

## Chapter 6: Cambyses in Egypt: (525-522 B.C.)

### Cambyses' Expedition

#### Two Versions of History

In the traditional history the arrival of Cambyses in Egypt took the form of a military conquest that included a pitched battle against Psamtik III at Pelusium, a siege of Memphis, the brutal murder of Psamtik's children, and the desecration of Amasis' body in Sais. There followed three separate military ventures against Carthage, Ethiopia and the Ammonians of the western desert. Herodotus portrays Cambyses as a madman, who brutally savaged Egypt en route to the conquest of North Africa.<sup>210</sup>

In the revised history Cambyses arrived as head of state intent on establishing a physical presence in his Egyptian province, a country in the first stages of recovery from a brutal destruction by the Babylonians four decades earlier. He did not come to conquer; Egypt was already his.<sup>211</sup> As king of the Persian Empire, which had provided a reprieve from

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<sup>210</sup> Her. III.1-38

<sup>211</sup> The few Egyptian monuments dated to Cambyses' reign by modern scholars appear to consistently number his years from the beginning of his rule in Persia in 530 B.C., rather than from his assumption of a pharaonic titulary in 525 B.C. It is a serious matter for the traditional history that a demotic papyrus written after the conquest of Cambyses (Cairo 50059) refers to the years 2 and 8 of Cambyses, apparently ignoring the reigns of Amasis and Psamtik III. [For bibliography and discussion cf. Posener, *La Première Domination Perse En Egypte* (1936), p.33 note a & p. 173 note 1 - cf. also the demotic papyrus Cairo 50060, col. 2,1 dated to Cambyses 5<sup>th</sup> year] For the most part scholars ignore the implications of this dating system, and attempt to explain the data otherwise (though K.M.T. Atkinson ["The Legitimacy of Cambyses and Darius as kings of Egypt," *JAOS* 76 (1956) 167-177] followed by Leo Depuydt ["Regnal Years and Civil Calendar in Achaemenid Egypt," *JEA* 81 (1995) 151-173] agree that Cambyses' years of rule in Egypt are dated from his assumption of power in Persia, and Atkinson at least attempts to provide an explanation, namely, that Cambyses deliberately backdated his Egyptian regnal years to the beginning of his Persian rule in order to legitimize his kingship in Egypt.) Other scholars attempt to alleviate the problem by reinterpreting some of the numbers. Posener [op.cit.] expresses the opinion that the rule of Cambyses was sometimes reckoned from the death of Amasis, while P.W. Pestman argues that Cambyses' rule was reckoned from the year of his conquest. ["The Diospolis Parva documents: Chronological Problems," *Grammata Demotika* (1984) p. 154 & n.24; cf. also the discussion in R.A. Parker - "The Length of Reign of Amasis and the Beginning of the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty," *MDAIK* 15 (1957) p. 209 n.3] Finally, D. Devauchelle ["Un probleme de chronologie sous Cambyse," *Transeuphratene* 15 (1998)] has argued that Cambyses' regnal years were numbered consecutively from the year of his conquest (year 1) through to the fourth year of Darius (year 8), thereby creating an historical fiction. In fact, all of these interpretive efforts are in some measure mistaken. Atkinson and Depuydt are correct in their assumption that Cambyses rule in Egypt was dated from 530 B.C., but the only incontrovertible evidence of that fact, to my knowledge, is the Apis stela of his year 6 (see below). That stela was uniquely created at the request of Cambyses. It was arguably not the production of Egyptian priests and therefore did not follow their dating conventions. Any other Egyptian documents from the years 530-522 B.C.

the ravages of Nebuchadrezzar's invasion, Cambyses was welcomed as a liberator. He was neither vicious nor bent on conquest.

Which of these two views of history is correct?

If we can explain the grossly distorted portrayal of Cambyses, preserved in the Cambyses' narrative of the pseudo-Herodotus, we will have gone a long way toward vindicating the Persian king and authenticating the revised history. The explanation is circuitous. We begin with Ktesias.

#### According to Ktesias

Herodotus is not the only 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. historian to mention the expedition of Cambyses to Egypt. Ktesias, born into a family of physicians in Knidus in Caria, was taken prisoner by the Persians about 417 B.C. and took advantage of his privileged position in the Persian court to write a history of Persia from its beginnings to 398 B.C., the date of his return to Knidus and Sparta. The original historical work, the *Persika*, has unfortunately not been preserved intact.

The *Persika* was composed in twenty-three books, the first six devoted to a "history" of the Assyrian and Median empires down to the fall of Astyages; the remaining seventeen dedicated to a history of the Persian empire. While the original is lost, epitomes of the first six chapters are preserved in book two of *Diodorus Siculus*, and excerpts of the last seventeen chapters in the *Bibliotheca* of Photius.<sup>212</sup> In addition to these two major reproductions, numerous (other) fragments are preserved by various ancient authors. In spite of the quantity of preserved material the present text suffers from the criticism that not a single sentence written by Ktesias has been preserved verbatim.

