

Chapter 2: A Saite /Persian Dynasty

Displaced Dynasties

Resolving the Conflict

Convincing eyewitness testimony argues that Egypt was left a desolate, sparsely populated wasteland in the wake of the 564 B.C. invasion of the country by Nebuchadrezzar. Compelling circumstantial evidence argues that the invasion did not occur at all, or that, if it did take place, it was confined to the north-eastern Delta and left no break in the pharaonic tradition. Were the prophets mistaken? Or have the monuments been misinterpreted? Can the conflict be resolved by the simple expedient of moving Amasis and the dynastic succession of which he is part, to a new place in history? It should not take long to determine the answer. Relocating almost three hundred years of history should result immediately in a multitude of irresolvable conflicts. Unless, of course, the sequence of kings belongs elsewhere and has been correctly repositioned. In that event conflicts should be resolved, not created.

A Shift of 121 Years

We look for a place in history to move the forty-four year rule of Ahmose-sa-Neith? In Gardiner's epic history *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, in his discussion of Persian rule in Egypt, we read the following innocuous but inviting comment: "The forty years ending with the death of Darius II in 404 B.C. are a complete blank so far as Egypt is concerned, and it is only amid the stirring events attending the accession of Artaxerxes II that she re-enters upon the Middle Eastern stage".³³ Following this lead and with due caution we venture to move Amasis forward 121 years, overlapping the end of the 27th dynasty, to fill the void noted by Gardiner. His dates are uniformly lowered from 570-526 B.C. to 449-405 B.C. The earlier Saite³⁴ kings and Taharka dutifully follow, drawing dynasties 22 through 24 in their wake. The revision is essentially complete. If simplicity is the hallmark of a good theory, we are on the right track.

This displacement of the Saite dynasty into the 5th century is neither impulsive nor arbitrary. The lack of Egyptian monuments from the first Persian occupation (dynasty 27) already argues convincingly that something is wrong with the traditional history of this period. From Cambyses to Darius II only scraps of inscriptional material are forthcoming from Egypt, this at a time when the histories of neighbouring countries are increasingly well documented. G. Posener's classic collection of hieroglyphic inscriptions from this century contains barely a hundred items, most being one-line

³³ Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, p. 371-2.

³⁴ In the title of this chapter, and henceforth in the book, we will omit the umlaut in Saïte (pronounced Sa-ee) in keeping with the practice of many book writers.

inscriptions on vases and sundry artifacts.³⁵

Most conspicuous by their absence are records of the day-to-day operations of the dominant religious institutions of the country. Where are the Apis bull records of the Memphite priests from this century? What happened to the cult of Amon in Thebes with its high priesthood and its god's wives? Did temple worship come to a complete stop for 120 years?

We wonder additionally whether all building activity ceased for this extended period of time. We should conclude from the lack of contradictory evidence that for an entire century in Egypt no tombs were constructed; no temples were built; no buildings of any kind were erected. Neither were repairs to existing buildings recorded.

It is admitted by scholars that Xerxes, Artaxerxes I, and Darius II never visited Egypt. They were absentee landlords. Save for a few demotic papyri dated in their reigns, scattered graffiti at the stone quarries, and some indication that Darius II sponsored building activity in the Khargeh Oasis, these kings are virtually unknown. Who was ruling in Egypt? The Persian satraps (governors) were frequently absent from the provinces of the Persian Empire they administered. They could be absent because in most instances native officials or kings maintained a semblance of local authority. Where are the Egyptian officials? Where are the Egyptian kings? During the Assyrian occupation following 671 B.C. twenty Egyptian dignitaries/kings administered localized territory within Egypt while the Assyrians exercised suzerainty over the country. Are we to believe that the Persians, renowned for their tolerance, were more repressive than the Assyrians, and permitted no native government to exist?

The Greek historians provide tantalizing hints that the 26th dynasty pharaohs were alive and well and ruling within Egypt during the first Persian domination. Herodotus mentions the lengthy insurrection of Inaros, son of a king Psammetichus, overlapping the reigns of Xerxes and Artaxerxes. (Her. 7.7.1) Plutarch mentions a "king of Egypt" sending corn to Athens in 445-444 B.C. (Plut. Per. 37) and Philochorus (fr. 90) identifies this king as Psammetichus, king of Libya, the son of Inaros. Amyrtaeus, the sole occupant of Manetho's 28th dynasty (404-399 B.C.) is identified by Diodorus as a "Psammetichus, the king of the Egyptians, ...a descendant of the famous Psammetichus" (Diod. Sic.14.35.4). And only recently scholars have been forced to hypothesize the existence of a Psamtik IV, living and ruling in the Persian period, close to where we have relocated Psamtik II.³⁶ Why these persistent references to Saite dynasty kings in 5th century Egypt if the Saite dynasty actually ruled in the 7th and 6th centuries?³⁷

³⁵ G. Posener, *La Première Domination Perse En Egypte* (1936)

³⁶ E. Cruz-Uribe, "On the Existence of Psammetichus IV," *Serapis* 5 (1980) 35-9; cf. P.W. Pestman, "The Diospolis Parva Documents, Chronological Problems concerning Psammetichus III & IV," in J. Thissens/Th. Zauzich eds. *Grammata Demotika: Festschrift für Erich Luddeckens zum 15 Juni 1983*.

³⁷ Immanuel Velikovsky, in his *Peoples of the Sea* (1978) p. 93-98 and *Ramses II & His Times*

If indeed Saite dynasty rule is coterminous with the Persian occupation we should anticipate, as was the case during the Assyrian domination of the country a century earlier, that multiple individuals acted as administrators over various regions of Egypt, some bearing the title “king”. The revolt of Inaros, described by several Greek historians, includes reference to an Amyrtaeus - distinct from the 28th dynasty king Amyrtaeus - ruling in Lower Egypt. An enigmatic monumental inscription alluding to a king Khababash, contemporary with Xerxes, argues as well for multiple rulers at this time. The traditional history of the 5th century fails to explain these and other anomalies.

We argue in the following chapters that the prolonged historical vacuum in the 5th century is a result of a chronological error rather than an absence of political activity? What else but silence should result when the majority of the legitimate occupants of this century have been mistakenly moved elsewhere? When we move the Saite dynasty forward in time to overlap the Egyptian 27th dynasty we are merely giving back to the 5th century its displaced occupants.

