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The Political Role of an Egyptian Priest under the Early Ptolemies: The Case of Manetho

Abstract: This paper seeks to shed light on how a priest contributes to the recognition of the political authority and legitimation claims of a newly established royal dynasty. It focuses attention on Manetho and his treatise on the *History of Egypt*. It will present him as an agent of the native elite who composes at the interface of the Graeco-Egyptian encounter a work intended to contribute to the adaptation of Ptolemaic power to new political agendas within bicephalous Ptolemaic society.

Keywords: Manetho, Sothic cycle, Macedonian kings, Argos, Troy

Manetho's life and works

The ancient testimonies about Manetho are fragmentary and poorly preserved. Most of them are dated centuries after his supposed *floruit* under the first Ptolemies. His name, which derives indeed from a Greek transcription of an Egyptian anthroponym,[1] indicates his Egyptian origin. Ancient authors confirm this assumption. Flavius Josephus states that Manetho was Egyptian in origin who had partaken in Greek culture (*paideia*).[2] Plutarch, Aelian, Tertullian, and Eusebius also mention his Egyptian origin.[3] In the epistolary prologue of *Sothis Book*,[4] addressed to Ptolemy II and transmitted by

1 The name of Manetho, in the current state of knowledge, is not attested in any Egyptian or bilingual text. Scholars have suggested several possible etymologies in attempting to reconstruct the original Egyptian name, such as *Mrj-Nj.t* (Beloved of Neith), *Mrj-nj-Ḏḥwtj* (Beloved of Thoth), *Mꜣꜥ(t)-n-Ḏḥwtj* (The Truth of Thoth), *Mꜣꜣ.n=ỉ Ḏḥwtj* (I have seen Thoth), *Mrj-nṯr-ꜥꜣ* (Beloved of the Great God), or even *Mnỉw-tꜣ-ḥw.t* (The guardian of the temple). For a general overview, see Griffiths 1970, 78–81; Moyer 2011, 85.

2 Joseph. Ap. 14.73.

3 Plut. De Is. et Os. 28; Ael. NA 10.16; Tert. Apol. 19.6; Eus. PE 2.5.

4 A number of 'anachronisms' in the letter itself have made modern scholarship to consider *Sothis Book* as a spurious pseudonymous work. For many scholars, the letter should be considered as a later forgery for two reasons. First, the epithet "Thrice-Greatest" applied to Hermes, unattested before the reign of Ptolemy V and second, the title *Sebastos*, which is the Greek translation of the Roman *Augustus*, and thus unattested before the Imperial era arise suspicion about his authenticity. For an extensive commentary and further bibliography on this letter, see Adler 1989, 58–60; Adler/Tuffin 2002, 55. Most recently, the anachronistic elements of the letter have also been discussed in Bull 2018, 49–51, who rightly considers these two features "insufficient proof that the text is a later forgery." He argues, for the first one, that it could be an alteration of a copyist or epitomist of the Imperial era. As for the epithet *Sebastos* applied to Ptolemy II Philadelphus, he proposes that Manetho could use it "in an idio-

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the 8th cent. Byzantine monk George Syncellus in his universal chronography, Manetho presents himself as Sebennyte,[5] high priest and scribe of the Egyptian shrines who dwells at Heliopolis.[6] Concerning Manetho's dates, we shall see below that, in all likelihood, he was active in the reigns of Ptolemy II and Ptolemy III. Syncellus states that he was a quasi-contemporary of Berossus,[7] a Babylonian priest of Bel-Marduk who wrote in Greek a work dedicated to Antiochus I entitled *Babyloniaca* or *Chaldaïca*.[8] If we assume that the account of Plutarch[9] is correct in portraying Manetho as one of the advisors of Ptolemy I who participated to the introduction of Sarapis statue in Alexandria, it seems that the "Sebennyte" had established a close connection with the Ptolemaic royal court since the very end of the reign of Ptolemy I.[10] There is some disagreement among scholars as to whether or not Manetho acceded to the rank of a priest. This debate goes so far as to contest even the fact that Manetho truly existed. For some, Manetho should be considered as a local historian whose works were discovered much later by the Alexandrian scholars;[11] others propose that he was a fictitious persona conceived by an expert group with the intention to represent before the Ptolemaic King the Egyptian priestly interests.[12] A letter from El-Hibeh preserved on papyrus can contradict, however, these objections. The text dates to the year 6 of the reign of Ptolemy III (242–241 BC) and refers to the theft of the official seal of the temple of Heracles at Phebichis by two Egyptians, a certain Chesmenis and his son Semtheus.[13] The high-priest Petosiris complains to Dorion, the Greek *epistatēs* of the Herakleopolite nome, that these two men will be able, in possession of the seal, to use

syncratic manner" to highlight the divine nature of the King, in the same way as he does with the sacred animals of Egypt which he calls them *sebastuomena* (Joseph. Ap. 1.26.249 = Waddell 1964, fr. 54). Cf. Colin 2015, 57, for how the scribes translated in Egyptian demotic the Roman imperial title *Augustus*, by using the expression *nty ḥwy* (who is protected and therefore holy/sacred).

5 Two entries of Suida refer to a writer under the name Manetho: the first (M 142) mentions of a certain Manetho of Mendes, chief priest and author of a work entitled *On the preparation of Kyphi*. In all probability, there is a confusion here with Ptolemaeus of Mendes, an Egyptian priest of the Augustan period who also wrote a treatise on Egyptian history. See Waddell 1964, x. The second one (M 143) refers to a certain Manetho from Sebennytus or Diospolis Kato, author of a *Treatise on physical doctrines*, and an astronomical work entitled *Apotelesmatika*. The latter is a pseudepigraphic hexametrical poem dated, beyond any doubt, in the Imperial period. On *Apotelesmatika* of Pseudo-Manetho, see Verbrugghe/Wickersham 1996, F1–2; Ypsilanti 2006.

6 Waddell 1964, App. I. Cf. Syncellus Chron. 72.31–32.

7 Syncellus Chron. 32.21–25.

8 For Berossus' life and work, see Verbrugghe/Wickersham 1996, 13–91; Dillery 2015.

9 Plut. De Is. et Os. 28.

10 The version of Jerome of the Chronicle of Eusebius mentions that the transfer of the statue held in 286 BC. See Helm 1956, 129.

11 Yoyotte et al. 1997, 31, following by Gorre 2009, 483; Gorre 2018, 138.

12 Aufrère 2012, 323.

13 p.Hib. 1.72 (TM 8221).

it on any letter addressed to Manetho and the others.[14] If he is our Manetho, and this is highly probable since the name is uncommon, we see that the "Sebennyte" held under the reign of Ptolemy III a senior level position in the religious administration. The text of the papyrus, together with the testimony of Syncellus' who designate him as archierea *tōn en Aigyptō miarōn hierōn* lead us to suppose that he was appointed as an overseer of priests and Egyptian temples, probably with extended authority to all the country. The scattered testimonies on Manetho's literary production allow crediting him at least with three main works: a *History of Egypt* and/or *Sothis Book*, the *Sacred Book*, and an *Epitome of Physical Doctrines*. Three other treatises bearing the titles *On Antiquity and Religion, On Festivals* and *On the Preparation of Kyphi* must be seen as part of the same religious work, that should be the *Sacred Book.*[15] Similarly, the *Criticisms of Herodotus*[16] must be rather considered as an excerpt of the *History of Egypt.*[17]

Manetho's Treatise on the Royal Past of Egypt: Useful propaganda tool?