Photius, who preserves the largest segment of the existing work, was the patriarch of Constantinople in the late 9<sup>th</sup> century A.D. In his capacity as churchman he played a significant role in the final schism between the Orthodox and the Roman Catholic churches. He was also one of the greatest of the Byzantine scholars, and in that capacity preserved for subsequent generations his epitome of Ktesias. It is a highly condensed version of the original, consisting essentially of a collection of notes made by him from whatever texts were then accessible.

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would be dated by Egyptian scribes to the years of Psamtik I. The demotic papyri cited by all of the above named scholars in defence of their respective opinions - the Petition of Petesi and the Demotic Chronicle, both mentioned in earlier chapters, and the contract papyri from an Assiut tomb (Cairo 50059 and Cairo 50060) which will be discussed in chapter 11 - all refer to the years of an interloper named Kbdj who is not Cambyses and who "ruled" Egypt in the years following the death of Amasis in ca. 404 B.C., during and following the brief tenure of Amyrtaeus.

<sup>212</sup> Scholars refer to the entirety of the Photius version as fragment 29. The numbering of the other fragments can be found in John Gilmore, *The Fragments of the Persika of Ktesias*, (1888) p. 2,3.

Book twelve of the *Persika* is of special relevance for this revision, containing as it does Ktesias' account of the expedition of Cambyses to Egypt. Only two existing fragments purporting to be from book twelve mention the Cambyses expedition. One, by far the more detailed, is preserved by Photius; the other is part of a quotation contained in the work of Athenaeus from the second century A.D.

The Photius version describes an expedition against Egypt conducted by Bagapates, an influential eunuch held in some esteem by Cyrus, father of Cambyses. Shortly after the accession of Cambyses, for reasons not given, Bagapates invaded Egypt. It is not stated in the narrative that Cambyses ordered the invasion. In fact, the description of Cambyses' burial of his father Cyrus seems to be interrupted by the insertion of this vignette. The Egyptian king against whom Bagapates engaged this expedition was named Amyrtaeus, and the military expedition succeeded largely through the treachery of another eunuch named Combaphis, a minister in the Egyptian court of Amyrtaeus. According to Ktesias, Combaphis turned traitor in hopes of improving his political situation. Leaving Egypt he collaborated with Bagapates in the ensuing invasion. The invasion was successful. As a result six thousand Egyptians were taken captive and exiled to Susa, Amyrtaeus among them. All of Egypt was annexed to Persia. The battle itself is not described, only the fact that there fell therein 50,000 Egyptians and 7000 Persians.<sup>213</sup> It was an horrific time.

We have no idea when or how the Bagapates/Combaphis invasion came to be associated with Cambyses, but it is misplaced. It took place at the end, not at the beginning of the first Persian occupation. Scholars, attempting to adapt this story to fit the description of Herodotus, typically emend the name Amyrtaeus to Psamtik, and treat the incident as a distorted version of the 525 B.C. arrival of Cambyses in the days of Psamtik III. That is a mistake. The narrative is not distorted; it is reasonably if not totally factual. But it has been displaced. Amyrtaeus is well known as the sole occupant of Manetho's 28<sup>th</sup> dynasty. His brief reign followed immediately the death of Amasis in 404 B.C.

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<sup>213</sup> Based on the translation from the Greek into French by R. Henry, *Ctesias, La Perse, L'Inde: Les Sommaires de Photius* (1947) p.18,19. "Le douzième livre commence au règne de Cambyse. Dès son avènement, celui-ci renvoie le corps de son père en Perse par les soins de l'eunuque Bagapatès pour l'y ensevelir et règle tout d'après les dernières volontés paternelles. Les personnages les plus influents auprès de lui étaient Artasyras, un Hyrcanien, et, parmi les eunuques, Izabatès, Aspadatès et Bagapatès qui était le favori du père de Cambyse depuis la mort de Pétésaeas. Ce Bagapatès conduit une expédition contre l'Égypte et son roi Amyrtaios et défait Amyrtaios grâce à l'eunuque Combaphis, puissant ministre du Pharaon, qui livra les ponts et trahit tous les intérêts de l'Égypte pour en devenir le gouverneur; il le devient car Cambyse, après lui avoir fait conférer cette charge par Izabatès, cousin de Combaphis, la lui confirmé lui-même plus tard de vive voix. Ayant capturé Amyrtaios, il n'exerce contre lui aucune rigueur; il se confente de l'exiler à Suse avec six mille Égyptiens choisis par lui et il annexe toute l'Égypte. Il tomba dans la bataille cinquante mille Égyptiens et sept mille Perses." A German translation is given by Friedrich Wilhelm König, *Die Persika des Ktesias von Knidos* (1972) p. 5,6. To my knowledge there is no English translation.