Revised Saite Dynasty Dates

Ignoring for the time being the temporal shifts of the earlier 25th dynasty Ethiopian kings and the occupants of dynasties 22-24, we pause to consider the implications of the proposed change in Saite dynasty dates. The charm of this proposed chronological revision lies in the ease with which existing history can be modified. First we subtract 121 years from all Saite dynasty dates listed earlier in table 1. Then we introduce divisions necessary if the invasion and exile are historical realities. The result is shown below in table 2.

(1979) p. 60, n. 4 has already argued that Nekau and Psamthek belong in the 5th century. Unfortunately he failed to follow up on the implications of his observations.

Table 2: Revised Saite Dynasty Dates

<i>25th (Ethiopian) dynasty (earlier kings omitted)</i>
Taharka (in Egypt) 569-564 B.C.
INVASION OF NEBUCHADREZZAR 564 B.C.
Taharka (in exile in Ethiopia) 564-543 B.C.
<i>26th (Saite) dynasty begins (139 years)</i>
Wahibre Psamtik (under Cyrus and Cambyses) 543-525 B.C.
ARRIVAL OF CAMBYSES 525 B.C.
Wahibre Psamtik (under Cambyses & Darius 1) 525-489 B.C.
Wahemibre Necho (Necho) 489-474 B.C.
Neferibre Psamtik (Psamtik II) 474-468 B.C.
Ha'a'ibre Wahibre (Apries) 468-449 B.C.
Khnemibre 'Ahmose-sa-Neith (Amasis) 449-405 B.C.
Ankhkanre Psamtik (Psamtik III) 405-404 B.C. ³⁸

Since the Saite kings now share the identical time frame assigned to the 27th dynasty kings, we must be constantly mindful of the dates of the Persian kings. For the record they are reproduced in table 3 below.

³⁸ This king does not belong here. In due course we will argue that Amyrtaeus, the 28th dynasty king whose reign began around 405 B.C., who was also called Psamtik, succeeded Amasis. He alone deserves the title Psamtik III.

Table 3: Dates for the 1st Persian Occupation of Egypt (27th Dynasty)

<i>27th (Persian) dynasty</i>
INVASION OF CAMBYSES 525 B.C.
Cambyses 525—522 B.C.
Darius I (son of Hystaspes) 522-486 B.C.
Xerxes 486-466 B.C.
Artaxerxes (Longimanus) 465-424 B.C.
Darius II (son of Xerxes) 424-404 B.C.

We have no quarrel with these dates for the 27th dynasty kings. They are essentially correct.³⁹ With one notable exception.

The error in Table 3 relates to the founding of the dynasty, and thus to the initial row(s). In the traditional history the 27th dynasty began with the conquest of Egypt by Cambyses in 525 B.C. Since the dynasty ended with the death of Darius II in 404 B.C. it lasted precisely 121 years. When the 139 year long 26th dynasty is moved forward 121 years to overlap the 27th there are 18 excessive years to account for, since we believe both dynasties ended in 404 B.C. The solution to the problem is patent. Persian rule over Egypt did not begin in 525 B.C. as described in the textbooks.

³⁹ The dating system used by Egyptian kings of the 26th Saite dynasty was investigated a half century ago by Alan H. Gardiner, "Regnal Years and Civil Calendar in Pharaonic Egypt," JEA 31 (1945) 11-28; and the system employed by the Persian rulers of the 27th dynasty only recently by Leo Depuydt, "Regnal Years and Civil Calendar in Achaemenid Egypt," JEA 81 (1995) 151-173. The inherent assumption in both articles is that these dynasties were successive, not overlapping. Gardiner concluded, on the basis of the extensive documentation afforded by the Serapeum stela, that the Saite rulers dated their regnal years from new year (Thoth 1) to new year, and used a pre-dating (or non-accession year) system, in which the year of a king's death was reckoned both as the last year of that king and the first year of his successor. We agree entirely with Gardiner in his analysis and his assignment of relative dates for the Saite kings, save for his inclusion of the reign of Psamtik III following Amasis. There is absolutely no evidence from the monuments supporting the existence of this king at this time. We will argue in chapter 11 that the Psamtik mentioned by Herodotus as the successor of Amasis is not Ankhane Psamtik. Depuydt's analysis of the Persian kings is also generally acceptable. Certainly his conclusion that they used an accession year system is correct. Several of his dates, particularly those of Artaxerxes I and Darius II will need to be adjusted by at most a single year. The matter will be discussed further in chapter 10.

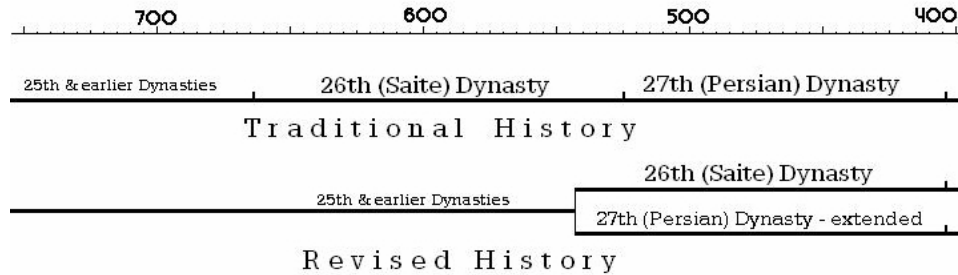
When Cambyses arrived in Egypt in 525 B.C. he was already its ruler, having inherited the Persian throne, and with it suzerainty over Egypt, five years earlier at the death of his father Cyrus. The rule of Cyrus in Egypt began much earlier. At first Cyrus ruled only the relatively obscure province of Parsua, east of the Tigris. His kingdom expanded westward to the Aegean in 546 B.C., then south and east until he occupied all lands formerly held by the neo-Babylonian king Nabonidus, descendant of Nebuchadnezzar. Finally, in 539 B.C. Cyrus overran Babylon and ruled the near-eastern world. Momentarily we will argue that in 543 B.C., as part of this territorial expansion, he conquered Egypt. The dates for the beginning of the 1st Persian occupation of Egypt, listed in table 3, are therefore incorrect, and are emended in table 4.

Table 4: Revised Dates for the 1st Persian Occupation of Egypt

<i>27th (Persian) dynasty (extended)</i>
Cyrus 543-530 B.C.
Cambyses 530—522 B.C.
Darius I (son of Hystaspes) 522-486 B.C.
Xerxes 486-466 B.C.
Artaxerxes (Longimanus) 465-424 B.C.
Darius II (son of Xerxes) 424-404 B.C.