The original of Manetho's *History of Egypt* (also known as *Aegyptiaca*)[18] is not preserved. What remains for us to study are some extended passages quoted by Flavius Josephus in his counter-polemic treatise *Contra Apionem* and a condensed version of his original work, an *epitomē*,[19] preserved in the Chronographies of the Christian writers Sextus Julius Africanus (3rd cent. AD) and Eusebius (4th cent. AD). These two, slightly different, versions of the *epitomē* have been transmitted to us down to us through Jerome's Latin translation of the *Chronicon* of Eusebius (4th–5th cent. AD), the chronographic work of George Syncellus (9th cent. AD), as well as an Armenian translation (6th–8th cent. AD).[20] The *History of Egypt* was by far the most known of Manetho's writings, judging by the many citations of this work by ancient authors. The date of the text's composition is not known. Based on a reference to the construction of the funerary

14 p.Hib. 1.72, ll. 6–7.
15 Waddell 1964, xiv–xv; Moyer 2011, 91.
16 Verbrugghe/Wickersham 1996, F17.
17 Verbrugghe/Wickersham 1996, 100.
18 It should be noted that these titles are used for the sake of simplicity. We do not know if they are really the titles that Manetho assigned to his work.
19 When and by whom Manetho's work is converted into an *epitomē* is unknown. One solution is to consider Ptolemaeus of Mendes as the epitomizer of Manetho's work. It is an intriguing assumption that can give a reason for the confusion between the name of Manetho and Ptolemaeus in Suidas. On this, see the arguments discussed in Krauss 2006b.
20 For the history of the transmission of Manetho's work, see Verbrugghe/Wickersham 1996, 115–118; Moyer 2011, 92.

complex of the Pharaoh Amenemhat III in the Arsinoïte nome,[21] we can suppose a *terminus post quem* the year 256 BC, when Ptolemy II renamed the Fayum as "Arsinoitēs" in honor of his deified sister-wife.[22]

What we know by the *epitomē* about the content of the work is that the *History of Egypt* contained, at least, a list of divine and half-divine kings, along with a list of Pharaohs of Egypt, going from Menes down to the Dynasty XXX, or most likely XXXI.[23] The reigns are grouped into dynasties, and the total is divided into three books.[24] Each dynasty is identified by an ordinal number, followed by a mention of the total of kings as well as the name of the royal capital. For each sovereign, an entry gives the king's name, the total of his regnal years, and occasionally a brief notice of memorable events or important details. In some cases, these events are synchronized with episodes and figures of the Greek tradition.

As it concerns the sources of Manetho, Josephus and Eusebius tell us that the "Sebennyte" translated the Egyptian history from scribal and priestly material, but also nameless oral tradition and legends, into Greek.[25] A part of the content, as well as narrative structures that one finds in his work, seem to trace their models back to pharaonic royal lists,[26] such as the hieratic Turin King List (ca. 1290–1224 BC),[27] as well as annalistic texts,[28] prophecies, wisdom literature[29] and various business documents.[30] One may suppose that Manetho's position as a high-ranking Egyptian priest allowed him to have access to this rich documentation.[31] Besides the Egyptian material, we

21 Waddell 1964, fr. 34–36 (in Eusebius & Africanus *apud* Syncellus and the Armenian version).

22 Hölbl 2001, 59.

23 It should be noted that the excerpt of Jerome's Latin translation (Verbrugghe/Wickersham 1996, T8d) suggests that Manetho closes the *History of Egypt* with the overwhelm of Nectanebo II by Artaxerxes III Ochos. The Armenian version, however, states that Manetho's work includes a list of kings up to the reign of Darius III (Verbrugghe/Wickersham 1996, T8a–b). Syncellus mentions also that "Manetho recorded the thirty-one dynasties of Egypt" (Verbrugghe/Wickersham 1996, F2c).

24 Verbrugghe/Wickersham 1996, T8a–c.

25 Joseph. Ap. 1.73, 228–230.

26 On Manetho's sources see Waddell 1964, xx–xxiv; Malek 1982; Redford 1986, 206–230; Verbrugghe/Wickersham 1996, 103–107; Gundacker 2015, 143–154; Adams 2011, 25–27.

27 In an extended comparison between the Turin King List and Manetho's work, scholars have recognized many similarities in dynastic divisions of earlier sovereigns up to the New Kingdom. Another shared feature with the Turin Canon is the list of divine and semi-divine kings ruling Egypt in the predynastic period. These similarities prove beyond any doubt the close dependence of Manetho from the Egyptian scholarly tradition that produced the King lists. On this issue, see Dillery 2015, 84–97, along with the further bibliography cited by the author.

28 About the origins and the use of Egyptian annalistic records (gnwt), see Redford 1986, 65–96, and for further information, especially on the sources of book 3, 297–331.

29 Redford 1986, 206–214.

30 Adams 2011, 26.

31 About the content of an Egyptian temple library in the Late Period, see Redford 1986, 215–223.

can also consider the accounts of Herodotus and Hecateus of Abdera as possible sources of Manetho's work, in terms of both their structure and content.[32]

As said above, some entries of his King List attempt to synchronize Egyptian reigns with events and figures of the Greek mythological past, in the manner, one could say, of Herodotus, who proceeds in his Egyptian account to synchronisms, such as this between the Egyptian king Sesostris and Heracles.[33] Such kind of synchronistic comparison has no counterpart in pharaonic tradition. We must search for precedents in Greek historiography, where the first attempts to correlate unrelated past events and proceed to approximate synchronisms occur in the works of Herodotus, Hellanicus of Lesbos, Thucydides, Timaeus of Tauromenium and Dicaearchus of Messene.[34] The case of the Sicilian historian, Timaeus of Tauromenium, almost contemporaneous to Manetho (ca. 350–260 BC),[35] is intriguing since the former appears as the first who clumps and coordinates in a synchronistic manner events from the Greek and the non-Greek past.[36] Could his historical and chronographic works have inspired Manetho to establish synchronisms between the Egyptian and the Greek past? If we consider the close diplomatic and cultural relations between Sicily and Egypt under the first Ptolemies,[37] it is not too far-fetched to think that Manetho may have had access to his work and been influenced by his synchronistic attitude.[38]

It is the analysis and the interpretation of Manetho's synchronistic connexions that concern me in this paper. As John Dillery had pointed out,[39] these Graeco-Egyptian linkages can be grouped into two main categories: the internal synchronisms that identify Egyptian pharaohs with mythological figures of the Greek past and the external ones that place figures and events of the Greek past under the reign of a par-

32 See Fraser 1972, 506–509; Murray 1972, 209. *Contra* the assumption that Manetho was also based on material and narrative patterns furnished by the Egyptian account of Herodotus and Hecateus are Redford 1986, 225–226, and Mendels 1990, 93–94, who argue that both of these Greek historians seem to have followed in their works, as Manetho did, the Egyptian tradition of King Lists. It should be pointed out, however, that the work of Manetho innovates by combining king's names and reign-lengths, as it is usual in Egyptian and Near Eastern king lists, with narrative segments in the form of glosses. This does not occur in the Egyptian king list tradition and recalls the book 2 of Herodotus who enhances his sequence of Pharaohs by linking together anecdotes on their achievements. One may also assume that the threefold partition of the *spatium historicum* in Herodotus' account on Egypt could have a determining influence on Manetho who divides his account of Egyptian royal past into three books. See, on this issues, Vannicelli 2001; Moyer 2011, 107–108, 140, along with the further bibliography cited by the authors.

33 On this synchronism, see Lloyd 1975, 1, 171–194.

34 Lloyd 1975, 1, 182–183; Feeney 2007, 7–67; Dillery 2015, 100–104; Dillery 2016, 112–115.

35 For the dates of Timaeus' life, Baron 2013, 17–22.

36 See, for example, FGrH 566 F 60. On the synchronistic practices of Timaeus, see Feeney 2007, 47–52.

37 Hölbl 2001, 133.

38 Cf. Dillery 2015, 101–103.

39 Dillery 2016, 110.

ticular pharaoh. It should be noted, however, that all the synchronisms that we find in Manetho's work cannot be genuine. I leave aside the gloss concerning the *speaking statue of Memnon*[40] that surely is a case of a later interpolation, since the earliest evidence of the *Vocal Memnon* date to the 1st cent. BC[41] as well as the *anti-Jewish* material of Manetho, namely the Exodus' story,[42] that could be injected into his work from outside, since overtones of antisemitism in literary evidence are not attested before the Maccabeans.[43] In addition, I will not consider in detail the lists of divine and semi-divine kings that start Manetho's account, because the versions transmitted by the *epitomes*, Syncellus and John Malalas[44] correspond partly to one another. The only part common to all the versions is the list of divine rulers that consists of an *interpretatio Graeca* of the Memphite ennead. Manetho translates Ptah to Hephaestus, Ra to Helios, Geb to Cronus and Set to Typhon. The name of Osiris has been left unchanged.