We cannot place the blame for the mistaken association of Combaphis and Cambyses on Ktesias, who lived through and whose history includes the entirety of the reign of Amyrtaeus (404-399 B.C.). It is unthinkable that he is grossly in error regarding an incident of this magnitude that occurred in his lifetime. The error must postdate his death in the first decade of the 4th century B.C. We will discuss the matter further below and again in chapter 11.

Removing the Combaphis/Amyrtaeus story to its proper historical context leaves the Photius version of Ktesias with no reference to the actions of Cambyses vis-à-vis Egypt. That leaves only the fragment from the *Deipnosophists* of Athenaeus (fr.30 = Ath.xiii.560) from which to determine the Ktesian version of the Cambyses expedition. We are disappointed. According to Athenaeus, Ktesias did contain some reference to the expedition, but he preserves none of it. Instead Athenaeus reproduces a story from Herodotus to provide an explanation of why the expedition was undertaken, an explanation which involved Amasis and Apries. The Athenaeus fragment begins:

Even the expedition of Cambyses against Egypt, as Ctesias says, occurred on account of a woman. For Cambyses, hearing that Egyptian women ...<sup>214</sup>

Athenaeus goes on to describe how Cambyses, upon learning favourable things about Egyptian women, sent to the Egyptian king Amasis, asking for one of his daughters in marriage. Instead, Amasis sent Cambyses one of his concubines named Neitetis, a daughter of Apries whom he had earlier deposed and killed. Ultimately Cambyses "learned the whole story from her, and when she entreated him to avenge the murder of Apries he consented to make war on the Egyptians."

This fanciful story is clearly a synopsis of a similar version preserved in the Cambyses narrative of Herodotus (Her. 3.1) It is not entirely clear from the syntax of the Greek original whether Athenaeus is attributing to Ktesias the entire story, or merely the statement that the expedition took place "on account of a woman." In the latter case Athenaeus is himself supplying the Neitetis story, borrowed from Herodotus, in order to explain Ktesias' comment. We do not have to decide. It is extremely unlikely that Ktesias included any comment on the matter.

We recall that Athenaeus wrote in the second century A.D., fully six centuries after Ktesias. By this time the Cambyses' legend was full blown. Athenaeus himself, in the same verse of the *Deipnosophists*, reproduces a different version of the Neitetis story, which he credits to Dinon in his *Persian History* and Lyceas of Naucratis in the third book of his *Egyptian History*. This second version is also from Herodotus. (Her. 3.2) What distinguishes the Ktesias quote from the stories supplied by Dinon and Lyceas is the absence of any mention of a literary source. We should have expected Athenaeus to mention the *Persika* as the source of Ktesias remarks, as he mentions the *Persian*

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<sup>214</sup> The translation is that of C.B. Gulick, *Athenaeus: The Deipnosophists*, vol. VI (1950) from the seven volume Loeb series.

*History and Egyptian History* of Dinon and Lyceas. This may indicate that his remarks vis-à-vis Ktesias are based on hearsay, rather than on personal observations from a printed version of the *Persika*.

We have other reasons for doubting that Ktesias recorded either the Neitetic aetiology or the remark that the expedition took place “on account of a woman”, the comment that introduced the aetiology. Ktesias’ contempt for the fanciful stories of Herodotus is well documented. It is questionable that he would have reproduced for public consumption one of those same stories, especially one discredited by Herodotus himself. Furthermore, since we have already argued that the Bagapates story belongs elsewhere, and that Ktesias preserves no details of the actual Cambyses expedition, only the mere statement of its occurrence, we wonder why he would have reproduced a lengthy and unreliable version of its cause?

In John Gilmore's classic treatment of *The Fragments of the Persika of Ktesias*, the fragment from Athenaeus is included in its entirety as an adjunct to the Bagapates/Combaphis story, leaving the impression that Ktesias, following Herodotus, associated Cambyses with Amasis. That is misleading. When the Bagapates story is removed to its proper historical context at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, and the fragmentary hearsay of Athenaeus is properly questioned, what is left in Ktesias is a simple statement that Cambyses led an expedition to Egypt.<sup>215</sup> The expedition (*strateia*) was no doubt a military enterprise. Cambyses intended to extend his empire beyond Egypt. But Ktesias says nothing about what happened in Egypt, perhaps because the Egyptian expedition was as inconsequential as that conducted by Cyrus almost two decades earlier. There was no great battle to describe, no death and destruction to document. The confusion among Greek historians must postdate the time of Ktesias.

