Obsomer, “Les inscriptions hiéroglyphiques,” 249 nos. 12-13.

⁸⁷¹ See Goyon, *Nouvelles inscriptions rupestres*, 118-20 no. 109, and Posener, *La première domination perse*, 120-21 no. 26, 124 no. 30.

⁸⁷² See 4.3.1.2.

⁸⁷³ See Kienitz, *Die politische Geschichte Ägyptens*, 67, Ray, “Egypt 525 – 404 B.C.,” 276-77, Rottpeter, “Initiatoren und Träger,” 15-16, and Leahy, “Egypt in the Late Period,” 727.

⁸⁷⁴ See 4.3.1.2.

5.3.2.2 The “rebels” near Elephantine

Several months after Psamtik IV’s reign was recognized in the Qena Bend of the Nile, an Egyptian man called Khnumemakhet wrote a letter to Farnava. The latter was a high-ranking Persian official in southern Egypt, who was connected to the military community at Elephantine/Syene. The letter is known today as P. Loeb 1 (written on 17 Payni of year thirty-six of Darius I, i.e. 5 October 486 BC).⁸⁷⁵ Its contents can be summarized as follows: at an unspecified date, Khnumemakhet had been sent on a journey to fetch a load of grain. He was accompanied by a certain Atarpana. Together, the men were supposed to deliver the grain to Egypt, in particular to the house of Usirwer – an Egyptian who probably lived at Elephantine/Syene. However, they ran into problems, as there were “men who rebel” (*rmtw nty bks*) on a mountain close to the location where the grain was deposited. Khnumemakhet and Atarpana could see them from a distance. Consequently, Khnumemakhet feared that if they tried to move the grain without the protection of armed guards, the rebels would “come for it by night (and) they will take it away.”⁸⁷⁶ He therefore asked Farnava to intervene, and to convince Atarpana – who apparently did not listen to Khnumemakhet – that the grain required strict protection.

As discussed in Chapter 4, the exact location of the “mountain” (*ḏw*) where the rebels resided is not specified by the letter. Nevertheless, the events probably took place in (northern) Nubia, south of the first cataract. The fact that the grain was to be transported “to Egypt,” and that the letter was sent to Farnava, who may have resided at Elephantine/Syene – just north of the first cataract – , point in that direction.⁸⁷⁷ Unfortunately, sources that throw light on Persian Period Nubia are scarce. What scholars call “Nubia” included the land between the first cataract of the Nile and the confluence of the Blue and White branches of the Nile near modern-day Khartoum.⁸⁷⁸ In the first millennium BC, large parts of this area were ruled by “Kush,” a political entity whose centers of power lay at Napata and Meroe in the northern half of Sudan.⁸⁷⁹ According to Herodotus, Cambyses had tried to conquer Ethiopia – generally understood as the Greek name for Kush – shortly after his conquest of Egypt. His campaign is said to have failed miserably, however (*Histories* 3.17-25). Nevertheless, the historian included Ethiopia in the list of countries that paid “gifts” to Persia during the reign of Darius I (*Histories* 3.97). In addition, Kushites feature in Achaemenid inscriptions and reliefs from the reign

⁸⁷⁵ See Spiegelberg, *Die demotischen Papyri Loeb*, 1-7 no. 1, Martin, “Demotic Texts,” 296-97 (C4), and 4.3.1.1.

⁸⁷⁶ Martin, “Demotic Texts,” 297.

⁸⁷⁷ See 4.3.1.1.

⁸⁷⁸ See Morkot, “Nubia and Achaemenid Persia,” 321, and Lohwasser, “Nubia,” 567.

⁸⁷⁹ See *ibid.*, 569.

of Darius I onwards, e.g. in lists of the Empire's provinces,⁸⁸⁰ and a handful of Persian Period remains have been found at fortified sites between the first and second cataract.⁸⁸¹ It is therefore plausible that parts of Nubia, especially the area directly south of the first cataract, fell under Achaemenid control in the early fifth century BC. Though speculative, the men whom Khnumemakhet spotted may have been locals of the area, who may have had ties to both Egypt in the north and Kush in the south.

P. Loeb 1 reveals little else about the identity of these "rebels." As discussed in Chapter 4, some scholars have suggested that the rebels in question were little more than brigands. The present study has argued that a political understanding of the phrase *rmtw nty bks* cannot be so easily dismissed: both the first millennium BC use of the word *bks*, and the appearance of these men at a time when parts of Egypt were ruled by Psamtik IV, suggests that they were more than common thieves.⁸⁸² However, this does not imply that the "rebels" in Nubia were directly connected to the rebellion of Psamtik IV. They were separated from one another by the first cataract of the Nile, which was strictly guarded by the Achaemenid garrison at Elephantine/Syene. It is probable that the latter community continued to recognize Darius I's reign in 486 BC, as Khnumemakhet's letter indicates.⁸⁸³ Nevertheless, the connection may have been indirect: if news of a rebellion in Egypt – especially one that affected southern Egypt – had reached Nubia, some of the latter's inhabitants may have been tempted to try their own luck, and to attempt to upend Persian rule south of the first cataract. Ambushing a transport of grain, which may have been meant for soldiers in the Empire's employ, fits with such political aims. Indeed, Persian control of Nubia appears to have waned in the fifth century BC, until, by the fourth century BC, Kushite kings again controlled the area up to the first cataract of the Nile.⁸⁸⁴

5.3.3 Conclusion

The rebellion of Psamtik IV (ca. 487/86 – 485/84 BC) has often been connected to the Delta of Egypt. Contemporary evidence that could confirm either its origins or its affect in northern Egypt is lacking, however (5.3.1). By contrast, three demotic papyri that are dated to Psamtik's second regnal year

⁸⁸⁰ See Morkot, "Nubia and Achaemenid Persia," 324-25.

⁸⁸¹ See Colburn, "Spear of the Persian Man," 306.

⁸⁸² See 4.3.1.1.

⁸⁸³ See also the discussions in 4.3.3.

⁸⁸⁴ See Lohwasser, "Nubia," 569-70. That inhabitants of Nubia may have taken advantage of the rebellion in Egypt was already suggested by Kienitz, *Geschichte Ägyptens*, 67-68 n. 8, and Török, *Between Two Worlds*, 365-66.

Figure 21. Map of ancient Egypt, which features the locations where Psamtik IV's reign was recognized (indicated by blue dots), where Persian kings continued to be recognized (red dots), and locations where the rebellion may have had an impact (indicated by green dots) – though the exact form of this impact remains unclear. (Adapted by the author from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Ancient_Egypt_map-en.svg)



show that the rebellion did affect the south of the country: some inhabitants of Hou, a town in the Qena Bend, recognized Psamtik's reign in the date formulae of their contracts in February/March – April/May 486 BC (Hathyr - Tybi of year two of Psamtik IV). The people in question were Egyptians who belonged to the so-called “middle class” of Egyptian society. Two of them were soldiers and a handful worked as gooseherds for the Domain of Amun (see 5.3.2.1). The present chapter has argued that the gooseherds of the Domain of Amun can be connected to the Domain of Amun at Thebes. It has also suggested that the administration of Karnak – like its employees at Hou – may have recognized Psamtik IV's reign. Though speculative, the connection between the rebellion at Hou on the one hand and Thebes on the other could explain the end of the Theban choachyte archive in year thirty-five of Darius I (488/87 BC).⁸⁸⁵ If this reconstruction is accepted, it changes our understanding of two rock inscriptions from the Wadi Hammamat. The latter were left behind by the Persian governor of Coptos, Athiyawahya, who appears to have travelled through the Eastern Desert in 487/86 BC (year thirty-six of Darius I) and in January 484 BC (Thoth of year two of Xerxes). Around that time, Hou (directly north of Coptos) and possibly Thebes (directly south of Coptos) were in the hands of rebel forces. Athiyawahya's journeys through the Wadi Hammamat might therefore have been prompted by the rebellion in the Qena Bend (5.3.2.1.3). Whether the rebellion was recognized in the area south of Elephantine, where “men who rebel” threatened a transport of grain in October 486 BC (Payni of year thirty-six of Darius I), is less certain; it is possible, however, that inhabitants of northern Nubia used the rebellion in Egypt as an opportunity to rid the area of Achaemenid control (5.3.2.2).