To understand better the meaning of Manethonian synchronisms, it is necessary, first, to examine the reasons lying behind the composition of his treatise. What could be the purpose of Manetho's work?

Manifold theories have been proposed in order to explain the object to be attained by such a project. We may summarize by saying that for a large part of modern scholarship the purpose of the work is that of an Egyptian who was seeking "to instruct foreigners in the history and religion of his native land",[45] "serve patriotic truth"[46] and in-process correct the Egyptian accounts of Herodotus and Hecateus of Abdera.[47] This is how Ian Moyer interprets the role of Manethonian synchronisms. He argues that "by pinning down figures that drift unanchored in the most remote parts of Greek antiquity, Manetho exposed the gaps in Greek genealogical chronologies and filled them in, defining the Egyptian King List as the scale of absolute chronology".[48] He sees Manetho's work as an indigenous reply to preceding Greek narrations on the Egyptian past as well as an attempt to instruct the Greeks on how to read Egyptian

40 Waddell 1964, fr. 52–53a–c.

41 The 'Memnon' colossus in Luxor represented the Pharaoh Amenhotep III (Dynasty XVIII) originally. It is known for his miraculous 'singing'. At the beginning of the Imperial era, an earthquake severely damaged the statue, and his base was emitting a high-pitched noise, especially at dawn. For this reason, the statue is supposed to represent Memnon, son of the dawn goddess Eos and king of Ethiopia, who was killed by the hand of Achilles. For possible reasons explaining the identification between Amenhotep III and the Homeric hero Memnon, see Aufrère 2011, 352–355. The earliest evidence is given by Strabo (17.1.46) who states that he heard the 'Vocal Memnon' during his visit in Thebes in 26–25 BC with the Roman prefect Aelius Gallus. It should also be noted that all visitors' graffiti date to the Imperial period. See Bernand/Bernand 1960, 29–31; Sijpesteijn 1990.

42 Waddell 1964, fr. 50.

43 See Hornung et al. 2006; Krauss 2006b.

44 Waddell 1964, fr. 1–5.

45 Waddell 1964, xxvi.

46 Verbrugghe/Wickersham 1996, 119.

47 Waddell 1964, xxiv; Verbrugghe/Wickersham 1996, 119.

48 Moyer 2011, 140.

history in the Egyptian manner.[49] John Dillery[50] proposes a less "antagonistic" interpretation. For him, Manetho intended to inform efficiently, by using trends and patterns of Greek historiographic tradition, the new incomers about the history of his country.

Another intriguing interpretation of the goals and accomplishments to be attained by Manetho's work is proposed recently by Christian Bull in his study on the tradition of Hermes Trismegistus.[51] The author argues that the original title of Manetho's work is that of *Sothis Book.* In fact, we do not know what title Manetho assigned to his work. In our surviving evidence, the treatise is cited, mainly by Syncellus, with some form of a general title *Aigyptiaka,* maybe, with the intention to compare it with the *Chaldaika* of Berossus.[52] The use of such a general title for citing a work in antiquity was very common.[53] *Sothis Book* is the title of the Manethonian treatise attested in the letter-preface of the work dedicated to Ptolemy II.[54] The modern editors attached to this epistolary prologue, "on untenable grounds",[55] a running list of 86 Egyptian kings ('Mestraia-list'),[56] also transmitted in the *Chronographia* of Syncellus.[57] The objections to the authenticity of the letter discussed above[58] led modern scholarship to consider the *Sothis Book* (prologue letter + 'Mestraia-list') as a spurious pseudepigraphic work. Nevertheless, it should be noted that at the end of the letter to Ptolemy II, Syncellus states that Manetho continues with the narration about the Egyptian classes of kings, namely the gods, demigods, spirits of dead and mortal men divided into dynasties.[59] Nonetheless, the 'Mestraia-list' does not present the expected divisions into dynasties, as announces Syncellus and as it is the case in the *History of Egypt*. Another argument against the association of the prologue of *Sothis Book* with the 'Mestraia-list' is a statement of Syncellus in the latter concerning the 25th king who appears under the name *Koncharis*. He says that he should be affiliated to "the Sixteenth Dynasty of the 'Sothic cycle' as it is known in Manetho (*para tō Manethō)*".[60]

49 Moyer 2011, 141.
50 Dillery 2015.
51 See Bull 2018, 47–80.
52 Syncellus *Chron.* 38.
53 See, for example, the case of the historical work of Timaeus, which is in the sources as *Hellēnika, Sikelika,* or *Historiai.* See Baron 2013, 28.
54 Waddell 1964, App. 1: "[. . .] Manetho dedicated it to the above King Ptolemy II Philadelphus in his *Book of Sothis,* using the following words [. . .]".
55 For the inconclusive arguments of the 19th cent. scholarship connecting the preface of *Sothis Book* with the 'Mestraia-list', see Bull 2018, 67–69.
56 Bull 2018, 63. For the text, see Waddell 1964, App. 4.
57 Waddell 1964, 234–249. Cf. also Adler/Tuffin 2002, 127.
58 See above p. 9, n. 4.
59 Waddell 1964, App. 1.
60 Waddell 1964, 236–237.

Thus, this cross-reference to Manethonian *Sothis Book* suggests that for Syncellus the 'Mestraia-list' is not part of the *Sothis Book*[61] which should be considered as an original Manethonian work concerning Egyptian dynasties. Thus, the working hypothesis, as proposed by Christian Bull, is that the *Sothis Book*, dedicated to Ptolemy II and opening with the prologue letter, must have been the original title of the Manetho's *History of Egypt*. If this assumption is correct, why the Egyptian erudite-priest gave such a title to his treatise?

A passage from Tacitus' Annals informs us that the appearance of the phoenix had fallen in the reigns of Sesosis, Amasis, and Ptolemy III.[62] It should be noted that already in Herodotus,[63] the Greek phoenix is identified to the Heliopolitan *benu*-bird, a symbol of the 'Sothic period',[64] which is renewed in Egypt approximately[65] every 1,461 years.[66] Bearing this in mind, we can understand that for Tacitus, the appearance of the phoenix, and consequently, the beginning of a new Sothis cycle fell in the reigns of Sesosis, Amasis, and Ptolemy III. From my point of view, this Sesosis should be identified, for reasons that I will explain below, to Sesonchosis son of Ammanemes (Sesostris I),[67] placed 'deliberately', I think, by Manetho at the beginning of Dynasty XII, while his father Ammanemes is not assigned to any dynasty, and his name is mentioned between the end of Dynasty XI and the beginning of Dynasty XII.[68] Amasis should refer not to the pharaoh of the Dynasty XXVI, but to Amosis (Ahmose I), founder of Dynasty XVIII. He is called *Amōsis* by the *epitomē*, in the same manner as the homonymous pharaoh of the Dynasty XXVI.[69] Calculating the total of regnal years from Amosis (Dynasty XVIII) down to Darius III (Dynasty XXXI), it is possible to reach

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61 Unfortunately, the versions of the *epitomē* do not list any Pharaoh of the Dynasty XVI by his name, so as to verify the cross-reference made here by Syncellus.

62 Tac. Ann. 6.28.

63 Hdt. 2.73.

64 For the assimilation of the *benu*-bird with phoenix, and the link with the concept of the 'Sothic period', see van den Broek 1972, 14–32, 67–112, 400–402; Krauss 2006a, 442–443.