If we accept as fact that Cambyses arrived in Egypt several decades into the reign of Psamtik I and that the event was relatively benign, there remains the problem of explaining the later tradition of his atrocities and of the mass destruction of life and property falsely attributed to him. The problem is not difficult, but it needs to be addressed. There are two contributing factors, both cases of mistaken identity. The first is the confusion of Nebuchadrezzar and Cambyses; the second the mistaken identification of Combaphis and Cambyses.

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<sup>215</sup> It can be argued that this was all that the original Herodotus said about the expedition. Book two begins with the statement that “He (Cambyses) 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). The focus immediately changes and there follows the entire 182 verses of Book two at which point the Cambyses expedition section (Her III. 1-38) was inserted, taking up the statement of II.1 and providing details of the invasion: “It was against Amasis that Cambyses led the army of his subjects, among them the Ionian and Aeolian Greeks. (Her. III.1) The original sequel to II.1 is found in III.39, immediately following the Cambyses narrative: “While Cambyses conducted the expedition against Egypt, the Lacedaemonians were attacking Samos...”.

### Confusion of Nebuchadrezzar and Cambyses

We have not only to explain how later tradition, developed fully by the time of the pseudo-Herodotus, viewed Cambyses with such vehement disdain, and credited to him the atrocities recorded in book three of the *Histories*; we have also to explain why history has failed to clearly record the actual destruction of Egypt by Nebuchadrezzar. The problems are but two faces of a single coin, and have a common solution. History has telescoped the invasions of Nebuchadrezzar and Cambyses, and has wrongly credited Cambyses with the destruction wrought by Nebuchadrezzar. The confusion may or may not have been accidental.

When Cambyses arrived in Egypt he was unopposed. There is no contemporary record indicating that he destroyed a single building or temple anywhere in Egypt. The sole possible exception, the statue inscription of Udjahorresne, typically interpreted as supporting Herodotus, actually argues to the contrary. As Olmstead says:

That the tales of savagery do not reflect contemporary opinion is proved by the account of Udjahorresne, admiral of the royal fleet under Amasis and Psamtik and priest of the goddess Neith at Sais. Writing under Darius, he was under no compulsion to speak kindly of his master.<sup>216</sup>

This sole surviving monument documenting the arrival of Cambyses is sufficiently critical for the present revision to deserve separate treatment in the next chapter. We mention here only one curiosity omitted in the later discussion. The famous Vatican statue of Udjahorresne was not the only record of Cambyses' activities left by this notable. In a tour of Egypt in 1828-29 Rosellini recovered another statue of Udjahorresne and recorded its inscription. The statue was subsequently lost but the legible portion of its brief introduction recorded in Rosellini's notes, and translated by Posener, refers to Cambyses as the "protector of all foreign countries, ... lord of the lands, Cambyses the great, the one who (re)builds cities (celui qui eleve les villes)".<sup>217</sup> Posener is puzzled by the reference, and can only remark that this is "a curious epithet for a king whom tradition represents as a destroyer."<sup>218</sup> Apart from Udjahorresne, and a misinterpreted papyrus inscription from Elephantine discussed below, there is absolutely nothing to substantiate the supposed atrocities of Cambyses, regardless of which king was his Egyptian contemporary.

The confusion or confounding of Nebuchadrezzar and Cambyses is perhaps nowhere so clearly portrayed as in the 7th century A.D. history of John, Bishop of Nikiu.

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<sup>216</sup> A.T. Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire* (1948), p. 90.

<sup>217</sup> G. Posener, *La Premiere Domination Perse en Egypte* (1936), p. 28.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid*, p. 29

### The Chronicle of John, Coptic Bishop of Nikiu

John of Nikiu was born about the time of Mohammed's invasion of Egypt (7<sup>th</sup> century A.D.) and he ultimately became the Coptic bishop of Nikiu and 'rector' of the bishops of Upper Egypt. He wrote in both Greek and Coptic a version of Egyptian history up to and including the Muslim conquest of the country, large portions of which are lost.<sup>219</sup> The ultimate source of his knowledge is unknown, though he names Epiphanius, a 4<sup>th</sup> century bishop of Cyprus, who had earlier written "a complete history of the prophets after the overthrow of Jerusalem and the disappearance of the kingdom of Judah". (Chronicle 50.7) He was without doubt also informed by Arabic sources, and, as his religious office might indicate, by biblical literature, including apocryphal and pseudepigraphical works. He begins his fifty-first chapter by describing the victory of Cyrus over Croesus (mistakenly dating the event after the fall of Babylon) and the return of the Jewish exiles "to their own country" (51:16) There follows a description of the appointment of Cambyses as successor to Cyrus:

And when Cyrus returned into Persia, he settled all the affairs of his government and appointed his son Cambyses to be king over Persia and Babylon. And he was a bad man, and he rejected the wisdom of his father and the worship of the Lord God. And Apries moreover was king of Egypt and dwelt in the city of Thebes and in Memphis and in two other cities, Muhil and Sufiru. And in those days, in consequence of the intrigues of the neighbouring peoples Cambyses sent to Jerusalem and gave orders (to his officers) to restrain them (the Jews) from rebuilding the sanctuary of God. (51:17-19)

From the outset Cambyses is identified as a villain and Apries as his Egyptian opponent. The mention of Apries is a surprise, but apparently the sources of John of Nikiu preserve a memory of an association of the two names.