As is the case with the rebellion of 521 BC, we know little about what happened in the months after Xerxes defeated the Egyptian uprising in 485/84 BC. According to Herodotus, Xerxes installed Achaemenes, a brother of his, as satrap in Egypt.⁸⁸⁶ In addition, Xerxes would have “laid Egypt under a much harder slavery than in the time of Darius” (*Histories* 7.7).⁸⁸⁷ Even if there is some truth to this statement, it remains difficult to quantify. The least that can be said is that Xerxes did not continue his father's construction works in Egypt: though an Old Persian inscription on a bronze object refers to the king, hieroglyphic inscriptions on e.g. royal stelae, statues or temple blocks are absent.⁸⁸⁸ We are equally badly informed about the fate of Psamtik IV and the inhabitants of Hou. References to both disappear when the last document dated to Psamtik IV was written, and when the archive at Hou

⁸⁸⁵ See 4.4.1.2, and 4.4.2.

⁸⁸⁶ Achaemenes presumably replaced Pherendates, who was satrap of Egypt at the end of Darius I's reign; see 3.4.1.

⁸⁸⁷ Godley, *Herodotus*, 3:309.

⁸⁸⁸ See Michaélidis, “Quelques objets inédits,” 95-96, and the discussion in 2.4.1.1.

– like the archive at Thebes – ended. The end of the archives suggests that their archive holders were killed, fled, captured as war booty, or were put out of office when the rebellion was put down – though this remains necessarily speculative.⁸⁸⁹ What we do know is that Athiyawahya remained in office for at least another ten years.⁸⁹⁰ In addition, the military community at Elephantine continued to thrive in the fifth century BC.⁸⁹¹ One may assume that this was the result of their continued loyalty to the Persian regime during 487/86 – 485/84 BC.

5.4. Conclusion

The present chapter began with a description of Inaros' rebellion in the mid-fifth century BC. The latter is primarily known from Greco-Roman texts, which provide us with information on Inaros' name, patronymic, ethnicity, royal claims, and the extent of his rule in (northern) Egypt. Greco-Roman texts that can be connected to the rebellions of ca. 521 BC and 487/86 BC are much less detailed. They merely note that “the Egyptians” had revolted. Nevertheless, by comparing them with later rebellions – especially Inaros' revolt – , modern scholars have often claimed that the first two Egyptian rebellions against Persian rule were “Delta rebellions.” They would have originated in the marshes of northern Egypt, led by Delta dynasts and/or Libyan warlords, and they would have had little to no effect in regions south of Memphis (5.1). A handful of Egyptian sources has sometimes been used to support these claims. For example, the sources from the reign of Petubastis Seheribre – the rebel king of 521 BC – showed that his birth name and epithet referred to Bastet, which might point to a connection with the eastern Delta city of Bubastis (5.2.1). The demotic papyri from the reign of Psamtik IV – the rebel king of 487/86 BC – showed that he bore a birth name that was of possibly Libyan origin (5.3.1.1). The present chapter has argued, however, that if one takes an in-depth look at all the Egyptian sources that can now be dated to the first two rebellions, a different picture emerges. This picture draws our attention very explicitly to southern Egypt. In addition, the sources provide us with a glimpse of the people who either did or did not recognize the reign of a rebel king during the periods of rebellion. The latter allows us to go beyond general statements such

⁸⁸⁹ See e.g. Stolper, “Inscribed in Egyptian,” 138-43, for an enslaved Egyptian woman who was sold in Sippar on 27 January 484 BC; if the rebellion was put down in 485 BC – which is uncertain, see 4.4.2 – she may have been captured as war booty in Egypt. Note that no other archive can be connected to Hou or Thebes in the decades that followed the revolt: the earliest papyri after 487/86 BC date to the fourth to third centuries BC (see e.g. Clarysse, Martin, and Thompson, “A Demotic Tax List,” 25-56, and Pestman, *Archive of the Theban Choachytes*, esp. 28).

⁸⁹⁰ See Posener, *La première domination perse*, 120-24 nos. 25-30.

⁸⁹¹ See e.g. Porten, “Aramaic Texts,” 110-254 B9-46, 259-67 B49-51, and Martin, “Demotic Texts,” 351-55 C29.

as “the Egyptians” rebelled, and to reconstruct a more nuanced picture of how each rebellion affected different layers in society. The conclusions can be summarized as follows.

First, the remains of a temple building at Amheida that was constructed during the reign of Petubastis Seheribre indicate that the latter’s primary base of power was the Dakhla Oasis in the Western Desert. It is possible that Seheribre had come from this region originally, as the oasis is known to have had a cult to Bastet. He later extended his reign to Heracleopolis, and possibly to Memphis. Whether Seheribre ruled the Delta of Egypt remains unknown (5.3.1-5.2.2.1.2). Second, the well-known statue of Udjahorresnet is often used as an example of the smooth transition from Saite to Persian rule, whereby high-ranking Egyptian officials were allowed to maintain their posts from the reign of Amasis to the reign of Darius I. However, the sources from Petubastis Seheribre’s reign complicate this reconstruction: not only was the first decade of Persian rule in Egypt interrupted by a rebellion that may have lasted more than three years, the letters from the Meydum pyramid, dated to Seheribre’s first regnal year, also show that high-ranking Egyptian officials recognized the reign of the rebel king within four months of his accession. Among them were a treasurer called Psamtik, and a chief of Heracleopolis called Hormaakheru. Whether these officials maintained their posts under Darius I, like Udjahorresnet did, is unknown. If they belonged to Petubastis Seheribre’s “foremost followers,” they may have been executed together with their ruler (5.2.2.2-5.2.3). Third, as is the case with Petubastis Seheribre, it is unknown whether Psamtik IV – whose birth name, Libyan or not, was very common in Late Period Egypt – had any connection to the Delta and/or Libyans (5.3.1-5.3.1.2). He clearly gained a foothold in southern Egypt, however. Three demotic papyri that are dated to Psamtik IV’s second regnal year show that his reign was recognized at Hou, a town at the western edge of the Qena Bend. The rebellion may also have reached Thebes, which was closely connected to Hou via the Wadi el-Hol. In addition, it is possible that the rebellion had repercussions in northern Nubia, where “rebels” were spotted in 486 BC (5.3.2-5.3.2.2). Fourth and finally, the rebellion of Psamtik IV shows that not all inhabitants of Egypt would have necessarily rallied behind a rebel king. While Psamtik IV’s reign was recognized by “middle-class” Egyptians in the Qena Bend, including soldiers and gooseherds who worked for the Domain of Amun, an Egyptian who worked at Egypt’s southern border continued to recognize the reign of Darius I. The man in question, called Khnumemakhet, worked for Farnava, a high-ranking Persian official who may have resided at the military community of Elephantine/Syene. Less surprisingly, the reigns of Persian kings also continued to be recognized by Persian officials themselves, including the governor of Coptos Athiyawahya. The latter may have travelled through the Wadi Hammamat of the Eastern Desert when Psamtik IV’s rebellion had

reached the Qena Bend, and when it affected regions that bordered on the Coptite nome (5.3.2.2).⁸⁹² These sources are a pointed reminder that the rebellions were politically complicated affairs, which affected people in Egypt in different ways – even when they lived in the same parts of the Nile Valley.

⁸⁹² See also the discussions in 4.3.1-4.3.3.