65 The 'Sothic cycle' is of variable length that goes from 1,450 to 1,461 years, hence the name *annus vagus*. This variability is due to the axial precession of the equinoxes as well as the altitude of Sirius and the Sun at the moment of the heliacal rising. On this issue, see Ingham 1969; Aubourg 2000, 39. It must be noted here that the concept of 'Sothic period' is known essentially by Graeco-Roman sources, like Tacitus (a*nn.* 6.28) and Censorinus (*DN*, 18.10). On this issue, see also Luft 1984, 1118, 1122.

66 Long 1974, 262: "Egypt possessed a 365 – day civil calendar: 3 seasons, each containing 4 months or 12 months of 30 days with 5 epagomenal days at the beginning of the year. Being ¼ day short every year or an entire day every 4 years the calendar corrected itself in accordance with the seasons only once in approximately 1,460 revolutions of the earth around the sun (actually 1,460 Julian calendar years and 1,461 Egyptian calendar years)." About the length of 'Sothis cycle' in Egypt, see Ingham 1969; O'Mara 2003.

67 Waddell 1964, fr. 31–32a–b. Bull 2018, 70, suggests an identification with Sesostris III and van den Broek 1972, 108, with Sethos I. From my point of view, these identifications are problematic since they do not allow the beginning of a new cycle at the reign of Amosis (Ahmose I), founder of the Dynasty XVIII.

68 Waddell 1964, fr. 34–36.

69 Waddell 1964, fr. 53a–b, 68, 69a–b.

a sum of 1,377 years.[70] Adding to this 84 years, that is the period from the end of the reign of Darius III (332 BC)[71] until the death of Ptolemy II and the accession of Ptolemy III (247/246 BC),[72] we can get the total of 1,461 years that defines a full 'Sothic cycle'. This means that at the time of the accession of Ptolemy III, in the year 1,461 from Amosis, a new 'Sothic cycle' and, by extension, a new 'Golden era' will begin. I believe that the Sothic scheme of approximately 1,461 years can also be applied to the period that goes from the Dynasty XII, which begins in Manetho, as seen above, 'irregularly' with Sesonchosis (Senwosret I)[73] and not Ammanemes (Amenemhat I), and goes down to the end of the Dynasty XVII. The reign of Amosis (Ahmose I), in which, according to Tacitus, appeared for a second time the phoenix marks the beginning of the new Sothic cycle that will be completed by the end of Ptolemy's II reign, and will be renewed with the accession of Ptolemy III to the throne of Egypt. After a necessary adjustment to the totals of the Dynasties XII–XVII,[74] as they are given in Eusebius and the Armenian version,[75] I believe that the period spanning between the beginning of the Dynasty XII and the reign of Ahmose I fits also well to the scheme of the Sothis cycle.

70 For the calculation of the total of regnal years from the Dynasty XVIII to the Dynasty XXI, see Bull 2018, 69–74.

71 von Beckerath 1997, 192.

72 Pestman 1967, 29.

73 Manetho seems to misplace the reign of the founder-king of Dynasty XII Amenemhet I in an "undynastic" period, between the end of Dynasty XI and the beginning of Dynasty XII. Such an oddity could be explained, from my point of view, if we consider the importance of the legendary figure of Sesostris within the framework of the royal ideology of Ptolemies. Senwosret I and Senwosret III, both members of the Dynasty XII, are considered by modern scholarship as the main historical personages that served as models for the development of the legendary figure of Sesostris – Sesonchosis – Sesoosis, with whom Alexander as well as the first Ptolemies sought to create a close connection for ideological purposes. On this issue, see Malaise 1966; Dillery 1999, 112; Nawotka/Wojciechowska 2014. If we admit the assumption that the *Aegyptiaca – Sothis Book* portrays the reign of Ptolemy III as the beginning of a new Golden Age, I think that the placement by Manetho of Senwosret I, whose reign signals also the beginning of a new Sothis cycle at the head of Dynasty XII is intentional. It aims to further highlight the close ties between Ptolemies and the Pharaohs of the Dynasty XII, on whom the new sovereigns of Egypt modelled themselves. Such a hypothesis enhances further the ideological and political orientation of Manetho's work. The importance of the legendary figure of Sesostris is also confirmed in the Armenian version of Eusebius, the Chronography of John Malalas, as well as the *Excerpta Latina barbari*, where Sesostris, under the name Sosis and Sosinosiris is listed among the divine predynastic rulers. Waddell 1964, fr. 1, 5–4.

74 The totals for Dynasties XII–XVII yield 1,425. If we add up the regnal years of Amenemhet I (16 years) given by Manetho at the end of his first book, as well as the regnal years of Senwosret II (19 or 10 years) whose name, for unknown reason, seems to be omitted in the *epitomes*, we can get a total that varies from 1,450 to 1,460 years, which also fits to the length of a 'Sothic cycle'. This places, according to Manetho, the end of the 'Sothic cycle' at the end of Dynasty XVII. So, the reign of the founder of Dynasty XVIII Amosis (Ahmose I) inaugurates a new 'Sothic cycle' which lasts until the end of Ptolemy's II reign. For the length of Senwosret's II reign, see Edgerton 1942, 311; von Beckerath 1997, 189.

75 The *epitomē* of Africanus' gives a different total for the Dynasties XII–XVII (1,750 years). The subtotals also of each dynasty are quite different from that of Eusebius. If we add up, as above, the totals

If the above calculations are correct, we can assume that the main purpose of Manetho's *History of Egypt–Sothis Book* is to demonstrate that a new 'Sothic cycle' will begin when Ptolemy III will accede to the throne.[76] The exaggerated numbers that we can find in the totals of the regnal years of these dynasties reflect an apparent effort to fit the periods mentioned above to the schema of a 'Sothic cycle'. On historical grounds, the Dynasty XII begins approximately only 426 years before the reign of Ahmose I.[77] The same applies to the period from the Dynasty XVIII to the Dynasty XXXI for which Manetho gives a sum of 1,377 years, but, its actual length is about 1,220 years.[78] If such an assumption is correct, it may be assumed that Manetho's work tries to portray the crown prince as the inaugurator of a new era. It also draws an analogy between the future King Ptolemy III, Senwsret I, one of the historical models of the legendary figure of Sesostris, with whom the Ptolemaic propaganda was closely connected, and Ahmosis I, whose reign laid the foundations of the 'Golden era' of pharaonic Egypt. The propagandistic belief that Euergetes' reign marks the beginning of a new Sothic cycle might also be the reason of the unsuccessful reform calendar of the Canopus Decree (238 BC) that tried to add a day into the Egyptian calendar in order to conjunct the civic calendar with the Sothic year.[79] The link between Sothis and Euergetes' reign is also apparent in the same decree in the decision of Egyptian priests to establish a new festival in honour of the royal couple on the day when the Isis star [i.e., Sothis] raises.[80] A passage of the 1st cent. BC astronomer Geminus suggests that such questions were also related to the interests of the scientific advisors of Euergetes, such as Eratosthenes who addressed similar issues in a treatise about the eight-year lunisolar cycle.[81] Thus, the scheme in which Manetho chooses to fit and present a part of the Egyptian past, with the overriding objective to praise his future patron Ptolemy III, both a Macedonian King and an Egyptian Pharaoh, reflects matters also raised by the Ptolemaic intellectuals and court science. Based on the assumption that the letter

for the reigns of Amenemhet I and Senwosret II (26 or 35 years), we get a sum of 1,776 or 1,785 years. This goes far beyond the expected length of a 'Sothic cycle'. The *Excerpta Latina barbari*, which is based chiefly upon a copy of Africanus' *epitomē*, gives for the XV Dynasty a total of 318 years (Waddell 1964, fr. 4). This may reduce the total number to 1,576 or 1,585 years, but it is still far from the length of a 'Sothic cycle'. We have to admit that the version of Africanus does not allow us to confirm the assumption that the total length of Dynasties XII–XVII could fit a 'Sothic period'. One may assume that in the course of the transmission of the *epitomē* some of the totals have been erroneously copied.