As the narrative continues the brutality of Cambyses is contrasted with the benevolence of his father, and the initial phase of his expedition to Egypt is described:

And afterwards he made an expedition to Egypt with a great (and) innumerable army of horse and foot from Media. And the inhabitants of Syria and Palestine got ready to oppose him (but in vain) and he destroyed not a few but many cities of the Jews, for he was supreme over all the world. And in the pride of (his) heart he (Cambyses) changed his name and named himself Nebuchadnezzar. And his disposition resembled that of a barbarian, and in the evil counsel of his desire he hated mankind. And his father Cyrus had been great and honoured before the living God and had commanded that they should build the temple of God in Jerusalem with (all) vigilance and zeal, what time he had sent Joshua the high priest, the son of Jozadak and Zerubbabel, that is Ezra,

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<sup>219</sup> R.H. Charles, *The Chronicle of John (c. 690 A.D.) Coptic Bishop of Nikiu* (1916), p. iii. All quotations from the Chronicle are taken from this edition and are referenced to chapter and verse.

and all the captivity of Judah that they might return to the land of the Hebrews and Palestine. But Cambyses, that is, Nebuchadnezzar the second, and Belshazzar burnt the holy city Jerusalem and the sanctuary according to the prophecies of the holy prophets Jeremiah and Daniel. And after they had burnt the city Cambyses came to Gaza and got together troops and all the materials for war, and he went down into Egypt to war against it. And in the war he gained the victory and he captured the Egyptian cities Farma and Sanhur and San and Basta. And he captured Apries, the Pharaoh, alive in the city of Thebes and he slew him with his own hand. (51:20-25)

It does not matter that the *Chronicle* is mistaken in its description of some aspects of post-exilic Jewish history. Nor is it important that we identify the Egyptian cities of Farma, Sanhur, San and Basta. (John of Nikiu is clearly influenced by Arabic sources and frequently uses Arabic epithets for place names and king names.) What is significant is the apparent merging of the character and historical roles of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon in 586 B.C. and Cambyses, king of Persia in 525 B.C. Suddenly, out of nowhere, Cambyses not only adopts Nebuchadnezzar's name, but also assumes Nebuchadnezzar's place in history. He is no longer a contemporary of the Jewish returnees who are about to rebuild the Jerusalem temple; he is a contemporary of the inhabitants of Jerusalem in the last days of the Judaean kingdom and of Nebuchadnezzar the Chaldaean king who destroyed their temple and "burnt the holy city Jerusalem and the sanctuary." From this point in the narrative the activities of Cambyses parallel those of the first Nebuchadnezzar.

Before supplying further details of the invasion, the *Chronicle* of John explains the reason for Cambyses' anger. Apparently at an earlier time, "when there was war between the Persians and Egyptians" a warrior named Fusid "had gone and fought in Syria and Assyria and he had taken four sons of Cambyses prisoner as well as his wives... and he bound them and burnt their houses and took all that they had captive and brought them to the city of Memphis and he imprisoned them in the palace of the king." (51:26-27) There followed, apparently in retaliation, the expedition of Cambyses, referred to by the *Chronicle* as the second war, in which Memphis (mistakenly called Thebes in the *Chronicle*) was attacked and Fusid was fatally wounded. The bulk of the defenders somehow escaped and fled to Sais.

And for this reason they fled for refuge into the city Sais, because it was a strong city and its fortifications stronger than those of the others. And Cambyses attacked this city a second time and carried it by storm and destroyed it. And he captured all the other cities of Lower Egypt towards the north to the seacoast and plundered them of all their possessions and destroyed their cities and neighbourhoods and burnt their houses with fire and left *neither man nor beast living*. And he cut down their trees and destroyed their plantations and made *the land of Egypt a desert*. (51:30-32) (italics added)