This phase of our revision is essentially complete. By lowering Saite dynasty dates 121 years we have uprooted that 139 year long dynasty from its traditional 7th/6th century placement, dragging it to a new location overlapping the 1st Persian domination of Egypt, the latter extended appropriately. The 25th and earlier dynasties follow in its train. The result is depicted visually in figure 10 below.

Figure 10: Timeline – The Saite Dynasty Displaced 121 Years



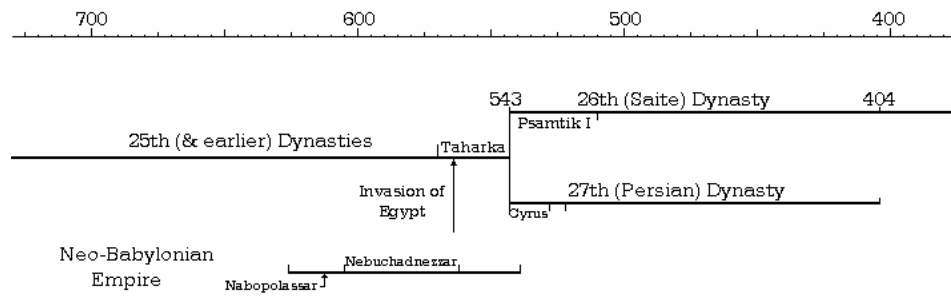
Reflections on the Revised Chronology

From a literary perspective this summary of the revised history is unfortunate. The element of surprise is forfeit; the mystery gone. There was no other choice. Over three hundred years of Egyptian history must move as a unit or remain where it is. The only significant questions, the size and direction of the movement, are necessarily stated at the outset. How else do we prove history wrong than to establish it in its proper place. There are advantages, however, to the present approach. What is lost in intrigue is gained in clarity. The most casual reader will immediately know what needs to be proved. A glance at the charts is all that is required. When we summarize below the consequences of the proposed revision we are merely examining the tables and figures and stating the obvious.

The list that follows is suggestive of what needs to be proved. It serves additionally as a table of contents for the book. The reader should be ever mindful that it is Egyptian chronology that is in error, not the chronologies of Israel, Assyria, or Babylon, the other dominant players in our drama. When the dynasties move, they move against the background of an established history for these three nations. The 25th Ethiopian dynasty, which formerly preceded, now follows the Assyrian invasion of Egypt of 671 B.C. Taharka (569-543 B.C.) is a contemporary of Nebuchadrezzar, not of Ashurbanipal. Nebuchadrezzar did not invade a country ruled by Ahmose sa-Neith; his invasion took place early in Taharka's reign (see figure 11). Cambyses did not arrive in Egypt in the last days of Amasis, thus bringing the Saite dynasty to an end; he was greeted by Psamtik I (543-489 B.C.), the first in a succession of Persian governors/kings of the emerging 26th dynasty.

Without the charts we will quickly lose our way.

Figure 11: Invasion of Nebuchadrezzar (Revised Chronology)



There remains for us to prove that:

1. Taharka of the 25th dynasty is not the same as Tarqu of the Assyrian annals. They are separated in time by a full century. Gardiner's confidence notwithstanding, Taharka's dates are not certain; they are in error by 121 years! The history of the early 7th century needs to be rewritten, if only to dislodge the Ethiopian dynasty from an historical context in which it plays no part. Tirhakah of the Hebrew Bible and Tarqu of the Assyrian annals need to be identified. [Chapter 3]
2. The Egyptian Pharaoh Necho who killed Josiah and who for years contested with Babylon for control of the Hatti lands, and the Wahibre (Hophra) whose activity provoked the wrath of God in Ezekiel's oracle, are not the second and fourth kings of the Saite dynasty, in spite of the coincidental correspondence in names and dates. Their true identity needs to be sought among the earlier kings of the 25th dynasty. Alternative identifications are readily available. [Chapter 4 and the second book in this series]
3. Taharka was not driven out of Thebes by Ashurbanipal and he did not die in 664 B.C. He was driven from Memphis by Nebuchadrezzar in 564 B.C., late in his 6th or early in his 7th year. He lived out the balance of his life in Ethiopia. The Egyptian invasion and exile lie entirely within the reigns of Taharka and Psamtik I, where reign lengths are accurate to within a year. This allows us to test our revision within very strict limits. We expect to find evidence of Taharka's conflict with Babylon, of the loss of his Egyptian kingdom after his 7th year and of the presence of a Babylonian army in Egypt preceding the arrival of Psamtik I. [Chapter 4]
4. Psamtik I was not the ultimate authority in Egypt, exercising rule over a united kingdom. Throughout his reign he served Persian overlords. Some time between 546 B.C. when Cyrus defeated Croesus of Lydia and 539 B.C. when Babylon fell and Cyrus ruled the world, Egypt passed from Babylonian to Persian control. Psamtik I became

governor/king in Egypt. The year was 543 B.C. We expect to find evidence that, early in the career of Psamtik I, extensive repairs were underway to temples and monuments destroyed by Nebuchadrezzar, and long dormant priesthoods were being re-established. Egypt was recovering from its trauma. There was a sparse population. Corruption was prevalent. Skilled artisans were hard to find. Scribes and sculptors copied old works that they barely understood. There remained a vague memory of the holocaust. [Chapter 5]

5. When Cambyses came to Egypt in 525 B.C. he did not come to conquer. Egypt was already a Persian province. His arrival was non-destructive. Many temples still lay in ruins. Cambyses spent time repairing the country, not destroying it. The *Histories* of Herodotus is heir to a tradition which wrongly ascribes to Cambyses the atrocities committed by Nebuchadrezzar forty years earlier. Monumental evidence exists linking Cambyses and Psamtik I. [chapter 6]

6. The kings Khnemibre and Ankhkare, whose ships were regulated by Udjahorresne, cannot have been Amasis and Psamtik III who lived a century later. They were definitely not kings of Egypt, in spite of their titles. Udjahorresne cannot have been, as he is accused of being, a navy commander who first fought the Persians and then joined them. He is wrongly accused of collaborating with the enemy. His navy did not consist of warships. The record must be set straight. [Chapter 7]