76 See also Bull 2018, 73.

77 See the chronology proposed in von Beckerath 1997, 189: Dynasty XII (ca. 1976–1794 BC), Dynasty XVIII (ca. 1550–1292 BC).

78 von Beckerath 1997, 189–192.

79 The latter, as it was governed by Sirius, who added one further day to his rising every four years, was out of alignment with the civic calendar. For the passage of Canopus decree, see Pfeiffer 2004, 131–144. For extremely limited application of the reform calendar of Canopus decree, see Bennett 2011, 179–186.

80 Pfeiffer 2004, 121–131.

81 Gem. 8.24. See Geus 2002, 208.

to Ptolemy II is indeed the prologue of ‘*Aegyptiaca*’–*Sothis Book*, it can be assumed that the Egyptian priest, whose original work was probably framed as a long letter, in the same way as other experts and advisors of Hellenistic royal courts have addressed their works to their patrons,[82] began to compose his text at the time of Ptolemy’s II death and the accession to the throne of Ptolemy III.

As Christian Bull argues, the ‘*Aegyptiaca*’–*Sothis Book* can be presumed as a prophecy given to Ptolemy II, who sought to learn “*peri tōn mellontōn tō kosmō gignesthai*”,[83] that predicts the new era that will be inaugurated by the crown prince Ptolemy III.[84] The exegetical format of the King List composed by lemmata and comments might also have been intended to make explicit to Ptolemies, by citing examples of concrete royal actions, the traditional role assumed by an Egyptian king.[85] The Ptolemaic king, however, must be seen as a double-faced ruler, both a pharaoh and Macedonian king.[86] As we shall see, the episodes and the figures of the Greek mythological past that are synchronized with the reigns of Egyptian pharaohs can be considered as significant for the Ptolemaic ideology, and may have been intended to provide legitimizing reference points for the new sovereigns of Egypt. Manetho, being conscious of the bicephalous nature of Ptolemaic kingship, seeks to make linkages between the Egyptian past and the past of Greeks in a way to create significant meanings capable of developing much further the legitimization process of the newly founded royal house of Egypt. It should be noted that the coordination of events as well as the cross-cultural identification of figures of the Greek past with Egyptian pharaohs occurs only from Dynasty XVIII onwards, namely from the ‘Sothic period’ that will be renewed at the beginning of the reign of Euergetes’. This remark can reinforce the assumption that Manetho’s work clearly has an ideological and political orientation.

Linkages between the Egyptian and Greek past

The reign of Misphragmouthosis and the Deucalionic flood myth

The first event of the Greek past coordinated with the reign of an Egyptian pharaoh is attested under the reign of Misphragmouthosis. This latter is presented in the *epitomē* of Africanus[87] as the 6th pharaoh of the Dynasty XVIII. The name of this pharaoh is

82 On the scientific letters addressed to Hellenistic rulers, see Berrey 2017, 127–161, along with the bibliography discussed by the author.
83 Waddell 1964, App. 1.
84 Bull 2018, 73–74.
85 See also Moyer 2011, 130.
86 For the Janus-like character of Ptolemaic kingship, see Koenen 1993.
87 Waddell 1964, fr. 52.

not easily identifiable, but, as Sydney Aufrère suggests, it can be construed as a fictitious name composed by elements that recall the birth and coronation names of Thutmose.[88] The Heliopolitan priest, if the synchronism transmitted in Africanus' *epitomē* is not a later interpolation,[89] puts in the reign of Misphragmouthosis the episode of the flood held at the time of Deucalion. John Dillery understands the presence of Deucalion's flood story in Manetho as the result of interaction with contemporary Near Eastern scholarship,[90] and especially with Berossus who provides an extended account of the flood.[91] Bearing in mind that the Macedonians defined themselves in relation to the heroic past,[92] I think that we can also contemplate broader ideological implications in this synchronism. The earliest mentions of Deucalion are known for the most part from scattered and allusive indications that appear in Hesiod as well as in the logographers of the 6th and 5th cent. BC, like Acusilaus, Pherecydes, and Hellanicus.[93] The account in Pseudo-Apollodorus *Bibliothēkē,* based in all likelihood on sources of Classical and Hellenistic period,[94] presents Deucalion as king of Pthia,[95] a region situated in southern Thessaly. This statement reflects a mythological tradition that dates back to Hesiod, Hecateus and Herodotus, and portrays the Phtiotic king Deucalion as the common ancestor of all the Thessalian kings.[96] One of them is Peleus, father of Achilles.[97] This latter was said to be ancestor of Alexander on his mother's side.[98] As is well known, Achilles provided many times an *exemplum* not only for the Macedonian king[99] but also for his successors. Deucalion should also have been an important figure for Ptolemaic ideology, since he was, from the perspective of Archaic genealogical epic, the grandfather of Makedon, eponym of Macedonians. As it is mentioned in the Pseudo-Hesiodic catalog of women, Thyia, the daughter of Deucalion bears to Zeus two sons, Magnes and Makedon.[100] It is interesting also to note that Aris-

88 About the etymology of the name Misphragmouthosis, see Aufrère 2011, 349.

89 It should be noted that the synchronism between the reign of Misphragmouthosis and the Greek flood does not occur neither in Eusebius' *epitomē* (Waddell 1964, fr. 53a–b) nor in Josephus' account (Waddell 1964, fr. 54). John Dillery seems to follow the reservations of Felix Jacoby on this point, and does not exclude the possibility that the mention of the Deucalionic flood is an interpolation, perhaps by Christian authors, such as Africanus, who also attached a great importance to flood accounts. See Dillery 2015, 108; Dillery 2016, 121–122. However, the Deucalionic flood is mentioned in the Parian chronicle (IG 12.5 444, 4.6b), that is an exact contemporary of Manetho's work (ca. 264–263 BC).

90 For the oriental influences on Deucalionic flood myth, see West 2003.

91 Dillery 2015, 108–109, 253–264; Dillery 2016, 122–123.

92 For further details, see Stewart 1993, 81.

93 See Fowler 2000, Ac. 34–35; Ph. 23, 85; Hell. 6, 74, 117, 125. Cf. also Smith 2015, 243.

94 West 2003, 247.

95 Ps.-Apollod. Bibl. 1.7–2.

96 Hdt. 1.56.3; Merkelbach/West, fr. 6. See also Bremmer 2008, 107.

97 On Achilles and Thessaly, see De Cristofaro 2016.

98 Diod. Sic. 17.1.5; Paus. 1.9.8; Plut. Vit. Alex. 2.1–2. Cf. also Carney 2006, 5–18.

99 See, for example, Stewart 1993, 78–86.

100 Merkelbach/West, fr. 107. See also Heckel 1980, 452; Gantz 1993, 167.

totle's account confines Deucalion's flood to the old Hellas,[101] a region around the river Acheloos and Dodona,[102] where was situated from the 4th cent. BC the seat of the Aeacid house. It was from this dynasty that Alexander claimed descent on the side of his mother Olympias, daughter of the Molossian king Neoptolemus.[103] Thus, I think that the flood story, if genuine, is cited by Manetho not only as a simple chronological milestone that establishes an epoch. It should be considered above all as a reference alluding to the matrilineal descent of Alexander as well as to a common Macedonian ancestry, which is undoubtedly a thing mattered to early Ptolemies who appear to be proud of their Macedonian origin.[104]

Egyptian pharaohs and the Argive mythological cycle

The next synchronism, which is also placed in the Dynasty XVIII, is an internal one since it identifies the Egyptian pharaohs Armaïs/Hermaeus (Horemheb) and Ramesses I (Paramessu),[105] or Sethos (Sety I),[106] with the Argive brothers Danaus and Aigyptus.[107] The narrative of the quarrel between the two brothers, transmitted by Flavius Josephus[108] informs us on how Armaïs/Danaus seized the *diadēma*, namely the royal power of the legitimate pharaoh Sethos/Aigyptus.[109] The passages of Eusebius' and the Armenian version[110] focus on the return of Armaïs/Danaus to Greece and his accession to the throne of Argos. Manetho tries to introduce into the chronological framework of Egyptian past two figures of the Inachid line, namely Danaus and Aigyptus, the sons of Belus. This latter was a king who succeeded to the Egyptian throne his grandfather Epaphus, son of the Argive princess Io[111] and grandson of Inachus, the mythical king of Argos.[112] Belus fathered with Anchinoe, daughter of the Nile two sons, Danaus and Aigyptus.[113] Aigyptus was installed by his father as ruler in Arabia.