The merging of the activities of Nebuchadrezzar and Cambyses is transparent in this description of a military action undertaken by Fusid. This otherwise unknown "warrior" appears to be a general in command of an Egyptian army fighting against Cambyses/Nebuchadrezzar in the highlands of Assyria. But there is no place in either the traditional or the revised histories for a war between Persia and Egypt in the trans-Euphrates region in the years immediately preceding the expedition of Cambyses, whether in the reign of Cambyses or of Cyrus earlier. Such an event did take place, however, prior to the invasion of Nebuchadrezzar as described in the revised history. We argued earlier in chapter four that Nebuchadrezzar invaded Egypt for reasons similar to those described in the *Chronicle*, namely, in retaliation for Taharka's intrusion into Babylonian domains in Syria and Assyria during Nebuchadrezzar's mania. The army was Taharka's. The general may well have been Fusid. The possibility exists that members of the family of Nebuchadrezzar were taken captive by Taharka's army while that army was stationed in Nineveh. The obvious similarities between the language of the *Chronicle* and the language of Ezekiel in describing the results of the responsive invasion by Nebuchadrezzar serve further to confirm the claim that Nebuchadrezzar, not Cambyses, is the focus of attention. It was the invasion of Nebuchadrezzar which, according to Ezekiel, left "neither man nor beast living" and "the land of Egypt a desert."

The previous quote must have been a summary statement since John continues to describe Cambyses/Nebuchadrezzar warring against individual cities. There are multiple local kings resisting his advance, and individual battles against each are described. In every case Cambyses/Nebuchadrezzar is victorious and in every case the devastation is complete.

And returning in the direction of Rif he warred against the city of Memphis, and he conquered the king who was in it. And the city of Busir also, which lies below Memphis, he destroyed and annihilated and took its possessions as a booty, and burnt it with fire and made it a desert. (51:32-33)

The narrative proceeds to document the murder of Cambyses' captive children by the Egyptians, and attention is focussed on the exploits of Elkad, one of the sons of Muzab, a local king who took an active role in slaying the children and was subsequently killed by Cambyses.

And when (Elkad) was informed of the death of his father he fled into Nubia. And Cambyses also destroyed the city of On and upper Egypt as far as the city Eshmunin. And the inhabitants of this city on learning (of his approach) were seized with fear and fled into the city of Eshmunin. And they sent to Nubia to Elkad the son of Muzab, asking him to come unto them that they might make him king in the room of his father. For he had formerly made war against the cities of Assyria. And thereupon Elkad gathered a large army of Ethiop[ians] and Nubians and warred against the army of Cambyses ... (51:40-42)

Elkad lost the battle. Eshmunin fell. "And when they had completed the destruction of the city Eshmunin they march into upper Egypt, and laid waste the city of Assuan.... and they destroyed Phile as they had done to the other cities." (51:44)

And they turned back to the cities and provinces which still remained, and they ravaged them and burned them with fire till all the land of Egypt became a desert and there was no longer found in it a moving creature, neither a man nor even a bird of the air. (51:45)

Somehow Elkad lived through the carnage and along with others brought gifts to Cambyses, "that they might receive from him mercy" (51:46) Cambyses took many of the survivors captive, "and led them away to Media and Babylon." (51:47) Elkad was released and continued to rule, presumably in Nubia, since Egypt was left in shambles. The Cambyses/Nebuchadrezzar story ends with the exile of the remnant of the Egyptian population:

And the number of the Egyptians whom Cambyses led away with him were 50,000 besides women and children. And they lived in captivity in Persia forty years, and Egypt became a desert. And after devastating Egypt, Cambyses died in the city of Damascus. (51:49-50)

There can be absolutely no mistaking the correspondence between this final segment of the *Chronicle* narrative and Nebuchadrezzar's invasion as outlined in the revised history. Multiple kings ruled Egypt. One of these kings - Taharka according to our revision, Elkad according to John of Nikiu - had outraged Nebuchadrezzar in the course of military action in Syria and Assyria, was driven from Lower Egypt by the invasion, fought and lost a battle with Nebuchadrezzar in Upper Egypt, and ultimately ruled in Nubia while Egypt was left a virtual desert. In both instances there was a massive exile of the remaining population and in both cases the exile lasted forty years.

Two clear conclusions can be drawn from the *Chronicle* of John. The most obvious is that at some time in antiquity the expeditions of Nebuchadrezzar and Cambyses were merged or telescoped by historians into a single event, their distinctions blurred, and that therefore the historical records of the actions of Cambyses should be read with extreme caution. The uncritical reading of book three of Herodotus should cease and desist. There is absolutely no confirmation of its details forthcoming from the monuments.

The second inference relates to the identity of the Egyptian pharaoh contemporary with Cambyses - Psamtik III according to Herodotus, Apries according to John of Nikiu. There is clearly a need to question the traditional identification. The *Chronicle* appears to be blending together two separate and reliable traditions, one in which the historical Cambyses arrived in Egypt in the days of Apries, not Amasis and Psamtik III, and the other a version of the invasion of Egypt by Nebuchadrezzar preserved, most likely, by Muslim historians. We note the prominence of Apries in the beginning of the narrative, where Cambyses is accurately positioned in a post-exilic context. In the

Nebuchadrezzar story that dominates the balance of the narrative, Elkad (Taharka?) is the prominent king and Apries played no part. The premature death of Apries is assumed by John of Nikiu or by his sources in order to explain his absence in the conflated narrative.