Chapter 6

Conclusion, Causes and Consequences

Between the sixth and fourth centuries BC, the population of Achaemenid Egypt witnessed at least five rebellions against Persian rule. The first broke out in ca. 521 BC, a few years after Cambyses had conquered the Nile Valley. The others followed in ca. 487/86 BC, ca. 463/62 BC, ca. 404 BC, and between ca. 343 and 332 BC. Additional rebellions may have occurred in the second half of the fifth century BC, though our understanding of these episodes is lacking due to a scarcity of available sources.⁸⁹³ In 1988, Pierre Briant observed that scholars of Achaemenid Egypt often mentioned the rebellions of the Persian Period, but that none “pris le problème à bras le corps.”⁸⁹⁴ Questions such as “Qui se révolte? Où? Quand? Pourquoi? Contre qui?” still needed to be answered.⁸⁹⁵ Briant himself explored the possibility that socio-economic grievances – such as imperial over-taxation – may have led to the outbreak of the rebellions. In addition, he argued that all truly organized political resistance had come from the Egyptian Delta.⁸⁹⁶ It should be clear from the preceding chapters that the present thesis does not share the latter conclusion. Nevertheless, the questions that Briant raised remain relevant today. This study has attempted to provide an answer to some of them. In doing so, special weight has been given to the rich source base that can be used to reconstruct the rebellions (Chapter 2), as well as questions regarding the rebellions’ “when” (Chapters 3 to 4), “where,” and “who” (Chapter 5). The findings of the study can be summarized as follows.

First, the Egyptian rebellions of the sixth to fourth centuries BC have traditionally been studied on the basis of Greco-Roman texts. Other sources, including contemporary Egyptian texts, have received comparatively little attention.⁸⁹⁷ The present study has emphasized that the rebellions can and should be studied on the basis of a variety of sources. These sources include traditional Greco-Roman histories, but also Achaemenid royal inscriptions, hieroglyphic, demotic, Aramaic, and material sources from Egypt, contemporary Greek inscriptions, Achaemenid glyptic, and cuneiform sources

⁸⁹³ See 1.1 and 2.2.

⁸⁹⁴ Briant, “Ethno-classe dominante,” 138-39.

⁸⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 139.

⁸⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 139-43, 147-51.

⁸⁹⁷ See 1.2 and 2.1.

from Babylonia and Persia.⁸⁹⁸ Each group of sources provides us with a different perspective on Egyptian resistance. For example, the rebellion of ca. 521 BC is only scarcely reflected in Greco-Roman histories; yet, it is mentioned by the most elaborate Achaemenid royal inscription that has been preserved (the Bisitun inscription), and has yielded a comparatively large number of Egyptian sources that are dated to a rebel king.⁸⁹⁹ The rebellion of the mid-fifth century BC, on the other hand, is discussed at length by Greco-Roman histories, and appears in contemporary Greek inscriptions; yet, Achaemenid inscriptions do not refer to the unrest, and only one Egyptian source has been found that dates to the rebellion's leader.⁹⁰⁰ Despite these differences, the sources indicate that the rebellions of the sixth to fourth centuries BC shared several characteristics. Among other things, the rebellions were violent political conflicts, which included clashes between armed rebels on the one hand and soldiers who served the Persian Empire on the other; they resulted in the installation of local kings, who often claimed traditional pharaonic titles; they were generally defeated only after additional imperial forces were sent to Egypt; and they could result in the destruction of buildings, the deaths of soldiers and civilians, and the enslavement and/or deportation of parts of the population.⁹⁰¹ It is important to observe that only the Babylonian rebellions of the sixth to fifth centuries BC are better documented.⁹⁰² The Egyptian rebellions are therefore important case studies for scholars who are interested in the study of provincial resistance in the Achaemenid Empire.

Second, of all the Egyptian rebellions of the sixth to fourth centuries BC, the first two rebellions are among the least studied. The present thesis has therefore discussed both rebellions in depth. This began with a detailed look at the sources that can be attributed to the rebellions in question, and what these sources can tell us about the rebellions' chronology. To start with, the rebellion of ca. 521 BC is now documented by the Elamite and the Babylonian version of the Bisitun inscription, by a group of early Persian Period Egyptian sources that mention a pharaoh called Petubastis Seheribre, by one – and possibly two – Greco-Roman texts, and by a small dossier of Babylonian tablets. Taking all sources into account, it is probable that the rebellion began in the early months of 521 BC. This was a few months after Darius I had claimed the throne of the Persian Empire. The end date of the rebellion remains uncertain, but it is plausible that it lasted until 519 or even the middle of 518 BC. This was in year three or four of Darius I. The latter reconstruction implies that the Egyptian rebellion was the

⁸⁹⁸ See 2.2-2.5.

⁸⁹⁹ See 2.2.1, 2.3.1, 2.4.1.1, and Chapter 3.

⁹⁰⁰ See 2.2.2, 2.4.2.1, and 2.5.1.

⁹⁰¹ See 2.6.

⁹⁰² See 2.5.2.

longest-lasting rebellion of the Bisitun crisis. More importantly, it upends the idea that the rebellion had only lasted several months, or even that it never existed.⁹⁰³ As for the second Egyptian rebellion against Persian rule: the episode is now documented by two Greco-Roman texts, a handful of Egyptian texts, and possibly by an Achaemenid royal inscription. By taking an in-depth look at the relevant sources, the present thesis has argued that the rebellion began in 487/86 BC, and probably in 487 BC specifically. This was in year thirty-five of Darius I. The rebellion was defeated in 485/84 BC, i.e. in year one or two of Xerxes. Egyptian sources show that a rebel king called Psamtik (IV) ruled parts of Egypt between these two dates. This reconstruction indicates that the rebellion may have begun more than a year earlier than what has often been assumed. In addition, it draws our attention to several Egyptian sources from 487 BC that may bear on the rebellion, but which have previously gone unnoticed. The latter include texts from Thebes, which were part of one or several demotic archives that ended in 487 BC.⁹⁰⁴

Third, the Egyptian rebellions of the sixth to fourth centuries BC have often been connected to the Delta, and/or to the Libyan population of North Africa. The example par excellence is the rebellion of the mid-fifth century BC. The latter was led by Inaros, king of the Libyans, who began his rebellion from a town in the western Delta.⁹⁰⁵ It is possible that later rebellions were likewise connected to the north of Egypt.⁹⁰⁶ The present thesis has argued, however, that this observation does not apply to the rebellions of ca. 521 and 487/86 BC. Egyptian sources that were published in 2015 indicate that the first rebellion may have originated in the Dakhla Oasis. From there, it spread to the province of Heracleopolis and possibly to Memphis. Those who recognized the reign of the rebel king Petubastis Seheribre included high-ranking Egyptian officials – notably a treasurer called Psamtik, and a chief of Heracleopolis called Hormaakheru – , and soldiers who probably received land in exchange for military service.⁹⁰⁷ As for the rebellion of 487/86 BC: the sources that are presently at our disposal do not reveal where it originated. However, it clearly had an impact in southern Egypt. Demotic sources show that rebels might have been present in the region of the first cataract, near the island of Elephantine, and that the reign of the rebel king Psamtik IV was recognized at Hou, a town in the Qena Bend. The people who recognized Psamtik IV included Egyptian soldiers, and several men who worked as gooseherds for the Domain of Amun. In addition, the present study has argued that

⁹⁰³ See Chapter 3.

⁹⁰⁴ See Chapter 4.

⁹⁰⁵ See 1.2, 2.2.2, and 5.1.

⁹⁰⁶ See 2.2.3-2.2.4.

