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

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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]

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[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, *Ägypter 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 Luschey, "Studien zu dem Darius-Relief von Bisutun," 66. It is difficult to discern from which point the measures were made. Luschey 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, Luschey 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 *xšaçam 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 ([^{m}Mi]-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 *ˀmiˀ-ṣir* 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 ṣa 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-Uribe, "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

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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

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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-Uribe, "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 Wijnsma, "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 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 stéles 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-Uribe, "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

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[393] For an introduction to Manetho and his work, see Verbrugghe and Wickersham, *Berossos 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, "Inschriften 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, *Ägypter 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 *ỉnfr*-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 *wḏꜣṯ*-eye (but no *ỉnfr*-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 Goebs, "Crowns, Egyptian," 2.

[409] See Étienne, *Les portes du ciel*, 303, and Goebs, "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 Ḥetepka,* 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*

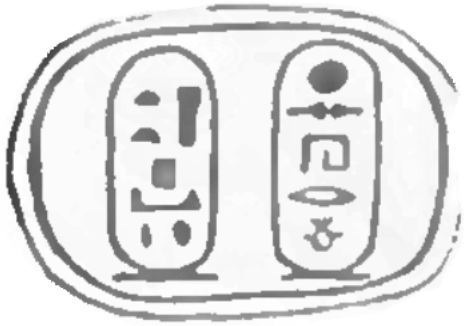

Figure 9. Drawing of the base of a scarab inscribed with the names of Petubastis Seheribre. (Adapted by the author from Newberry, *Scarabs*, 185, pl. 37 no. 10.)

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" (*sꜣ Shr-ib-rˁ mr ḫtm 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 ḫtm*) 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 born 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 *sꜣ* (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" (*Wꜣḥ-ib sꜣ Psmṯk-sꜣ-Nt*).[436] It is important to observe that the *sꜣ*-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 *sꜣ*-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" (*sꜣ Ḫnm-ib-rʿ mr ḥʿw nswt Ḥkꜣ-m-sꜣ=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-ỉb-rˁ mr ḥtm Ḥr-wḏꜣ*; 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-Winkeln, *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 ḫtm*), 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 *ḏd 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-ḏr.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

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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

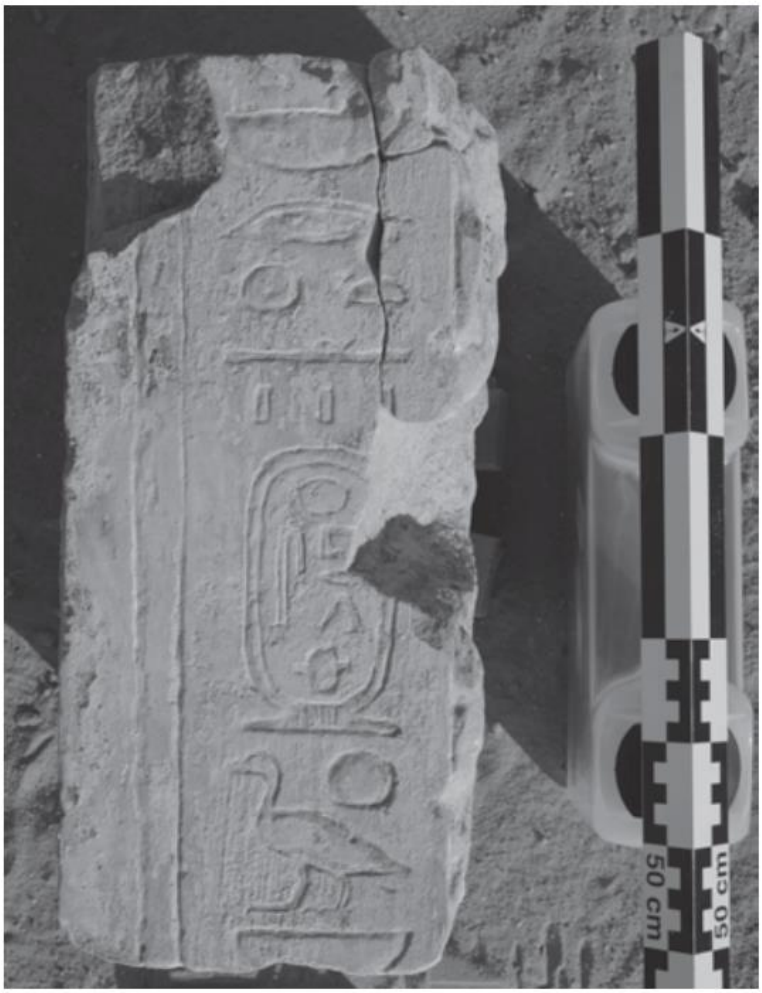

Figure 11. A temple block from Amheida inscribed with the throne name of Petubastis Seheribre. (Photograph by B. Bazzani, published in Kaper, "Petubastis IV," 131 fig. 3)

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 (*sꜣ-wḥꜣt*). From at least the mid-first millennium BC onwards, the area was called Set-Wah (*st-wꜣḥ*). The last attestation of the older form occurs on a stele 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-Winkeln, *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-Uribe, "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-Uribe, "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 Amyrtaios 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 ostracon 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 Polyaenus 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 Polyaenus, 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 Polyaenus' 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 Polyaenus 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" (*Stratagems* 7.11.7).[471] Though Polyaenus 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 Polyaenus 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 Polyaenus – 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 Polyaenus' 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 Polyaenus' 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 Polyaenus draws between the Egyptian rebellion on the one hand and the satrap Aryandes on the other.

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[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 Polyaenus 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 Polyaenus' 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 stéles 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 Ayrandes' 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 Polyaenus' 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 (ἐπανίσταιτο) rather than with the practical charge of minting pure silver coins on the other – a word which recalls the rebellion which Polyaenus 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: Polyaenus' 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, "Nakhthor 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 Polyaenus - 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 Polyaenus' 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 Polyaenus' 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 Polyaenus 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 Polyaenus' 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 Polyaenus' 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 Bouder 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 Polyaenus, 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).