7. Neco was not the military genius who allied Egypt with Assyria and defeated the great Nebuchadrezzar in battle. He was instead a puppet king and an unwilling participant in the wars that Darius I and Xerxes fought on land and sea against Greece. His major accomplishments, the excavation of a Mediterranean-Red Sea canal, the construction of a fleet of triremes, and the circumnavigation of the African continent, must be credited to his Persian masters. [Chapter 8]

8. The civil war between Wahibre (Apries) and Amasis, which supposedly preceded the invasion of Nebuchadrezzar and is depicted in a stela from Elephantine, is actually a concluding episode in the rebellion of Inaros against Artaxerxes I. Details of this revolt are otherwise known through the writings of Diodorus Siculus and Thucydides. [Chapter 9]

9. The source of wealth in the time of Amasis can be traced to the rise of Naucratis and the expansion of foreign commerce within Egypt immediately prior to and during the time of the Peloponnesian wars. Several members of the extended family of Amasis had official positions under Artaxerxes and Darius II. [Chapter 10]

10. Psamtik, the successor of Amasis according to Herodotus, is not Ankhkare of the Udjahorresne stela, nor the Ankhkanre of the monuments. According to our revised dates, that honour must be given to Amyrtaeus Psamtik, the sole king of Manetho's 28th dynasty. Activities within this king's reign help to explain how the Saite dynasty became displaced in history. Greek historians and the authors of the Demotic Chronicle

contribute to an understanding of the end of both the 26th Saite dynasty and the first Persian domination. [Chapter 11]

These are by no means the only subjects to be considered in the balance of this book. But they are critical aspects of the problem and they afford the context in which other matters may be introduced. We will treat them in the order in which they are listed. But first a word about Herodotus, and then another word about the Demotic Chronicle.

Herodotus or Pseudo-Herodotus?

When Heinrich Brugsch wrote his *Egypt Under the Pharaohs* in the late 19th century he restricted his comments on dynasties 26 through 30 to a few pages. The editors explain:

With the Twenty-fifth Dynasty Dr. Brugsch's history practically ends, for it was his special object to write the story of the kingdom of Ancient Egypt from the evidence of the monuments alone. At this point their information becomes but very scanty, while in the fragments of Manetho and among the Greek and Roman authors there is to be found an abundance of material which, even if some of it must be accepted with caution, furnishes us with ample means for laying down the broad outlines of the history of Egypt from the Twenty-sixth Dynasty until its close."⁴⁰

At the outset of the 26th dynasty inscriptional evidence within Egypt practically ceases and we are dependent for history on Greek and Roman historians writing decades or centuries after the fact.

There is no great surprise that the production of monuments all but ceased. The exile marked the end of an artistic tradition stretching backward a thousand years. The artisans were gone, their skills employed in the service of Babylon, then Persia. Only a few survived the invasion. The fact that Psamtik I ruled Egypt for 53 years, yet erected not a single building and inscribed but a handful of monuments, speaks volumes. But what about the Greek and Roman historians? Are they reliable? The question applies particularly to Herodotus.

Secular History Based on Herodotus

The traditional history of the Saite dynasty is derived almost entirely from Herodotus. But the history that emerges in the textbooks is heavily edited. Herodotus makes factual statements; modern historians adapt those facts to an assumed 7th/6th century context.

⁴⁰ Heinrich Brugsch, *Egypt Under the Pharaohs* (1902).

Change the context and the facts would be interpreted differently. There is nothing in Herodotus, apart from his description of the Persian invasion that brought the Saite dynasty to a close, which places it unequivocally in the 7th and 6th centuries. Herodotus is ignorant of any connection between Psamtik I and the Assyrians. He knows nothing of Necho's wars with Nabopolassar and Nebuchadrezzar. The invasion of Egypt by Nebuchadrezzar is not mentioned. When the details of Herodotus' Saite history are examined later in this book, in the respective chapters dealing with the Saite kings, we will see that almost everything the Greek historian says suits the Persian context into which we have moved the dynasty. There is but a single exception, namely, the military conflict between Cambyses and the Saite kings Amasis and Psamtik III that terminated the 26th dynasty and initiated foreign rule in Egypt. To set this incident in context and to introduce a secondary problem created by the revised chronology itself, we digress for a moment to look at the structure of the *Histories* of Herodotus.

The *Histories* of Herodotus

The *Histories* was originally an oral discourse, delivered in open forums as entertainment for Greek speaking audiences in and around Athens. Like most oral tradition it grew over time, as anecdotes and historical information were accumulated in the author's travels. Only later was it put into written form.

The existing written version has been divided by contemporary historians into nine major divisions or "books", which are themselves subdivided into sections for reference purposes. Much of Book II - which deals exclusively with Egypt - is not, strictly speaking, historical in nature. The first 34 sections are concerned with geography; sections 35-98 with matters of custom and religion. The historical discussion proper is confined to the final sections 99-182. This historical material can be further divided into two parts - those sections describing Egyptian history before the Saite period (99-146) and those that focus exclusively on the Saite dynasty (147-182). We will consistently refer to the latter as the "Saite History" of Herodotus. It is important to note that there is no fundamental disagreement between the current revision and this Saite history.

The conflict is confined to the initial sections of book three (III: 1-30) where Herodotus describes in great detail the expedition of Cambyses against Egypt. The function of this "Cambyses Expedition Story" in the overall narrative needs to be clarified.

In the final sections of book one Herodotus documents the death of Cyrus and the ascendancy of Cambyses. The few verses that begin book two introduce the so-called "Egyptian digression", which occupies the whole of book two.

After the death of Cyrus Cambyses inherited his throne. He was the son of Cyrus and Cassandane daughter of Pharnaspes, for whom, when she died before him, Cyrus himself mourned deeply and bade all his subjects mourn

also. Cambyses was the son of this woman and Cyrus. He considered the Ionians and Aeolians as slaves inherited from his father, and prepared an expedition against Egypt, taking with him, with others subject to him, some of the Greeks over whom he held sway. (Her. II.1)

Abruptly at this point Herodotus digresses. He begins talking about Psammetichus. "Now before Psammetichus became king of Egypt, the Egyptians deemed themselves to be the oldest nation on earth." (Her. II.2) There follows the Egyptian discourse, which ends with the "Saite History". Book three resumes the tale of Cambyses expedition to Egypt, describing it in great detail. This "Cambyses Expedition Story" functions both as an ending to the Saite history of chapter two, and as a bridge bringing the narrative back to the Persian history

In the final chapter of this revision we will explain the origins of the Cambyses narrative. The intent here is to discuss its authorship.