101 Arist. Mete. 352a30.
102 See also Trzaskoma/Smith 2009, 93–94.
103 Carney 2006, 28, 91, 142, 178.
104 See Thompson 2005, 270.
105 For an overview of Paramessu's career under Horemheb's reign, see Somaglino 2014.
106 Waddell 1964, fr. 50, 54.
107 Waddell 1964, fr. 53 a–b.
108 Waddell 1964, fr. 50.
109 For the assumption that the elements of Josephus' excerpt, such as the term *diadēma* and the expression "*o tetagmenos epi tōn hiereōn*" might suggest genuine elements of Manetho's text dated in the Hellenistic period, see Dillery 1999, 99–100; Dillery 2015, 306–309.
110 Waddell 1964, 53a–b.
111 For the myth of Io and its ties with Egypt, see Gottesman 2013.
112 For an overview of the early history of Inachids and the beginnings of the Argive royal family, see Hard 2004, 225–245.
113 Ps.-Apollod. Bibl. 2.1.4. Cf. A. Supp. 315–323.

He also conquered Egypt and gave his name to the Egyptians. His brother Danaus was installed as ruler by Belus in Libya. The quarrel between the two brothers began when Aigyptus insisted on marrying his fifty sons with the fifty daughters of Danaus. The claim of Aigyptus provoked fear to Danaus, who believed that his family and consequently his power would be absorbed by that of his brother. The rivalry with his brother forced Danaus to flee to Argos, where he seized the power from Gelanor, son of Sthenelas.[114] The sons of Aigyptus pursued the Danaids to Argos. Danaus, feared Aigyptus, incited his daughters to kill the sons of his brother in the wedding-night. However, the Danaid Hypermnestra saved his husband, Lynkeus, son of Aigyptus,[115] who established himself king of Argos, after killing Danaus. Their son Abas, who descended both from Danaus and Aigyptus lineages,[116] succeeded his father on the throne of Argos. His reign inaugurated a new Argive dynasty that produced the two mythological ancestors of Alexander, Perseus[117] and Heracles,[118] both descended from Akrisios, son of Abas. From the Heraclid lineage, through Hyllus, son of Heracles, descended also the Argive king Temenus, from whom the Macedonian royal family of Temenids/Argeads, to which Alexander have belonged, claimed ancestry.[119] The Argeads have always sought to highlight their mythological past and their ties with the legends of Argos in order to claim legitimacy.[120]

In the light of this evidence, I think that Manetho proceeds to this internal synchronism due to the considerable importance that the myths of the Argive cycle had in the self-conception of the Ptolemaic dynasty. As is well known, the Ptolemies desired to present themselves, *inter alia*, as Argead kings, since as newly-established rulers needed to construct *ex nihilo* their dynastic legitimacy.[121] Mythological figures related to Argos must have been therefore eloquent reference points for the legitimating agenda of the new sovereigns of Egypt. Incorporating into the Egyptian royal past the story of Danaus and Aigyptus, who gave rise to the respectable mythical ancestry of Alexander, should make a direct claim to the Ptolemaic Argead legacy. The identification of Danaus and Aigyptus with pharaonic rulers locates in Egypt the origin of the Argeads. The Macedonian rule is thereby depicted not as a conquest, but as a return to the ancestral land. However, the slightly nationalistic overtone[122] in Manetho's nar-

114 Ps.-Apollod. Bibl. 2.1. 4; Paus. 2.19.3; 2.16.1.
115 Ps.-Apollod. Bibl. 2.1.5; A. *Pr.* 859–869.
116 Ps.-Apollod. Bibl. 2.2.1; Paus. 2.16.1.
117 On Perseus as ancestor of Alexander, see the evidence discussed by Caneva 2016, 46; Bianchi 2018, 91.
118 On Alexander's Heracleian ancestry on his father's side, see the evidence discussed by Huttner 1997, 102–112. On emulation of Heracles by Alexander, see, for example, Palagia 1986, 140–141; Huttner 1997, 112–123.
119 Hdt. 8.137–139; Thuc. 2.99.3.
120 See for example Psoma 2015; Asirvatham 2010; Sprawski 2010.
121 On the connections established by Ptolemies with the Argeads, see Lianou 2010, 128–130.
122 Cf. also Aufrère 2010.

rative cannot go unnoticed. By presenting Danaus as the usurper of the Egyptian throne, Manetho probably sought to call attention to the superiority of the Egyptian descendance of the Argeads.

It is in the same perspective that one should understand the identification of Osorchōn/Osorthōn, pharaoh of the Tanite Dynasty XXIII with Heracles.[123] Donald Redford identified Osorchōn of Manetho with Osorkon III,[124] and suggested that the "nick-name" Heracles should be derived from the pharaoh's epithet *sꜣ ꜣs.t* alluding to Horus, son of Isis who was often identified with Khonsu, son of Amun. Through the assimilation of Amun with Zeus, the Theban god Khonsu was also identified with Heracles, son of Zeus.[125] Jürgen von Beckerath[126] has furthered the observations of Karl-Heinz Priese[127] by convincingly argued for identifying the Manethonian pharaoh of the Tanite dynasty with Osorkon IV, king of Bubastis and *Rꜥ-nfr* [i.e. the region of Tanis].[128] Both of them have pointed out that Osorkon III should be ascribed to the Upper Egyptian royal line of the Dynasty XXII that was not based at Tanis.[129] For von Beckerath, it is this notion of strength that laid the ground for the identification with Heracles, "den starken Helden ihres Mythos".[130] He argues that the surname of Osorchon/Osorthon results from a reinterpretation of the pharaoh's Libyan name *Wsirkn* as *wsr-qn* ("mächtig und stark") or *Wsjr-qn* ("Osiris der Starke").[131] No documentary evidence, however, links together the name of the pharaoh with one of these two nominal groups. As showed by Frédéric Colin, the Libyan name *Wsirkn* must have been reinterpreted in Egyptian as *Wsjr-tn*,[132] and from this form it was transcribed into Greek as *Osorchōn/Osorthōn*. But the question remains—why *Wsirkn*/*Wsjr-tn* is identified with Heracles? An entry of *Etymologicum Magnum* could be regarded, I think, as evidence to explain this internal synchronism. The entry tells us that Heracles is called *Chōn* in the Egyptian language.[133] This statement points to the existence of a Greek transcription of the divine name *Ḫnsw* (Khonsu) as *Chōn.* Thus, one may assume that this was through the second part of the Greek transcription of

123 Waddell 1964, fr. 62, 63a–b.

124 For the long-standing debate over the identification of Manethonian Osorcho with Osorkon III or Osorkon IV, see Aston 2009, 12–14; Adams 2011, along with the further bibliography cited by the authors. Kahn 2006, 32, identifies Osorthon of Manetho with a poorly attested Tanite king who bears the names *iri.n Rꜥ špss-kꜣ-rꜥ* Gemenef-Khonsu-bak. Such an assumption, however, does not explain why the Pharaoh is mentioned by Manetho under the name Osorkon.

125 On the identification of Heracles with Khonsu, see von Lieven 2016, 73.

126 von Beckerath 1994.