⁹⁰⁷ See 5.2.

members of the Domain of Amun at Thebes might have recognized Psamtik IV as well.⁹⁰⁸ By contrast, men who were intimately connected to the imperial administration of Egypt, such as Athiyawahya, the Persian governor of Coptos, and Khnumemakhet, an Egyptian who worked for Farnava, a Persian official with broad authority over Upper Egypt, continued to recognize Persian kings. These sources are a testament to the political fragmentation that accompanied the revolts.⁹⁰⁹ It is important to observe that similar observations can be made regarding Inaros' rebellion in the mid-fifth century BC: sources from southern Egypt that are dated to Persian kings have sometimes been used as *termini post* and *ante quem* for Inaros' rebellion, or – more often – as evidence that the entirety of southern Egypt would have remained under Persian control while the rebellion was confined to the Delta.⁹¹⁰ However, all of these sources were written by people like Athiyawahya and Khnumemakhet.⁹¹¹ We should therefore consider the possibility that some inhabitants of the (southern) Nile Valley recognized Inaros' reign, even though others continued to recognize Persian kings. Indeed, that even this quintessentially “Delta” rebellion had an impact in southern Egypt is clear from a demotic ostrakon that was published in 2004: it shows that Inaros' second regnal year was recognized at ‘Ayn Manawir, a village in the Kharga Oasis.⁹¹²

A conceivable fourth and fifth step would be to study the causes and consequences of each Egyptian rebellion against Persian rule. In other words, what may have led people to risk their lives for a change in government, and how did the imperial administration respond in the aftermath of the rebellions' defeat? One may also wonder whether the Empire's response was effective, or whether it simply fueled new grievances that may have led to additional resistance. It should be clear from Chapters 2 to 5 that Greco-Roman texts give us little indication in this regard.⁹¹³ If the *Stratagems* of Polyaeus refers to the rebellion of ca. 521 BC, then this second century AD author believed that the Egyptians had rebelled because of the “ὠμότητα” of the satrap Aryandes (*Stratagems* 7.11.7).⁹¹⁴ The word can be translated as rawness, savageness, fierceness, or cruelty.⁹¹⁵ Some scholars have suggested that it

⁹⁰⁸ See 4.3.1.1, 4.4.2 and 5.3.

⁹⁰⁹ See 4.3. and 5.3.2.1.

⁹¹⁰ See Kahn, “Inaros' Rebellion,” 427-30, and Kienitz, *Die politische Geschichte Ägyptens*, 69-70, Ray, “Egypt 525 – 404 B.C.,” 276-77, and Leahy, “Egypt in the Late Period,” 727.

⁹¹¹ See Posener, *La première domination perse*, 125-26 no. 31, Porten and Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents*, 2:22-28 B2.3-2.4, 2:54-57 B3.1, 4:236 D17.1, Martin, “Demotic Texts,” 351-55 C29, and the discussion in 4.3.3.

⁹¹² See Chauveau, “Inarôs,” 39-46, and 2.4.2.1.

⁹¹³ See 2.2.1-2.2.4, 3.4.2, 4.2, 5.2.3, and 5.3.3.

⁹¹⁴ See 2.2.1 and 3.4.1.

⁹¹⁵ See Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 2034.

may have referred to financial misconduct. In the words of Pierre Briant: “It is possible that Aryandes changed the standard used in Egypt for paying tribute in weighed silver. (...) Perhaps the Egyptians, exhausted by the burden of assessments imposed by Aryandes, brought their complaint to the Great King, who then came to restore order.”⁹¹⁶ What happened after the rebellion’s defeat is not described. Ca. thirty years later, the second Egyptian rebellion against Persian rule would have been caused by the burden of military levies that were meant to support Darius I’s campaign against Greece (Herodotus, *Histories* 7.1).⁹¹⁷ After the rebellion’s defeat, Xerxes “laid Egypt under a much harder slavery than in the time of Darius,” and installed a new satrap over the province (Herodotus, *Histories* 7.7).⁹¹⁸ In a similar vein as Aryandes’ cruelty, the “slavery” (δουλοτέρην) mentioned by Herodotus has sometimes been interpreted as a reference to imperial taxation.⁹¹⁹ In addition to this, scholars have speculated on the causes of the Egyptian rebellions on the basis of other sources as well. For example, some have described the rebellions as “Hungeraufstände,” which would have been led by an impoverished population.⁹²⁰ Though contemporary Egyptian sources do not corroborate this explicitly, recent studies of ancient volcanic eruptions – which, via a chain reaction, may have led to substantially lower Nile floods – give some credence to the idea that the inhabitants of Achaemenid Egypt grappled with food shortages. This applies, among others, to the years and months leading up to the 487/86 BC rebellion.⁹²¹ In addition, it has been pointed out that many of the rebellions began during periods of imperial instability. The best-known example is the Bisitun crisis in 522/21 BC, which would have

⁹¹⁶ Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 410. The connection between Aryandes’ cruelty and financial misconduct is heavily influenced by a story in Herodotus, which claims that Aryandes had minted his own silver coins; this act eventually got him executed on the charge of rebellion (*Histories* 4.166). See also Briant, “Ethno-classe dominante,” 141-42, Tuplin, “The Coinage of Aryandes,” 74-76, Sternberg-el Hotabi, “Politische und sozio-ökonomische Strukturen,” 163, and van Alfen, “Herodotus’ ‘Aryandic’ Silver,” 24-25. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the story in Herodotus should probably be disconnected from Polyaeus’ account, as Herodotus implies that Aryandes was executed many years after the Bisitun crisis (see 3.4.1).

⁹¹⁷ Herodotus does not comment on the cause of the rebellion explicitly, but implies as much: after Darius I’s defeat at Marathon the king “sent messengers to all cities commanding the equipment of an army, charging each to provide much more than they had before provided of ships and horses and provision and vessels of transport. By these messages Asia was shaken for three years, the best men being enrolled for service against Hellas and making preparation therefor. In the fourth year the Egyptians, whom Cambyses had enslaved, revolted from the Persians” (Godley, *Herodotus*, 3:301).

⁹¹⁸ Godley, *Herodotus*, 3:309.

⁹¹⁹ See Briant, “Ethno-classe dominante,” 140-41.

⁹²⁰ See Sternberg-el Hotabi, “Politische und sozio-ökonomische Strukturen,” 155.

⁹²¹ See Ludlow and Manning, “Revolts under the Ptolemies,” 154-71, esp. 171. See also entries 284-85 in tab 1 of Supplementary Data 5 by Sigl, Winstrup, and McConnell, “Timing and Climate Forcing,” 543-549. The collected data do not extend beyond 500 BC.

afforded Egyptians with a perfect opportunity for secession.⁹²² All of these factors may have played a role in the outbreak of violent political conflict in the sixth to fourth centuries BC. Nevertheless, it is important to observe that the aforementioned explanations remain rather nonspecific. (Over-)Taxation, military levies, and famine may have affected different parts of Egypt in different ways. It would therefore be interesting to explore regional differences, and to what extent they can be connected to the social and geographical context of each individual rebellion. It is hoped that the present thesis, and especially the conclusions of Chapter 5, can serve as a stepping stone for research in that direction. We may assume, after all, that the “why” of the rebellions was intimately connected to the “who” and the “where.” The same applies to the Empire’s response following the rebellions’ defeat. Though an in-depth discussion of these issues lies beyond the scope of the present thesis, the following paragraphs discuss three possible avenues of further research.

First, one possible avenue of further research concerns the regional consequences of the rebellion of ca. 521 BC. In the past few decades, it has become increasingly clear that the Southern Oasis was an important locus of development in the Persian Period. This began with the reign of Darius I. In the Dakhla Oasis, for example, traces of a cartouche have been found on a temple block at Amheida that might be dated to the reign of the Achaemenid king.⁹²³ In the Kharga Oasis, elaborate inscriptions show that large parts of the temples at Hibis and Qasr el-Ghueita were built under Darius I.⁹²⁴ The foundation date of the mudbrick temple at ‘Ayn Manawir is less clear, but it was at least built before 443 BC, which is when the temple is first mentioned in demotic ostraca from the site.⁹²⁵ As discussed in Chapter 5, the royal development of the Southern Oasis had already begun under the Saite kings. Amasis especially had left numerous inscriptions behind at temple sites in the Dakhla Oasis, as well

⁹²² See e.g. Ray, “Egypt 525 – 404 B.C.,” 261-62. Later rebellions were sometimes connected to the death of a Persian king and the accession of a new ruler as well; see Ray, “Egypt 525 – 404 B.C.,” 275-76, and Rottpeter, “Initiatoren und Träger,” 28-29.