We wonder why tradition preserves a memory of Apries as a contemporary of Cambyses. Apries, as was noted in chapter one, is the Greek version of Egyptian Wahibre. There are two Saite kings bearing that name. One is Ha'a'ibre Wahibre, the predecessor of Amasis. The other is Psamtik I (Wahibre Psamtik). There is nothing in the narrative that compels us to identify the named Apries as the fourth Saite king. Instead, following the revised history, we argue that the Bishop of Nikiu preserves a tradition of Cambyses arrival in Egypt in the days of Psamtik I.

There remains, however, a single problem. The argument above might convince the reader that the expeditions of Nebuchadrezzar and Cambyses have been superimposed in antiquity, thereby transforming the relatively benign expedition of Cambyses into a holocaust and erasing the memory of Nebuchadrezzar's invasion. But there remains to be explained the connection between that expedition and the time of Amasis and Psamtik III. For that we must assume some further confusion.

#### Confusion of Combaphis and Cambyses

We have previously noted that the Photius version of the Persika of Ktesias describes an expedition against Egypt conducted by Bagapates, presumably on behalf of Cambyses, and that Egypt was at the time ruled by Amyrtaeus. The expedition succeeded largely through the treachery of a eunuch named Combaphis, a minister in the Egyptian court of Amyrtaeus, who turned traitor in hopes of improving his political situation. The successful invasion by the Bagapates/Combaphis alliance resulted in six thousand Egyptians being taken captive and exiled to Susa, Amyrtaeus among them. In the battle 50,000 Egyptians and 7000 Persians died. We further suggested that this incident is misplaced in the Photius version; it belongs instead at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Sometime in the 4<sup>th</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. the Bagapates/Combaphis invasion and the Cambyses expedition were merged into one.

The confusion of the Bagapates/Combaphis and Cambyses invasions, at least in subsequent generations when the Cambyses legend acquired its vicious attributes, is understandable. While differences outnumber similarities, both incidents involved invasions of Egypt by Persians armies; both were invasive and destructive; and both involved men with similar sounding names, Combaphis and Cambyses. The suggestion that the two invasions were confused in antiquity does not originate with this author. The proposal was first made in the middle of the last century by Jacques Schwartz, who argued, as do we, that the confusion was caused by the similarity between the names of

Combaphis and Cambyses.<sup>220</sup> Schwartz attributed the distortion of history to Ktesias himself. He argued that Ktesias, writing around 390 B.C., utilized a literary source that described the insurrection in Egypt accompanying the beginnings of the 28<sup>th</sup> dynasty, and mistakenly attributed aspects of that story to Cambyses. We argue instead that the Bagapates/Combaphis story was a later insertion into the work of Ktesias, as subsequent generations confused the two invasions. In the final analysis it matters little whether the fault lies with Ktesias or with later editors.

Assuming that the Bagapates story belongs at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, precisely where we have located the reign of Amasis in the revised history, we have a plausible explanation of the erroneous tradition preserved in the Cambyses narrative of Herodotus. The Combaphis invasion occurred immediately following the death of Amasis in 404 B.C., i.e. during the reign of Amyrtaeus. That same Amyrtaeus is the likely referent of comments by Diodorus Siculus, who refers to him as "Psammetichus, the king of the Egyptians, who was a descendant of the famous Psammetichus." (Diod. 14.35.4). This invasion by a namesake of Cambyses, dated precisely to the last years of Amasis and the initial years of a king Psamtik, was subsequently and mistakenly identified with the Cambyses' expedition, and a legend was born. The atrocities of Nebuchadrezzar had already been or were subsequently transferred to this legendary Cambyses, further distorting history. The pseudo-Herodotus was beneficiary to the conflated invasion story. The argument will be advanced further in chapter 11.

### Elephantine Papyri: Petition to Bagoas

That Cambyses does not deserve his reputation for violence to life and property within Egypt is admitted by an increasing number of scholars. But that is not to say that they are in agreement with what has just been argued. The current generation of scholars believe that the atrocities credited to Cambyses never happened, but they continue to deny an antecedent invasion by Nebuchadrezzar that might account for the damage. Therefore they simply minimize the actual damage done to Egypt at the time of Cambyses. We believe, on the contrary, that Egypt was indeed the victim of atrocities, but that those atrocities are not attributable to Cambyses. They were inflicted on Egypt by Babylon forty years earlier.