Authorship of Herodotus II & III: 1-30

We have registered the complaint that Herodotus is almost singularly responsible for the belief that Amasis and Psamtik III were contemporaries of Cambyses. On that account alone we would have argued with the content of the Cambyses expedition narrative. But the careful reader will recognize by now that we also have a fundamental problem with the Saite history of book two - not with its content, but with its authorship. The problem is created by the revised chronology. With the removal of Amasis to the end of the fifth century the critic will be quick to complain. How is it possible for Herodotus, who died before the end of the 5th century (ca. 425 B.C.), and who supposedly derived his information while visiting Egypt two decades earlier (ca. 450 B.C.), to describe in chapter 2 the prosperous reign of Amasis, which only began in 449 B.C. and did not end until 405 B.C. The question applies equally to the Cambyses narrative in chapter 3, which describes the death of both Amasis and Psamtik III. Herodotus could have authored neither the Saite history nor the Cambyses narrative unless he lived and wrote this portion of his history after the deaths of Amasis and Psamtik III, that is, after 404 B.C.

In fact we have only one problem with a common solution. Both the difficulty with the content of the Cambyses expedition story and the alleged anachronism in the Saite history require much the same solution, namely, the assumption that the whole of Herodotus II and the early sections of Herodotus III are not the work of the 5th century historian. In fact, we argue that the entire treatment of Egyptian geography, culture, and history in Herodotus II was the creation of some later author, a pseudo-Herodotus, who inserted his work into the existing dialogue of Herodotus, supplying the Cambyses material in order to blend his work with the existing Persian history. We will not attempt to identify this author, nor the specific time when the alleged pseudepigraph was

written, though it clearly predates Diodorus Siculus, the 1st century B.C. Roman historian who refers to several of the Egyptian sections and attributes them to Herodotus. The intrusive Egyptian material dates probably to the middle of the Seleucid era. Beyond that we cannot say.

While we cannot identify the pseudo-Herodotus, we can argue for his existence. The arguments have been known for well over a century.

The Uniqueness of Herodotus II

The whole of chapter two of Herodotus differs markedly in tone and construction from the balance of the *Histories*. Its uniqueness has been the subject of much discussion. A. Bauer in his *Die Entstehung des Herodotischen Geschichtswerkes* (1878) argued the thesis that it was written last, late in the life of Herodotus, basing his belief in part on its distinctly anti-Hellenic tone. W.W. How and J. Wells dedicated a section of their classic *Commentary on Herodotus* to this "Peculiar tone of Book II" in which they discuss Bauer's thesis, adding their own observations:

But if the tone of Bk. II is really different from that of the rest of H(erodotus)'s work, this fact may well be connected with another obvious difficulty as to it. It is hard to conceive an author possessed of the literary skill and sense of form which H(erodotus) undoubtedly had, deliberately composing it in its present place or its present scale.⁴¹

When we suggest that some later author incorporated chapter two into an existing history we are not introducing any novel thesis. Bauer's claim that the Egyptian material is different in tone from the earlier Herodotus can be construed as an argument that its author was not Herodotus. And it is a very small step from arguing with Bauer, How, and Wells, that the Egyptian material was inserted late by Herodotus, to arguing that it was inserted late by someone else. "If, on the other hand, we suppose that it was written by itself when the rest of the history was practically finished, and then introduced into its present place later, both the difference of tone and the difference of scale explain themselves. It seems not unlikely, therefore, that Bk. II is the latest part of the work of H(erodotus)."⁴²

As we have already noted, this insertion of newly created material into an existing work is standard procedure in early oral tradition. Historical works such as Herodotus, and Hecataeus, on whom Herodotus depended for much of his information, were not composed in a single sitting. They grew over time as refinements were made to existing works. It is not known when the entire discourse of Herodotus achieved its final form

⁴¹ W.W. How & J. Wells, *A Commentary on Herodotus* (1912), p. 14

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 14

and was put into writing. Traditionalists make the assumption that its final editing antedated the death of Herodotus around 430 B.C. and that the text as presently received is essentially what Herodotus wrote. But there is no evidence that this was the case. Many oral traditions are not put into writing in the author's lifetime. Many pass for centuries before being committed to writing. And bogus additions to the works of famous authors are commonplace.⁴³

When was Herodotus written and what was the original content of the *Histories*? The earliest extant written manuscripts of the text are from the 9th to 11th centuries A.D., fifteen centuries after the death of the alleged author. The possibility certainly exists that the Saite history in chapter two and the early sections of chapter three were not part of the original oral tradition or the first written text. We know for certain that a history of Herodotus was known to Ktesias and Thucydides early in the 4th century B.C. They are both highly critical of its contents. Neither appears to be aware of the second book. Ktesias has a different version of the arrival of Cambyses, one that includes no mention of Amasis or Psamtik. His version of events, discussed later in this book, has not received due attention.

Chapter 2 of Herodotus is arguably late and intrusive. We rest on the authority of How & Wells, whose influential commentary has not been superseded after more than a century. The chapter 3 Cambyses story is also late. It results from a confusion to be detailed in chapter 11. Thus the entirety of II:1-III:30 is the product of a secondary author. Further discussion on the nature of this late redaction is beyond the bounds of the present revision. We expect, however, that a different author would reveal his presence otherwise than by changes of style and content. In fact, that is the case.

The Character of the Pseudo-Herodotus

The 5th century Greek historian has received bad press. Herodotus was criticized by his near contemporaries Thucydides and Ktesias as being more concerned with storytelling than with strict accuracy. "Herodotus was one among many who had more of story and song about them than truth, a storyteller whose main object was to entertain and profit there from"⁴⁴ But in spite of the criticism, there is little evidence in the *Histories* that Herodotus was deliberately fraudulent. He might be mistaken in his facts, but he did not

⁴³ The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha most clearly reflect this trend. Over sixty works purporting to be written by familiar Old Testament characters are reproduced in the most recent two volume edition of *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* edited by James H Charlesworth (1983, 1985). Many of these consist of expansions to existing works, precisely what we claim to be the case with the pseudo-Herodotus. But pseudepigraphs are not restricted to biblical characters. Claims have been made that many existing Greek and Roman texts are the work of impostors, Philo and Hecataeus being among them.