⁹²³ See Kaper, “Epigraphic Evidence from Dakhleh Oasis in the Late Period,” 171-72. See also Kaper, “Temples of the Late Period,” 53, who attributes additional temple blocks with empty cartouches to Darius I’s construction work at Amheida.

⁹²⁴ See e.g. Wasmuth, *Ägypto-persische Herrscher- und Herrschaftspräsentation*, 224-39, Colburn, *Archaeology of Empire*, 112-23, and Darnell, “Antiquity of Ghueita Temple,” 29-40.

⁹²⁵ See Chauveau, “Les archives d’un temple,” 39. See also Wuttmann, Bousquet, Chauveau et al, “Premier rapport préliminaire,” 393-402, and Colburn, *Archaeology of Empire*, 109-12. In addition, a bronze door hinge inscribed with the name of Darius in Old Persian cuneiform is said to have been found at Kharga, and may have belonged to one of the aforementioned temple sites; see Michaélides, “Quelques objets inédits,” 91-93, and Schmitt, *Die altpersischen Inschriften*, 10, 99 (DKa).

as in the Bahariya and Siwa Oases to the north. These islands of the Western Desert could be agriculturally exploited, and had the potential to become important hubs for long-distance trade.⁹²⁶ However, now that the Dakhla Oasis has been identified as the center of power of the Egyptian rebellion during the Bisitun crisis, it is conceivable that at least part of the Persian Period presence in the oasis was intended to prevent it from becoming a locus of resistance in the future. Indeed, this was already suggested by Olaf Kaper in 2015.⁹²⁷ It has since been entertained by Henry Colburn and Melanie Wasmuth.⁹²⁸ One might also go a step further: Persian Period development of the Southern Oasis was predominantly focused on Kharga, while the latter had received little to no attention in the preceding centuries.⁹²⁹ One may therefore consider the possibility that the Dakhla Oasis was stripped of its regional importance in the aftermath of Seheribre's rebellion, and that a new center was consciously developed at Kharga to the east.

A second possible avenue of research concerns regional developments that may have led to the outbreak of the rebellion of ca. 487/86 BC. As discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, the king of the second Egyptian rebellion, Psamtik IV, was recognized at Hou. It was also suggested that he gained a foothold at Thebes, and that he may have been recognized by members of the Theban Domain of Amun.⁹³⁰ This latter step is admittedly speculative. Nevertheless, it is interesting to observe that several Egyptian sources suggest that priests and officials connected to the Domain of Amun may have had cause to join the rebellion. First, when Cambyses conquered Egypt, one of the highest-ranking people at Karnak was the God's Wife of Amun. This office was traditionally fulfilled by a woman from the royal family, often a daughter of the king of Egypt.⁹³¹ The last God's Wife, Ankhnesneferibre, was a daughter of Psamtik II. She succeeded to the office in 586 BC, and was still God's Wife in the months leading up to Cambyses' invasion: her name and likeness feature on a chapel at Karnak together with those of Psamtik III.⁹³² Ankhnesneferibre's heir apparent was Nitocris (B), a daughter of Amasis. However, after 526 BC mention of both women and of the office of God's Wife of Amun disappears.⁹³³ Though it is often assumed that these women had been installed at

⁹²⁶ See 5.2.1.1.

⁹²⁷ See Kaper, "Petubastis IV," 144-45; the statement is repeated in Kaper, "Temples of the Late Period," 53-54.

⁹²⁸ See Klotz, Colburn, "Pioneers of the Western Desert," 105, Colburn, *Archaeology of Empire*, 99-110, 124, and Wasmuth, *Ägypto-persische Herrscher- und Herrschaftspräsentation*, 231 n. 687.

⁹²⁹ See Colburn, "Pioneers of the Western Desert," 86-114, and Colburn, *Archaeology of Empire*, 95-130.

⁹³⁰ See 4.4.2 and 5.3.

⁹³¹ See Ayad, *God's Wife*, 15-28.

⁹³² See *ibid.*, 27-28.

⁹³³ See *ibid.*, 28, 153-54.

Thebes to ensure that the royal family had a strong foothold in the region, the disappearance of the office in the Persian Period must have entailed a significant administrative as well ideological change.⁹³⁴ Second, the Persian Empire's general policy towards the Egyptian temples is sometimes studied on the basis of P. BN 215, a third century BC demotic papyrus which records several narrative, prophetic and legal texts that relate to the sixth to fourth centuries BC.⁹³⁵ One passage, known as "Cambyses' decree," suggests that the temples had lost (part of their) royal support during Cambyses' reign. For example, they were expected to collect their own building wood, firewood, flax and shrubs – commodities that had been donated to them during the reign of Amasis.⁹³⁶ Though it has sometimes been suggested that Darius I would have retracted the "oppressive" policies introduced by Cambyses, neither P. BN 215 nor contemporary evidence bear this out.⁹³⁷ In fact, papyri from Thebes suggest that something had indeed changed in the late sixth century BC: during the Saite Period, legal texts show that the Domain of Amun had raised tithes on the sale of land that was nominally theirs in the Theban and Coptite nomes. The tithe was collected by scribes of the Domain of Amun.⁹³⁸ In year twelve of Darius I (511/10 BC), however, this same tithe was collected by "representatives of Thebes" (*rdw n Nwt*).⁹³⁹ These representatives may have been state agents. Although the papyrus states that the agents were to transfer the tithe to the God's Offering of Amun, it is possible that they redirected

⁹³⁴ For the office of God's Wife as a means for royal control over Thebes, see e.g. Ayad, *God's Wife*, 15-16, 23, 154, Naunton, "Libyans and Nubians," 125, 138, and Perdu, "Saites and Persians," 142.

⁹³⁵ See Spiegelberg, *Die sogenannte Demotische Chronik*, Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 124-27 no. 4.14, 393-94 no. 9.60, 397-98 no. 9.65, and Quack, "So-Called Demotic Chronicle," 27-34.

⁹³⁶ See e.g. Kuhrt, *Persian Empire*, 125-26 (c), Agut-Labordère, "Le titre du 'Décret de Cambyse,'" 45-54, and Wespi, "Das Gesetz der Tempel," 189-91. The third century BC text states that three (Memphite) temples were exempted from some of the regulations. In the absence of a sufficient number of contemporary texts, it is unclear whether they were the only temples that enjoyed exemptions, or whether the original decree – assuming it was historical – would have included a longer list of exceptions. See e.g. Agut-Labordère, "Le titre du 'Décret de Cambyse,'" 45-54, who argues that the original list would have been longer. Compare Agut-Labordère, "Royal Taxes," 247-60, from which it is clear how little we know about Persian Period royal taxes in Egypt.

⁹³⁷ Darius I is often celebrated as a "great benefactor" of Egyptian temples; see e.g. Cook, *Persian Empire*, 99, Klotz, *Adoration of the Ram*, 5-8, Perdu, *Saites and Persians*, 151-52. Though Darius' construction works in Egypt are indeed noteworthy when compared with that of other Persian kings (see 2.4.1.1), it should not blind us to policies that may have been ill received (see 2.5.3, and below).

⁹³⁸ See Vleeming, "Tithe of the Scribes," 343-44, and Pestman, *Les papyrus démotiques de Tsenhor*, 73 v. The Domain of Amun also raised taxes on harvests; see Donker van Heel, "Abnormal Hieratic and Early Demotic Texts," 43-47.