127 Priese 1972, 20.

128 Priese 1972, 20, n. 23; Jansen-Winkeln 2006, 246; Aston 2009, 12.

129 See also Adams 2011, 27–28.

130 von Beckerath 1994, 8.

131 von Beckerath 1994, 8.

132 Colin 1996, 1, 61–63.

133 Etym. Magn. 816.27.

the Egyptian reinterpretation of the Libyan name (-chōn/-*thōn*), which recalls the Khonsu's name in Greek, that Manetho established the equivalence between *Osorchōn/Osorthōn* and Heracles. But why it was so important to connect Heracles with a pharaoh of Egypt? Before answering the question, let us note a paradox in the gloss of Manetho. The 'Sebennyte' states that Osorchon is named Heracles by the Egyptians. One can see that he makes here, in fact, an inverted *interpretatio Graeca*, contrary to Herodotus' pattern that assigns the Greek names to Greek speakers and the Egyptian names to Egyptian speakers[134] ("the Egyptians call Zeus Amun"[135]/ "Horus, the son of Osiris, whom the Greeks called him Apollo"[136]). An explanation may be that Manetho aims to portray Heracles, the Greek mythical ancestor of Alexander and of Ptolemies[137] as a foreign but legitimate pharaoh of Egypt. As in the case of Aigyptus/Danaus' story, he tries to show that the power of Macedonian rulers also stems from the Egyptian side, bestowing in this way on the new sovereigns of Egypt a strong Pharaonic political legacy, enhanced by legitimizing points of reference to their mythological ancestry.

The reign of the queen Tausret and the Fall of Troy

The last entry of the Dynasty XIX attests to a synchronism, both internal and external, between the Greek and the Egyptian past. It occurs in all the versions of the *epitomē* and it states the following:[138]

> Ruler 5 (or 6[139]): Thuoris, who is called by Homer Polybus, the husband of Alkandrē, and in whose reign Troy was captured; he reigned for 7 years.

Manetho makes, first, an internal synchronism by identifying a pharaoh under the name Thyoris with the Homeric figure of Polybus, and, after that, he synchronizes this reign with an event of the Greek mythological past, namely the fall of Troy. As Alan Gardiner remarked, "Thyoris [. . .] gives in distorted form the name Twosre, though there misrepresented as a male".[140] The reign of the queen Twosre lasted approximately 9 years. She acceded to the throne of Egypt as regent of Ramesses-Siptah.[141] This

134 See also Dillery 2015, 112–113; Dillery 2016, 126.
135 Hdt. 2.42.
136 Hdt. 2.144.
137 On Heracles as Ptolemaic ancestor and the *emulatio* of his iconography by Ptolemies, see Fraser 1972, 1, 44–45.; Palagia 1986, 143–144; Huttner 1997, 124–145; Hunter 2003, 12–13,79, 107–108, 116, 120, 129, 196.
138 Waddell 1964, fr. 55, 56 a-b. The Armenian version designates Polybus also as a strenuous and the most powerful man at Thebes. See Waddell 1964, fr. 56b.
139 According to the Africanus' *epitomē*.
140 Gardiner 1958, 20. See also Callender 2012, 25.
141 Callender 2012, 29–32.

latter succeeded Sety II, the Twosre's husband at about 1194 BC.[142] After the death of Siptah in ca. 1186 BC, she became pharaoh of Egypt and continued to rule at least until ca. 1185 BC.[143] It is under this period (ca. 1194–1185 BC)[144] that arrived, according to Manetho, the fall of Troy. As it was a very significant episode of the Greek mythical past, many ancient scholars before him have reckoned various dates of the event.[145] Among them, the date 1194/1193 BC[146] given by the quasi-contemporary of Manetho, Timaeaus of Tauromenium would have guided Manetho's choice[147] to place the fall of Troy at the end of Dynasty XIX, under the reign of Twosre. I think, however, that we can also search for additional reasons justifying this double synchronism.

The relevant evidence concerning the events of this period suggests that at the end of the Dynasty XIX certain Asiatic princelets threatened Egyptian sovereignty. Two texts referring to this period, the Great Harris Papyrus I[148] and the Elephantine Stele[149] record how Asian rebels led by a certain *ỉr-sw ḫ3rw*,[150] an Asiatic leader of Palestine, most likely contemporary of Siptah and Twosre,[151] seized control in Egypt's northern regions. According to texts, the invaders were expelled by Sethnakht, the first pharaoh of the Dynasty XX, who usurped the throne from Twosre.[152] Bearing in mind, however, the Nebty name of the queen (*grgt Kmt wʿf ḫ3swt*),[153] which suggests that she crushed foreign invaders, it is not unlikely that the queen, long before Sethnakht, has been started to fight wars for driving back the Asiatic enemies and saving Egypt's sovereignty. We could assume that the opposition under Twosre's reign between Egypt and its Asiatic neighbours, who plundered Egyptian treasures and insulted the Egyptian gods[154] recalls *mutatis mutandis* the "Asiatic" Paris whose outrage had caused the Trojan war. The triumph of the Greeks over the Trojans and the capture of Troy may be considered analogous to the destruction and expulsion of Asiatics who threatened Egypt under Twosre's reign. Synchronizing the reign of this queen, a supposed "descendant" of the Inachid/Argead line, if we accept the assumption that

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142 von Beckerath 1997, 118.

143 For the length of the reign of Twosre, see von Beckerath 1997, 118; Hornung 2006, 214; Callender 2012, 43; Wilkinson 2011, 44–45, 127–128; Wilkinson 2012, 2.

144 The available documentation suggests that Twosre's reign started to count from the death of Sety II onward.

145 For an overview of all the alternative dates, see Möller 2005, 249.

146 See Möller 2005, 249; Kokkinos 2009, 40.

147 For other general similarities in the methodology of Timaeus and Manetho, see Dillery 2016, 114–115.

148 § 75.3–75.6. See Grandet 1994, 1, 335.

149 ll. 4, 7 –18. See Drenkhahn 1980, 62–63.

150 On the Asian rebel Irsu Kharu [i.e. region of Syro-Palestine], see Grandet 1994, 2, 220–224. Cf. Goedicke 1979, 6–7.

151 Goedicke 1979, 11.

152 On this issue, see Callender 2012, 43–47.

153 Callender 2012, 36.

154 Papyrus Harris I, § 75.5–75.6; Elephantine stele, ll. 4, 9.

she was granddaughter of Ramesses II,[155] who descended in his turn from Aigyptus/ Ramesses I-Sety I, with the fall of Troy, which were understood in Antiquity as a signal of victory of the “modesty” of the West over the overweening *hybris* of the East[156] could carry a significant political and ideological message, especially if we admit that Manetho composed his work at the end of Ptolemy’s II reign (*terminus post quem* the year 256 BC).[157]

Twosre/Thouōris is considered as a male king[158] by Manetho, who identifies him with Polybus, husband of Alkandrē. This internal synchronism is a clear allusion to *Odyssey*, where we find a certain Polybus, resident of the wealthy Egyptian city of Thebes, who, along with his wife Alkandrē hosted Helen and Menelaus during their sojourn on the banks of the Nile. They also furnished them with luxurious things that existed, according to Homer, in Menelaus’ palace in Sparta.[159] The common Theban origin of the queen Twosre and Polybus could partially explain the identification of these figures. It must be noted that the reference to Polybus could also recall the sojourn of Helen in Egypt during the Trojan War.[160] According to Herodotus’ account, the Memphite king Proteus forced out Paris from Egypt, while he compelled Helen to stay with him in order to reunite her with Menelaus after the Achaeans had besieged Troy. In Egypt, Menelaus received good hospitality and regained his wife, as well as all his possession stolen by an ‘Asiatic’, namely the son of King Priam. As Phiroze Vasunia remarked, “Egypt occupies an interesting intermediate position between European Greece and barbarian Asia in Herodotus’ narrative [. . .] and functions as a necessary hurdle for the Asiatics, [. . .] a point through which the Asian threat to Greece must pass and encounter difficulties.”[161] I think that such juxtapositions of references underlying, both from Egyptian and Greek perspective, the capacity of Egypt to prevent the ‘Asiatic’ enemy from enjoying the fruits of his theft, should have an ideologically central thrust for Ptolemaic propaganda, especially towards the end of the reign of Ptolemy II, when the relations between the Ptolemies and the Seleucids were strained. Despite the marriage in April 252 BC of the Seleucid king Antiochus II with the princess Berenice, daughter of Ptolemy II, that brought the Second Syrian War to an end, it seems that the competition between the two kings for the control of Koilē Syria and Palestine had no end. We can assume that Antiochus II could be considered as the ‘Asiatic’ enemy who respected neither the matrimonial alliance with the Ptolemaic royal house nor the huge dowry of gold and silver brought by the Ptole-