⁴⁴ O. Kimball Armayor, "Did Herodotus Ever Go to Egypt," JARCE 15 (1978) p. 60. Armayor here reproduces the sentiments of Thucydides i.21.1, 22.4; ii. 41.4.

misrepresent himself. That is, except in the Egyptian narrative. Reading any article critical of Herodotus, one is immediately struck by the fact that the criticisms are almost entirely concerned with chapters two and the beginning of chapter three.

A recent article has revived the debate that has raged for the past two centuries concerning the integrity of Herodotus vis-à-vis his discussion of things Egyptian. The object of contention is the claim by Herodotus to have derived his material first hand from his travels through Egypt:

At the turn of the century (20th century), the face value of Herodotus' travel in Egypt was much in doubt. If Aelius Aristides (2nd cent. A.D.) believed that Herodotus never reached Elephantine, Gardner Wilkinson had the same kind of doubts in the 19th century. A.H. Sayce believed that Herodotus never got as far as Upper Egypt, and he came to doubt that Herodotus went to Egypt at all. By the end of the century F. Ll. Griffith had cut the knot and decided that it did not matter where he went. Of Herodotus' Egypt Griffith wrote, in 1899, that "If occasionally his descriptions are truthful, they present so marked a contrast to the general standard of his history that one is disposed to credit them to other vision than his."⁴⁵

Griffith's frustration with Herodotus was well founded, but misdirected. His quarrel was with the author of the Egyptian material, whom we identify as an impostor.

The problem with Herodotus' statements about Egypt is not so much with *their* accuracy as with *his* integrity, though the two cannot easily be separated. The author of chapter 2 claims to have been to Egypt and to be recording his own observations. But a strong case can be made that he had never even visited the country. He mistakenly describes the Egyptians as black skinned, woolly-haired and circumcised. He claims to have confirmed these personal observations from conversations from the Colchians, supposed kinfolk of the Egyptians, at the time living in Anatolia. O.K. Armayor has recently called into question both claims. He concludes after a lengthy analysis that Herodotus (our pseudo-Herodotus) is not just a gullible and unreliable witness; he is a liar. This is particularly so when he claims to be informed on Egyptian matters by Egyptian priests.

We come, therefore, to Herodotus' Egyptian priests. Apart from his own experience, Herodotus claims that most of his knowledge of Egypt came from them. But could Herodotus ever really have been admitted to extensive converse with learned Egyptian priests of Memphis, Thebes, Heliopolis, and Sais (ii. 2f., 28)?⁴⁶

⁴⁵Armayor, op.cit., p.59. The Griffith reference is to an article in D.G. Hogarth, ed. *Authority and Archaeology Sacred and Profane*, 1899, 187 ff.

⁴⁶Ibid, p. 63

Herodotus acknowledges the fact that Egyptians detested Greeks, "yet Herodotus tells us that the priests counselled and tutored him on Egyptian mores and history, and even on Egyptian religion." Armayor goes on to ask how the Greek speaking Herodotus engaged in lengthy conversation with these native Egyptians?

Perhaps we should also remember the matter of interpreters. Herodotus did not talk to native Egyptian priests without them, and yet he does not mention either interpreters themselves in this connection, or the lack of a need for them.⁴⁷

Alan Lloyd, in his classic treatment of *Herodotus Book II*, produces a lengthy list of problematic features of the Egyptian history. While remaining positive regarding the reliability of book two he does observe that from an historical point of view some things in Herodotus book two "are profoundly disturbing."⁴⁸ Additionally Lloyd refers to a more negative appraisal by Heidel a half-century earlier:

Herodotus' account of Egyptian history, in Heidel's view, cannot possibly derive from Egyptian priests. It is a garbled rehash of what Hecataeus had derived from them and whenever Herodotus mentions *hiereus* [priests] as sources he means his predecessor. In other words, Herodotus is a barefaced liar!⁴⁹

The conclusion reached by Armayor was essentially the same as that determined by Heidel in 1935 and by A.H. Sayce at the turn of the twentieth century. The author of the Egyptian material lied about his travels to Egypt.

What conclusions shall we draw? Herodotus may indeed have gone to Egypt, but his narrative bears little or no relation to whatever his travels may have been on the basis of archaeological evidence now in hand. As Griffith put it in 1899, it is the frequent absence of even superficial knowledge that tries our belief in the veracity of Herodotus.⁵⁰

The problem that bothered these critics is not just what Herodotus said about Egyptian blacks and priests, nor his complete misrepresentation of the backwardness of the country. It was a combination of things he said which any casual visitor to Egypt would know to be false and of things he did not say which the same visitor would very likely have considered worth mentioning:

Armayor fills two pages itemizing the multiple misrepresentations and oversights of the author of the Egyptian discourse, arguing in conclusion that "if we cannot believe that he (Herodotus) saw the Egypt and Egyptians that he talks about, then how do we know that

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ A.B. Lloyd, *Herodotus Book II*, 1975, p. 94

⁴⁹ Ibid., n. 26. The quoted comments are from Heidel's article "Hecataeus and the Egyptian Priests in Herodotus, Book II," *Memoirs of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences* 18 (1935).

⁵⁰ Armayor, op. cit., p. 69

he went to Egypt at all?" In summation he voices the opinion that "Herodotus' evidence and authority on Egypt needs re-thinking. It is difficult to imagine a literary genius of wide and varied Greek learning confused enough to set down in full earnest the impressions of Egypt that we find here."⁵¹

The reputation of Herodotus needs to be rescued. The criticisms directed toward the Egyptian sections should not be reflective on the character of the 5th century historian. He was not their author. Part of the re-thinking suggested by Armayor needs to focus on the question of the authenticity of Herodotus book II.