⁹³⁹ See Vleeming, "Tithe of the Scribes," 347, and Pestman, *Les papyrus démotiques de Tsenhor*, 71-73 no. 10.

a part of it to the royal treasury.⁹⁴⁰ A similar phenomenon is documented by Ptolemaic papyri, which show that some of the temple revenues at Thebes were redirected to state coffers.⁹⁴¹ Incidentally, the latter policy has been connected to the outbreak of the Great Thebaid Revolt in the third century BC.⁹⁴² Third and finally, it may be noteworthy that Egyptian silver was weighed against stones in a treasury in Thebes during the Saite Period. From at least the reign of Darius I onwards, the silver was weighed against stones in the treasury of the temple of Ptah at Memphis instead.⁹⁴³ Taken together, it is plausible that the regional power of Thebes, and especially that of the Domain of Amun, was gradually curtailed by Cambyses and Darius I.⁹⁴⁴ It would be interesting to investigate how these changes may have related to Darius I's investment in the Southern Oasis following the rebellion of ca. 521 BC. For example, some scholars have suggested that Thebes was an important center from which the Southern Oasis – and especially the Kharga Oasis – was “colonized” in the early Persian Period.⁹⁴⁵ Indeed, demotic and hieroglyphic rock graffiti near Armant, a site just south of Thebes, refer to Darius I, Amun, and Amun of Hibis;⁹⁴⁶ and temple inscriptions at Hibis and Qasr el-Ghueita explicitly invoke the Theban triad of Amun, Mut and Khonsu – in fact, some of the inscriptions are copies from temple hymns that are known from the walls at Karnak.⁹⁴⁷ As the regions were closely interconnected, one may wonder whether some of the measures that were intended to bring the rebellious Southern Oasis into the imperial fold after ca. 518 BC could have backfired at Thebes – and whether they may have contributed to the outbreak of the rebellion in ca. 487/86 BC. Similar

⁹⁴⁰ See Vleeming, “Tithe of the Scribes,” 347, Pestman, *Les papyrus démotiques de Tsenhor*, 73 v, and most recently Agut-Labordère, “Royal Taxes,” 255-56.

⁹⁴¹ See Vleeming, “Tithe of the Scribes,” 344, 347-48, Pestman, *Les papyrus démotiques de Tsenhor*, 73 v, and Honigman and Veïsse, “Regional Revolts,” 307-8.

⁹⁴² See *ibid.*, 307-8.

⁹⁴³ See Griffith, *Catalogue of the Demotic Papyri*, 76, Vleeming, *Gooseherds of Hou*, 87-89, Jurman, “Silver of the Treasury of Herishef,” 62, and Colburn, *Archaeology of Empire*, 223.

⁹⁴⁴ For a similar conclusion, see Agut-Labordère, “Beyond the Persian Tolerance Policy,” 319-28. For other possible changes at Thebes, see Klotz, *Adoration of the Ram*, 8. See also Masson, “Le quartier des *prêtres*,” 593-623, for evidence of an early Persian Period destruction/abandonment level at Karnak (though not attributed to e.g. Cambyses' invasion by the author). Note that the religious infrastructure at Thebes was not entirely neglected: the name of Darius – presumably Darius I – appears on a pillar and several minor temple objects that were found at Karnak (Traunecker, “Un document nouveau,” 209-13).

⁹⁴⁵ See Klotz, *Adoration of the Ram*, 8-9, and Colburn, “Pioneers of the Western Desert,” 103-4.

⁹⁴⁶ See Di Cerbo and Jasnow, “Demotic and Hieroglyphic Graffiti,” 32-38.

⁹⁴⁷ See Darnell, Klotz, and Manassa, “Gods on the Road,” 3-4, 12-13, and Klotz, *Adoration of the Ram*, 11.

questions apply to towns like Hou and Coptos, which were likewise connected to the Kharga and Dakhla Oases.⁹⁴⁸

A third and final avenue of further research that will be mentioned here are the consequences of the second rebellion. As discussed in Chapter 4, Xerxes reconquered Egypt in 485/84 BC. The *Histories* of Herodotus claims that Egypt was subsequently subjected to a state of even worse slavery than it had suffered under Darius I's reign (Herodotus, *Histories* 7.7). Though difficult to qualify, there are indications that Xerxes' reign was indeed a period of change: his name does not appear on Egyptian temple walls, and the wealth and autonomy of the Egyptian elite appears to have been reduced, as indicated by the scarcity of monumental private tombs, statues, and stelae that can be safely dated to the reigns of Xerxes and his successors.⁹⁴⁹ Some scholars have assumed that this "policy of greater repression" was itself a factor in the outbreak of the third rebellion in the mid-fifth century BC.⁹⁵⁰ A comparison with contemporary Babylonia complicates this assumption, however. In the summer of 484 BC, i.e. shortly after the second Egyptian revolt was defeated, part of the Babylonian population rebelled. The rebellion lasted several months, and mainly affected the northern part of the province. When the rebels were bested, a large number of northern Babylonian archives came to an end. In addition, archives from Uruk show that families who had roots in the north disappeared from important temple posts in the south, and were replaced by local men.⁹⁵¹ This targeted post-revolt policy – by which those implicated in the resistance were replaced with *homines novi*, who owed their position to the imperial regime – was successful: Babylonia does not appear to have rebelled anew.⁹⁵² It goes without saying that this comparison throws doubt on the "negative feedback loop" hypothesis in Egyptology, which assumes that Xerxes' policies were necessarily counter effective. Why some Egyptians did rebel in the remainder of the fifth and fourth centuries BC requires further study. As is the case with the first two rebellions against Persian rule, the causes of these rebellions need to be assessed on a case-by-case

⁹⁴⁸ For the administrative and religious connection between the Southern Oasis, Thebes, and towns in the Qena Bend – a connection which is already evident before the Persian Period – , see e.g. Klotz, "Administration of the Deserts," 901-3, 906-7, Darnell, Klotz, and Manassa, "Gods on the Road," 5, 12-13, and Colburn, "Pioneers of the Western Desert," 104.

⁹⁴⁹ See 2.4.1.1-2.4.1.2.

⁹⁵⁰ See Ray, "Egypt 525 – 404 B.C.," 275-76; see also Lloyd, "Late Period," 286.

⁹⁵¹ See Waerzeggers, "Babylonian Revolts against Xerxes," 160-63, Kessler, "Urukäische Familien versus babylonische Familien," 237-62, Waerzeggers, "Network of Resistance," 89-91, Beaulieu, "Uruk before and after Xerxes," 189-206, and the discussion in 4.4.2.

⁹⁵² It is possible that Babylonia rebelled in the fourth century BC, but the historicity of the revolt is debated; see Grayson, "Königslisten und Chroniken," 97-98, van Dijk, "Die Inschriftenfunde," 58, Stolper, "Mesopotamia," 240, and Safaee, "A Local Revolt," 51-56.

basis, and should be carefully connected to the “who” and “where” of the revolts. Only one general and possibly contributing factor can be mentioned here: throughout the Persian Period, Egypt lay on the periphery of the imperial realm. It was well connected to Sudan in the south, Libya in the west, and the Mediterranean – including the independent city-states of mainland Greece – in the north.⁹⁵³ It is therefore conceivable that even if Xerxes effectively curtailed the risk of rebellion in southern Egypt – which was a, if not the, locus of resistance in the sixth and early fifth century BC – , the province remained an attractive staging ground for anti-Persian resistance in the eyes of both locals and foreigners. Indeed, it may not be coincidence that the third rebellion in Egypt was initiated by a Libyan, who was king of the Libyans that bordered on Egypt, and who was clearly supported by Greek military forces.⁹⁵⁴ As far as our present evidence suggests, none of these characteristics applied to the Egyptian rebellions of ca. 521 and 487/86 BC. It is therefore possible that a new era had started in the mid-fifth century BC – one in which foreign powers began to play a more decisive role in attempts to “liberate” Egypt from Persian rule, and one in which the Delta – rather than southern Egypt – became the primary locus of resistance.