155 Callender 2012, 28.
156 For the reception of Trojan themes in antiquity, see Zeitlin 2009.
157 See above p. 12.
158 A possible reason for this misinterpretation may be that in most cases the Horus name of Twosre takes a masculine form (“*Kꜣ nḫt mry Mꜣꜥt, nb ꜥn m nswt mi͗ Tm*”). See Callender 2012, 36.
159 Hom. Od. 4.125–128.
160 Hdt. 2.113–120.
161 Vasunia 2001, 124–126.

maic princess Berenikē when she arrived in Antioch in 252 BC. The Seleucid policy in Crete and in Thrace shows clearly that Antiochus II did not abandon his anti-Ptolemaic activity after the peace and his marriage with Berenikē.[162] From such a perspective, the ideological message of this dual synchronism is clear enough: the Ptolemaic kingdom, especially under the new era that will begin with the accession of the crown prince Ptolemy III to the throne, and as rightful heir of Pharaonic royalty will crush every attempt of an 'Asiatic'-Seleucid invader, who, motivated by his predictable tendency to *hybris*, will challenge Egypt's sovereignty.

The reign of Petoubatēs and the date of the first Olympic games

The last synchronism coordinates the reign of the first pharaoh of the Manethonian Dynasty XXIII, who appears under the name of Petubatēs, with the foundation of the Olympic games.[163] It is difficult to identify with certainty the pharaoh in question,[164] and the absence of a fixed date of the first Olympiad, at least before the *Chronographiae* of Eratosthenes that occurs a little later than Manetho's work (ca. 220 BC) and dates the first Olympiad at 776/775 BC,[165] complexifies every attempt of identification. About 50 years before Eratosthenes, the *Olympionicae* of the quasi-contemporaneous of Manetho, Timaeus has also established in all likelihood a fixed date for the first Olympiad, but unfortunately nothing directly survives.[166]

For the chronographic tradition of the Greeks, the first Olympiad functions as a marker of a new time-epoch. According to Varro, the past time can be divided into three epochs: the first one goes from the creation of humankind to the flood, and it is called *adēlon*, the second one from the flood to the first Olympiad, and it is named *mythikon*, and the last one, goes from the first Olympic games to our days, which is known as *historikon*.[167]

I think, however, that the mention of the first Olympiad is not just a matter of epoch's division. As in previous cases, such a reference may also carry ideological significance for the first Ptolemies, who were in search of legitimizing symbols advertising their direct relations with the dynasty of Argeads. For understanding the ideological meaning of this synchronism, we should recall Herodotus' story of the participation of

162 For an overview of the events mentioned above, see Grainger 2010, 137–152.

163 Waddell 1964, fr. 62.

164 The identification of the Manethonian Petubatēs with Pedubast I, Pedubast II, or even another Pedubast, contemporary of Shoshenq V has been much debated. For an overview, see Kahn 2006; Aston 2009, 13–18.

165 FGrH 241. Cf. Möller 2004, 178–179; ead. 2005, 254.

166 For the Timaean evidence concerning the first Olympiad, see Möller 2004, 175–176; Baron 2013, 23–28.

167 Varro apud Censorinus DN 20.12–21.2.

Alexander I at the Olympic games, which allowed the Argeads to prove their Greekness.[168] The Olympic games can be seen, therefore, as a reference point to the legitimate authority of significant ancestors of the Ptolemaic royal house.

Laudatory poems composed by poets of the Ptolemaic court used very often the 'Leitmotiv' of equestrian victories at Olympia in order to praise their patrons, and this proves that the Olympic games were a source of prestige for the first Ptolemies.[169]

The mention of the most prestigious among the four Panhellenic festivals of mainland Greece in the timeline of the Egyptian royal past should matter to the first Ptolemies for one more reason. As is well known, Ptolemy II founded in 279–278 BC[170] a new festival in honor of his predecessors and parents, Ptolemy I and Berenike I. Organized on the Olympic model, Philadelphus sought to ensure that his festival, intended to honor Ptolemy's ancestors and advertise the legitimacy of his rule,[171] should be recognized as *isolympion* [i.e. equal to the Olympic games].[172] Due to his Panhellenic character, it provided also to the new ruler of Egypt a means of exhibiting the power and wealth of Ptolemaic Kingdom throughout the Greeks, and also building the image of Alexandria as the new epicenter of the Hellenistic world. Moreover, an anecdote mentions that the Panhellenic character of the Olympic games, which bestowed prestige on Ptolemy II through the organization of his own *isolympion* festival, was sanctioned by the Egyptian pharaoh. According to Herodotus[173] and Diodorus[174] an Elian delegation arrived in Egypt in order to consult the Egyptian pharaoh Psammis (Psamtik II) or Amasis (Ahmose II) regarding the fairness of the games held at Olympia. The instructive reply that the royal counselors gave to the Elians suggested that the main condition for ensuring fairness is the participation of *xeinoi* in the games.

In the light of this evidence, we can assume that the mention of the first Olympiad by Manetho served not only as a key marker for the beginning of the historical epoch, but also as a frame of reference intended to allude symbolically to the Ptolemaic royal prestige.

Conclusion

To sum up, given the available documentary and literary evidence, we can depict Manetho as a native priest, proficient in Greek language, with an intimate knowledge of

168 Hdt. 5.22, 9.45. Cf. also Borza 1999, 27–50.
169 See, for example, the racing successes at Olympia of Ptolemy I, Ptolemy II, Arsinoe and Berenice recorded by Posidippus in Thompson 2005, 272–273.
170 Thompson 2000, 381–388.
171 Thompson 2000, 369.
172 Grabowski 2014, 28, along with further bibliography.
173 Hdt. 2.160.
174 Diod. Sic. 1.95.

Greek myths and literature. His capacity to navigate between the two different cultural contexts allowed him to be one of the court clerics who had access to the entourage of the Macedonian king and participated in activities of intercultural cooperation with the new royal house of Egypt, just as did previously the Egyptian priest Wedjahorresnet, who had had a substantial contribution to the legitimation of the Persian rule.[175] Allusive indications in his treatise suggest placing his *floruit* most likely in the reigns of Ptolemy II and Ptolemy III. Under the assumption that the annotated King List has initially been part of *Sothis Book*, a treatise with strong ideological overtones that seeks to point out that the reign of the crown prince Ptolemy III will usher in a new cosmic era, we can consider his work on the royal Egyptian past as an instructing tool intended to facilitate the self-positioning and self-fashioning of the Janus-headed ruling house of Egypt. Incorporating into his work trends, patterns, and material from Greek as much as Egyptian sources, this bicultural high-ranking erudite-priest of the Ptolemaic court, functioning as mouthpiece of Ptolemaic propaganda had intertwined in a common temporal grid events, figures, myths, and symbols of the Egyptian and the Greek past for serving the identity needs of the bicephalous Ptolemaic monarchy. His work testifies to an apparent willingness to laud his patrons, as well as register and adjust their rule to the royal pharaonic tradition.

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