The Saite History (Herodotus II.147-182)

We return momentarily to the exception that proves the rule - the Saite history. For all the inaccuracy elsewhere in the Egyptian narrative, sections 147-182, the Saite history, are remarkably reliable. The inclusion of a listing of all the Saite kings in their correct order, referenced to reign lengths that are essentially correct, suggests that the author had access to some reliable sources. Whatever distortions are found earlier in chapter two, and later in the Cambyses narrative, a remarkable precision suddenly and surprisingly appears in the Saite history discussions concerning Psammetichus - Herodotus' version of Psamtik's name - and of the descendants of Psammetichus. The author himself admits to having other sources for this portion of his Egyptian history. "Thus far I have recorded what the Egyptians themselves say. I will now relate what is recorded alike by Egyptians and foreigners to have happened in that land, and I will add thereto something of what I myself have seen." (Her. II 147. 1) What follows is reasonably accurate history, save for the additions that the author claims to have made based on his own observations. Even details of the reign of Amasis, though embellished with copious amounts of here-say, are probably reliable. Gardiner claims that "When Herodotus's account of Amasis (570-526 B.C.) is shorn of its lively and picturesque gossip, what is left is likely to be sound history."⁵² On balance Herodotus II 147-182 is reliably accurate and it is probably fair to say that this revision gives more credit to the Saite history of Herodotus than is accorded it by modern historians. It will be used throughout the following chapters to argue a 5th century context for the Saite kings. But how do we explain this remarkably accurate history and our reliance on it in spite of what has been argued about the unreliability of the pseudo-Herodotus.

On the assumption that the Egyptian narrative was composed centuries after the fact, we can assume, with reason, that when the pseudo-Herodotus acknowledges his reliance on "what is recorded alike by Egyptians and foreigners to have happened in that land", he refers to existing written histories of Egypt. In particular, since this material was likely inserted into the *Histories* in the Ptolemaic era, we can conjecture that Manetho was one

⁵¹ Ibid, p. 70-71.

⁵² Alan Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs* (1961) p. 361.

of his sources. Manetho wrote in Greek, and provided listings of all the Saite kings in their correct order together with their reign lengths. The substance of Manetho's history, not preserved in the later extracts, may well be represented in the Saite history of the pseudo-Herodotus. Even the chapter three material, the result of a confusion explained later in this book, might be attributed to Manetho.

In the balance of this revision we continue to refer to the entirety of the *Histories* as the work of Herodotus, this for convenience sake. But in view of what has been argued above we state categorically that the Egyptian discourse is not the product of the 5th century Herodotus. Armayor appropriately refers to the Greek historian as "a literary genius of wide and varied Greek learning". On the contrary the pseudo-Herodotus, a 3rd or 2nd century pretender, who depended on Hecataeus, Manetho, and others for his Egyptian material, and likely never travelled far from Greece, was anything but learned. He borrowed everything he wrote. He was certainly not honest. We can be thankful to him for preserving in his Saite history some details from Manetho or the sources used also by Manetho. But to him alone can be credited a distortion of history with untoward consequences, for had he not preserved and misplaced the book three account of the Cambyses expedition, the Saite dynasty might well be entrenched today in its correct chronological position overlapping Manetho's 27th dynasty.

The Demotic Chronicle

Amasis died in 405 B.C. The Pseudo-Herodotus preserves a tradition that he was succeeded by a son Psamtik who lived and ruled briefly. Though we question Psamtik's connection with Cambyses in the existing narrative of Herodotus chapter three, it can be argued that Herodotus preserves the memory of an actual historical incident. The event, to be described later in this revision, dates from ca. 399 B.C., not from 525 B.C. From other sources we know that at the death of Darius II in 404 B.C. Egypt rebelled and broke free from Persian control. The leader of its independence movement is named Amyrtaeus by most Greek sources. Manetho identifies him as the sole occupant of his 28th dynasty (404-399 B.C.). In the revised chronology this Amyrtaeus must be the immediate successor of Amasis, and therefore must be Psamtik III. Confirmation is provided by Diodorus Siculus, who describes the activities of the Egyptian successor of Darius II and refers to him as "Psammetichus, the king of the Egyptians, who was a descendant of the famous Psammetichus." (Diod. 14.35.4) Needless to say, scholars do not take Diodorus seriously.

The subject will be taken up again in the concluding chapter, but the reader may begin to see here the source of the faulty Cambyses narrative. If Amasis was followed by a king named Amyrtaeus with personal name Psamtik, and if this king was attacked by a Persian named Cambyses, a namesake of the earlier Persian king, with disastrous results for Egypt, then the resulting confusion is predictable. The later namesake, mistaken for

the earlier Cambyses, caused the pseudo-Herodotus to date Amasis and Psamtik at the beginning of the first Persian domination, rather than at its end.

Following the revolt of Amyrtaeus, Egypt remained free of foreign occupation for close to 60 years (404-343 B.C.), the last taste of independence the country would enjoy. This, at least, according to the traditional history. The kings of dynasties 29 and 30 are of minimal interest to this revision, but since reference is made to them periodically we list them here with their traditional dates (see table 5)

Table 5: Kings of Dynasties 28 – 30

<i>DYNASTY 28:</i>	
Amyrtaeus	404-399 B.C.
<i>DYNASTY 29:</i>	
Nepherites	399-393 B.C.
Achoris	393-380 B.C.
Nepherites	380 B.C.
<i>DYNASTY 30:</i>	
Nekhtnebef	380-363 B.C.
Teos	362-361 B.C.
Nekhthorheb	360-343 B.C.

In Persia, Artaxerxes II succeeded Darius II and ruled for forty-six years (404-358 B.C.) He was succeeded by Artaxerxes III (Ochus), who in 343 B.C. re-conquered Egypt and initiated the short lived 2nd Persian domination. Ochus was assassinated in 338 B.C., and was succeeded by his youngest son Arses, who was himself murdered in 336 B.C. The last Persian king of Egypt was a third Darius, nicknamed Codomannus, who ruled until Egypt fell to Alexander the Great in 332 B.C.⁵³

Following Alexander's death in 323 B.C. control over Egypt passed to the family of Ptolemy, one of Alexander's generals. The lengthy Ptolemaic period lasted for three centuries, till the last Ptolemy, Cleopatra, lost her throne to Rome.

⁵³ This summary is borrowed almost verbatim from Gardiner, op. cit., p. 453.

We noted in the previous section that the history of Egypt from dynasties 26 through 31 is known via Greek and Roman authors, not through the monuments. For the 26th dynasty we are largely dependent on Herodotus, corrected by Ktesias and Thucydides, with some additional help from Diodorus Siculus. For dynasties 27 through 31 the primary sources are Diodorus Siculus and Xenophon. In this later period, however, there is additional help from the papyri.