⁹⁵³ That the Persians themselves identified Egypt as a peripheral border region is suggested by Achaemenid glyptic; see the discussion in 2.5.4.

⁹⁵⁴ See 2.2.2. For the role that Egypt’s geographical position may have played in the rebellions, see already Lloyd, “Late Period,” 287, and Rottpeter, “Initiatoren und Träger,” 24-28.

List of Abbreviations

<i>AF</i>	<i>Altorientalische Forschungen</i>
<i>AfO</i>	<i>Archiv für Orientforschung</i>
<i>AJN</i>	<i>American Journal of Numismatics</i>
<i>AJSL</i>	<i>American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures</i>
<i>AMI</i>	<i>Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran</i>
<i>ASAE</i>	<i>Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte</i>
<i>BIFAO</i>	<i>Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale</i>
<i>BiOr</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Orientalis</i>
<i>CdE</i>	<i>Chronique d'Égypte</i>
<i>CdK</i>	<i>Les Cahiers de Karnak</i>
<i>CQ</i>	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
<i>CRAIBL</i>	<i>Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles lettres</i>
<i>CRIPEL</i>	<i>Cahier de Recherches de l'Institut de Papyrologie et d'Égyptologie de Lille</i>
ed./eds.	editor/editors
fig./figs.	figure/figures
<i>GM</i>	<i>Göttinger Miszellen</i>
<i>Hist.</i>	<i>Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte</i>
ibid.	ibidem
IFAO	Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale
<i>JAIE</i>	<i>Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections</i>
<i>JARCE</i>	<i>Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt</i>
<i>JCS</i>	<i>Journal of Cuneiform Studies</i>
<i>JEA</i>	<i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i>
<i>JEH</i>	<i>Journal of Egyptian History</i>
<i>JGS</i>	<i>Journal of Glass Studies</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>MDAIK</i>	<i>Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologischen Instituts: Kairoische Abteilung</i>

n.	footnote
<i>NABU</i>	<i>Nouvelles Assyriologiques Brèves et Utilitaires</i>
NINO	Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten
no./nos.	number/numbers
<i>RA</i>	<i>Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie Orientale</i>
<i>RdE</i>	<i>Revue d'Égyptologie</i>
<i>RT</i>	<i>Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et à l'archéologie égyptiennes et assyriennes</i>
vol./vols.	volume/volumes
<i>WO</i>	<i>Die Welt des Orients</i>
<i>ZA</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Assyriologie</i>
<i>ZÄS</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde</i>

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Samenvatting

Titel: Verzet tegen het Achaemenidische Rijk. De Egyptische opstanden van 521 en 487/86 v.C.

Het Achaemenidische of Perzische Rijk (ca. 550-330 v.C.) strekte zich op zijn hoogtepunt uit van Macedonië in het westen tot Afghanistan in het oosten en van Georgië in het noorden tot Soedan in het zuiden. Aangezien er nog nooit een groter rijk bestaan had, wordt het ook wel het eerste “wereldrijk” genoemd. Vanaf 526 v.C. maakte ook Egypte deel uit van dit rijk. Het land werd veroverd door de Perzische koning Cambyses II, die een einde maakte aan de Saïtische Dynastie (ca. 664-526 v.C.), wier koningen de Nijldelta en de Nijlvallei bijna anderhalve eeuw geregeerd hadden. Gedurende de Perzische Periode die volgde, werd Egypte bestuurd door Perzische gouverneurs. Zij moesten niet alleen voor de stabiliteit van Egypte zorgen, maar ook voor de toestroom van arbeiders, voedsel en materiele goederen naar het centrum van het rijk in Zuidwest-Iran. Sommige Egyptenaren werkten hieraan mee en bekleedden belangrijke posten binnen het nieuwe regime. Anderen verzetten zich. Zoals de titel aangeeft, focust het huidige proefschrift op het tweede element: het bestudeert twee Egyptische opstanden die aan het begin van de Perzische Periode uitbraken, respectievelijk in 521 v.C. en 487/86 v.C.

Dat delen van de Egyptische bevolking soms in opstand kwamen tegen het Perzische Rijk is breed bekend. Over het algemeen duurden de opstanden een aantal maanden of jaren. Ze werden gekenmerkt door georganiseerd en gewelddadig verzet en mondden dikwijls uit in de kroning van een inheemse man als farao van Egypte. Naast de opstanden van 521 en 487/86 v.C. vonden er ook revoltes plaats in ca. 463 en 404 v.C. Naar aanleiding van laatstgenoemde werd Egypte zelfs een paar decennia onafhankelijk van het Perzische Rijk. Toen de Perzen het land terug veroverden in ca. 343 v.C. steunden sommige Egyptenaren wederom een inheemse koning. Er zijn weinig Perzische provincies die voor meer problemen zorgden dan Egypte. Desalniettemin zijn er maar een handvol studies aan de Egyptische opstanden gewijd. Dit geldt in het bijzonder voor de opstanden van 521 en 487/86 v.C., dat wil zeggen de vroegste periodes van Egyptisch verzet tegen het Perzische regime. Dit is om twee redenen betreurenswaardig. Ten eerste moeten de opstanden van 521 en 487/86 v.C. invloed hebben gehad op het Perzische beleid in Egypte en hebben ze mogelijk indirect bijgedragen aan de uitbraak van latere revoltes. Voor een goed begrip van Perzisch Egypte is een gedetailleerde reconstructie van het vroegste verzet dus onmisbaar. Ten tweede waren de opstanden van 521 en

487/86 v.C. verbonden aan bredere politieke problemen in West-Azië: in 522-521 v.C. kwam niet alleen Egypte maar een groot deel van het Perzische Rijk in opstand en kort na 487/86 v.C. braken er revoltes uit in Perzisch Irak. Een reconstructie van de gebeurtenissen in Noord-Afrika is dus noodzakelijk voor een goed begrip van het Perzische Rijk als geheel. Het huidige proefschrift poogt hieraan bij te dragen.

Het proefschrift is opgedeeld in zes hoofdstukken. **Hoofdstuk 1** geeft een introductie tot Perzisch Egypte en de wijze waarop de Egyptische opstanden tot dusver behandeld zijn in de secundaire literatuur. Het vat tevens de doelstellingen en de opzet van de studie samen. **Hoofdstuk 2** geeft een overzicht van de bronnen die vandaag de dag gebruikt kunnen worden om de Egyptische opstanden te reconstrueren. Eerdere studies hebben vooral veel aandacht besteed aan Griekse teksten. Zulke teksten dateren uit de vijfde eeuw v.C. en later en werden veelal opgeschreven door mannen die buiten de grenzen van het Perzische Rijk woonden of die na de val van het Rijk leefden. Hoewel de teksten waardevolle informatie over de Perzische Periode bevatten, hebben ze ook hun beperkingen. Zo is het niet altijd duidelijk wanneer de opstanden plaatsgevonden zouden hebben en hoelang ze duurden, welke delen van Egypte door de opstanden getroffen werden of waarom het verzet überhaupt ontstond. Om zulke onderwerpen te verhelderen zijn bronnen die gelijktijdig zijn met en afkomstig zijn uit het Perzische Rijk cruciaal. Deze bronnen omvatten onder andere papyri en ostraca uit Egypte, spijkerschrifttabletten uit Irak en koningsinscripties uit Iran. Het huidige proefschrift beargumenteert dat zulke bronnen ons begrip van de Egyptische opstanden significant kunnen veranderen.