"But there is one important Egyptian literary source which deals with the political history of these last independent Egyptian dynasties, the so-called Demotic Chronicle. This papyrus, now number 215 in the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris, was purchased in Cairo by a soldier serving with Napoleon, and was taken to France in 1801. The text on the verso was first studied by Revillout, who gave it the name Demotic Chronicle, a name by which it is still known.⁵⁴

The Demotic Chronicle was written in the Ptolemaic era, presumably in the 2nd century B.C., a short time after Manetho. But the events that concern its authors occur in the 4th century. Those authors appear to be very familiar with happenings in Egypt during the 28th through 30th dynasties. It seems reasonable to assume that the content of the Chronicle was first written in the 4th century and recopied in the 2nd. The papyrus is a palimpsest.

The recto of this papyrus names all the kings from Amyrtaeus to Teos in their correct order. The authors were knowledgeable about their subject matter. Careful examination of details in the text has led scholars to conclude that its history is reliable.⁵⁵

The verso of the Chronicle is most relevant for this revision. It contains a number of distinct texts, two of which are of particular interest. The first is a brief chronicle describing in unflattering tones the lack of moral character of Pharaoh Amasis. Spiegelberg calls it an historical narrative and entitles it "The Narrative of King Amasis and the Sailor". The story depicts the Saite king as a drunken sot. The details are unimportant. It is clearly written by authors antagonistic to Amasis. It brings to mind Herodotus II. 172 where we are told that "at first he (Amasis) was contemned and held in but little regard by the Egyptians, as having been but a common man and of no high family".

The existence of this narrative raises a question: Why would a Saite king who supposedly lived and ruled in the mid-6th century be singled out for ridicule by authors whose preoccupation elsewhere is with happenings in the 4th century? How is it that he is even remembered? Only if the present revision is correct, and Amasis ruled from 449-405 B.C. as the last of the puppet kings of the first Persian domination, is this disdain

⁵⁴ Janet H. Johnson, "The Demotic Chronicle as an Historical Source," *Enchoria* 4 (1974) p.2

⁵⁵ Cf. Janet H. Johnson, *op.cit.* p 17. The opinion expressed applies to the small percentage of the verso of the Chronicle examined by Johnson.

comprehensible. We also understand why the life and work of Amasis have not been forgotten.

A separate group of related documents on the verso equally concern Amasis. One clearly mentions Amasis 44th year as a significant date for the beginning or ending of some activity. The existing translations claim that Cambyses is also mentioned. Gardiner alludes to this text as the source of our knowledge about "Cambyses withdrawal of grants to the Egyptian temples and about Darius's command that the laws of the country should be recorded in writing"⁵⁶ He further claims, on the basis of this section of the Demotic Chronicle, that the laws implemented by Darius were created in an assembly of the wisest soldiers, priests and scribes of Egypt gathered together at the behest of Darius, at which assembly "they were to set forth in writing the complete law of Egypt down to year 44 of Amasis, a task which kept them busy until his (Darius's) own nineteenth year."⁵⁷

It goes without saying that if Darius I is named in the document and if Darius requested any activity referenced to year 44 of Amasis then Amasis must precede Darius I in time and the present revision should stop. How do we respond to these statements by a noted Egyptologist?

If nothing else the comments by Gardiner serve to highlight a problem that will manifest itself repeatedly in the course of this examination of Egyptian history. Statements are made by scholars which, taken at face value, appear to undermine the current reinterpretation of history. Closer scrutiny shows the statements themselves to be at fault. They either misrepresent or misinterpret the data. There is no deliberate attempt to deceive. In most cases, as here, they result from an attempt to interpret a text in the light of an existing but erroneous view of history. Corrupt history begets faulty interpretation. The principle will manifest itself repeatedly.

When we examine the Chronicle text that deals with Amasis' 44th year we find only a questionable reference to Darius (Spiegelberg⁵⁸ sees the name; Griffith⁵⁹ questions whether it is present) and nothing to indicate whether the name refers to Darius I, Darius II, or Darius III. There is also no certain reference to Cambyses. A dignitary named Kbdj or Kbdje seems to be in the process of emending legislation enacted in the reign of Amasis (prior to his 44th year) or which has been in vogue since the 44th year of Amasis. Kbdj is never called a king. His title is omitted, while Amasis is always Pharaoh Amasis. The text is not well preserved. Lacunae abound. A second and related document in the same group in the Chronicle concerns what adjustments Kbdj should make to the procedures by which temples are furnished with their incomes. In the reign of Amasis it was done so; but now it will be done thus.

⁵⁶ *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, p. 372.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 365

⁵⁸ W. Spiegelberg, *Die Sogenannte Demotische Chronik* (1914) p. 30,31

⁵⁹ F. Ll. Griffith, *The Demotic Papyri in the John Rylands Library*, (1909) vol. iii , p. 26,27.

In the traditional history Cambyses and Darius I succeeded Amasis, with only the brief reign of Psamtik III intruding. At the end of the 5th century, where we have relocated Amasis, we also have Darius and Amasis, but this time the Persian king is Darius II, whose reign overlaps the last two decades of the reign of Amasis. Is there also a Cambyses? The argument in the concluding chapter of this revision is a resounding yes. In the Demotic Chronicle he is called Kbdj, and an argument can be made that this Kbdj is not Cambyses, son of Cyrus, but a contemporary of Amyrtaeus. When we examine the historical role of this native Persian in our chapter eleven, the Demotic Chronicle, far from being a threat to the current revision, will become one its staunchest allies. But the matter must be put on hold till then.

Before leaving the Demotic Chronicle it should be noted that the comments above should in no wise be construed as defensive. The entire problem could have been shrugged off by simply claiming that the Chronicle is in error. Since it is recorded on a palimpsest in the 2nd century it could be argued that the Chronicle reflects a time when historical facts related to the Saite dynasty are already in a state of confusion. Griffith himself suggests the possibility of error. He has more problems with the Chronicle than does the current revision, as he struggles to find agreement between its problematic text and the assumed facts of the traditional history. His confusion is evidenced from his comments:

This papyrus was written centuries after the events narrated took place, and its statements may be very incorrect. It is much to be hoped that the question may be definitely decided as to whether the passage represents an investigation by Darius as to the income of the temple in the days of Amasis, and the items lopped off by Cambyses, or an investigation ordered by Cambyses himself with a view to the reductions named.⁶⁰

Griffith would be surprised to learn that neither of his suggestions is close to the truth.

⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 27.