Hoofdstukken 3 en 4 zoomen specifiek in op de opstanden van 521 en 487/86 v.C. In het geval van de eerste opstand is historiciteit een belangrijk discussiepunt: sommige historici twijfelen of er wel een Egyptische opstand is geweest in de jaren twintig van de zesde eeuw v.C. **Hoofdstuk 3** beargumenteert dat er nu voldoende bronnen beschikbaar zijn waaruit geconcludeerd kan worden dat de opstand heeft plaatsgevonden. De opstand begon waarschijnlijk in 521 v.C. en werd mogelijk pas in 519 of 518 v.C. neergeslagen. Dit betekent dat de opstand een serieuze bedreiging was voor de Perzische koning Darius I, die onrusten in andere delen van het Rijk binnen een aantal maanden wist neer te slaan. Tussen 521 en ca. 518 v.C. claimde een zekere Petubastis Seheribre de koning van Egypte te zijn. **Hoofdstuk 4** neemt de chronologische reconstructie van de opstand van 487/86 v.C. onder de loep. Hoewel de opstand vaak naar 486 v.C. gedateerd wordt, beargumenteert dit hoofdstuk dat de opstand mogelijk al in 487 v.C. begon. Hij werd pas aan het einde van 485 of in de eerste maanden van 484 v.C. neergeslagen. Gedurende deze periode claimde een zekere Psamtik koning van Egypte te zijn. Daarbij beargumenteert hoofdstuk 4 dat een aantal Egyptische archieven ten einde kwam in ca. 485 v.C. Minstens een van deze archieven was verbonden aan een groep Egyptenaren

die de regering van de rebellenkoning Psamtik erkende. De situatie in Egypte vertoont hierbij opmerkelijke parallellen met de situatie in Zuid-Irak, waar na twee revoltes in 484 v.C. een grote hoeveelheid spijkerschriftarchieven eindigden. Ook een aantal van deze archieven waren verbonden aan families die de regeringen van de betreffende rebellenkoningen erkenden. Wat het lot van de archiefhouders was, blijft onzeker.

De chronologische reconstructies van hoofdstukken 3 en 4 vormen het fundament voor hoofdstuk 5. **Hoofdstuk 5** neemt de geografische en sociale context van de eerste twee opstanden onder de loep. Ten eerste worden de opstanden van 521 en 487/86 v.C. dikwijls omschreven als “Delta revoltes”; met andere woorden, de revoltes zouden primair ontstaan zijn en impact hebben gehad in de Nijldelta van Egypte. Een belangrijke reden voor deze aanname is dat de opstanden van ca. 463 v.C. en later door zowel Griekse als Egyptische teksten met de Nijldelta verbonden kunnen worden. Hoofdstuk 5 beargumenteert daarentegen dat Egyptische bronnen uit de laat zesde en vroeg vijfde eeuw v.C. een ander verhaal vertellen. Zo ontstond de opstand van 521 v.C. waarschijnlijk in de Zuidelijke Oase van de Westelijke Woestijn. Van daaruit verspreidde hij zich naar Herakleopolis en Memphis in het noorden van de Nijlvallei. De opstand van 487/86 v.C. beïnvloedde op zijn beurt de nederzettingen van Hou en Thebe in Opper-Egypte. Het is zelfs mogelijk dat rebellen actief waren rondom Elefantine aan de zuidelijkste grens van de Egyptische provincie. In hoeverre de opstanden van 521 en 487/86 v.C. de Nijldelta beïnvloedden, blijft echter onzeker. Ten tweede wordt er vaak gesproken over “de Egyptenaren” die in opstand kwamen, waarbij er weinig tot geen poging wordt gedaan om de identiteit van de Egyptische rebellen te achterhalen. Hoewel de beschikbare bronnen ons slechts een incompleet beeld van de opstanden geven, beargumenteert hoofdstuk 5 dat de opstand van 521 v.C. op zijn minst door een aantal hooggeplaatste Egyptische ambtenaren in het noorden van de Nijlvallei erkend werd. De opstand van 487/86 v.C. werd op zijn beurt erkend door leden van de Egyptische “middenklasse” in het zuiden, die verbonden waren aan de tempel van Amon in Thebe. Perzische functionarissen en hun Egyptische ondergeschikten bleven daarentegen de regeringen van de Perzische koningen erkennen. Kortom, hoewel de eerste twee opstanden grote delen van (zuidelijk) Egypte beïnvloedden, werden ze niet door alle bevolkingsgroepen gesteund.

Hoofdstuk 6 vormt het laatste hoofdstuk van het proefschrift. Het vat de belangrijkste conclusies van de voorgaande hoofdstukken samen. Tevens bespreekt het de mogelijke oorzaken en gevolgen van de Egyptische opstanden – een onderwerp waar nog veel ruimte is voor verder onderzoek. In de loop der jaren zijn er verschillende oorzaken voor het Egyptische verzet gesuggereerd: deze variëren van Egyptisch nationalisme en xenofobie tot een Perzisch wanbeleid in Noord-Afrika wat tot voedseltekorten en uiteindelijk tot hongersnoden geleid zou hebben. Hoewel zulke elementen een rol

gespeeld kunnen hebben in het Egyptische verzet benadrukt hoofdstuk 6 dat hypothesen over oorzaken de specifieke geografische en sociale context van elke opstand in acht moeten nemen. Op basis van de conclusies van hoofdstukken 3 tot en met 5 kan er bijvoorbeeld geopperd worden dat de opstand van 521 v.C., die in de Zuidelijke Oase plaatsvond, het Perzische beleid jegens Opper-Egypte veranderde. Bepaalde uitwassen van dit beleid hebben mogelijk voor ongenoegen gezorgd bij Egyptische groepen in de zuidelijke Nijlvallei. Deze groepen lijken op hun beurt de opstand van 487/86 v.C. gesteund te hebben. Ook is het mogelijk dat de opstand van 487/86 v.C. gevolgd werd door een nog verdergaande hervorming van zuidelijk Egypte, wat toekomstige revoltes moest voorkomen. Dit zou een verklaring kunnen zijn voor het feit dat de derde opstand in ca. 463 v.C. niet in het zuiden maar in de noordelijke Nijldelta begon. Zolang het Egyptische bronnenmateriaal schaars en onevenredig verdeeld is, blijven zulke reconstructies noodzakelijkerwijs hypothetisch. Maar ze brengen ons wellicht dichterbij een begrip van Perzisch Egypte dan hypothesen die de opstanden (impliciet) behandelen als vergelijkbare gebeurtenissen in een onveranderlijk Perzisch Egypte. Het is te hopen dat verder onderzoek en toekomstige vondsten uit het voormalige gebied van het Perzische Rijk ons begrip van de Egyptische opstanden, en de gevolgen die zij zowel binnen als buiten Egypte hadden, zullen verbeteren.

Curriculum Vitae

Uzume Zoë Wijnsma was born on 9 April 1993 in Utrecht, the Netherlands. After completing primary and secondary education, she moved to Leiden in 2011 to study ancient history. She earned a BA degree in Ancient Cultures of the Mediterranean World in 2014 (cum laude), and an MA degree in Classics and Ancient Civilizations: Egyptology in 2015 (summa cum laude). Her MA thesis was titled “Revolt and Response: The Achaemenid Policy towards the Egyptian Revolts of the First Persian Period.”

After completing her university education, Wijnsma worked as an assistant programmer for debate center De Balie in Amsterdam (January-June 2016). She subsequently worked for the film festival Movies that Matter in The Hague (July-December 2016). Wijnsma returned to academia in 2017 when she took up a PhD position at Leiden University within the ERC project “Persia and Babylonia: Creating a New Context for Understanding the Emergence of the First World Empire” (led by Prof.dr. Caroline Waerzeggers). During her PhD, Wijnsma was nominated and selected for Faces of Science, a project by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences to promote science among teenagers and young adults, and for Arts/Science, an Honors Program by the aforementioned Academy, which facilitates cooperation between artists and academic researchers. Wijnsma published multiple articles and blogs, and gave numerous lectures both in and outside of the Netherlands.

In the summer of 2021, Wijnsma obtained a six-month research fellowship at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, funded by the Collaborative Research Center “Cultures of Vigilance.” At present, Wijnsma is a postdoctoral researcher in the Center of Excellence “Ancient Near Eastern Empires” at the University of Helsinki.