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<sup>220</sup> Jacques Schwartz, "Les Conquerants Perses et la Litterature Egyptienne," BIFAO 48 (1949) p. 72. "Ne peut-on supposer une confusion assez piquante entre Kombapheus et Cambyse dont les noms sont tres semblables dans leur transcription egyptienne." Schwartz reasons, correctly in our view, that the Combaphis/Bagapates story cannot be understood as a garbled/plagiarized version of Herodotus, a view popularly held since the days of Maspero [*Histoire ancienne des peuples de l'Orient classique*, III, p. 659, n. 1]. It has "un cachet local que le texte d'Herodote, meme demarque, ne pouvait donner." [ibid.]

A quote from Gardiner is a case in point. Referring to a papyrus that appears to attribute to Cambyses the destruction of all but one of the temples of Egypt, he remarks:

It is true that a Jewish document of 407 B.C. speaks of 'the destruction of all temples of the Egyptian gods' in the time of Cambyses, but by then the king's evil reputation had had plenty of time to spread, and the damage done in that direction may have been confined to the withdrawal of the large official grants of materials that had previously been the custom.<sup>221</sup>

We want to set the record straight. The papyrus inscription referred to by Gardiner, that which refers to the mass destruction of the temples of Egypt, is not heir to a distorted tradition concerning Cambyses. Properly translated it does not credit Cambyses with the atrocities described. It describes instead his arrival in a country already decimated by some previous invasion. Egypt has been devastated - the only question is who caused the damage. Gardiner is mistaken. Destruction of temples, and "the withdrawal of large official grants of materials" from temples, are not the same thing. This papyrus deserves a second look.

The so-called "Petition to Bagoas" is part of the Sayce-Cowley collection of Aramaic papyri found in the ruins of the fortress at Elephantine, the southernmost garrison of the Babylonians and Persians in their respective occupation periods. It is a letter written in 407 B.C. to Bagoas, the Persian governor of Judea, appealing for assistance in rebuilding the Jewish temple in Elephantine, recently damaged by an anti-Semitic segment of the Elephantine community. In the course of this appeal, the Jewish inhabitants of Elephantine speak of the antiquity of the damaged temple.

Now our forefathers built this temple in the fortress of Elephantine back in the days of the kingdom of Egypt, and when Cambyses came to Egypt he found it built. They knocked down all the temples of the gods of Egypt, but no one did any damage to this temple.<sup>222</sup>

It is generally conceded that the letter acknowledges the existence of the Jewish temple in Elephantine in the days preceding the Persian conquest, when native pharaohs still ruled the country. Precisely when it was built is a matter of conjecture, but the construction is generally dated before the fall of Jerusalem or in the period immediately following, perhaps by the Jewish refugees who entered Egypt with Jeremiah. It would certainly have existed on the island at the time of Nebuchadrezzar's invasion. Therefore, according to the revised history, this temple would be one of the few temples in Egypt to be spared destruction by Nebuchadrezzar, perhaps because of its island location. The first sentence in the quoted paragraph is therefore consistent with the revised history. But if Ezekiel and Jeremiah are reliable, and we have correctly interpreted the activity of

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<sup>221</sup> Alan Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs* (1961), p. 364.

<sup>222</sup> H.L. Ginsberg, in ANET, p. 492. The Aramaic text is found in A. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.*, p. 112.

Mentuemhet, Petesi I, and Petosiris, the other temples in the country were not so fortunate. When Cambyses arrived he must have found the majority of Egyptian temples in ruins or only recently refurbished. It is therefore tempting to see the second statement in the quoted passage as a description, not of any destructive action on the part of Cambyses, but of the state of affairs greeting the Persian king on his arrival in Egypt. If it can be so interpreted, it constitutes a further argument for an extensive destruction of Egyptian temples in the years preceding Persian rule in Egypt, and thus for the destruction wrought by the army of Nebuchadrezzar.

We admit that most interpreters of the letter to Bagoas understand the antecedent of "they" in the last sentence to be Cambyses' army. Scholars in support of the claim that Cambyses ruthlessly destroyed the temples of Egypt constantly cite this letter. But is that what the letter actually says? Is the interpretation accurate? Several arguments support an alternative translation. We cite them in point form.

1. The authors of the letter, Jedoniah and his fellow Jews, are writing to a Persian governor in order to solicit his favour and assistance in rebuilding their temple. It seems unlikely that they would risk offending him by accusing Cambyses, the purported Persian founder of the 27<sup>th</sup> dynasty, of the mass destruction of Egyptian temples. On the contrary, it might be advantageous for the petitioners to remind Bagoas that, of all the temples in Egypt, the Khnum temple alone dated back to the days when the Persians assumed control of Egypt from the Babylonians.
2. In the usual view of the quote, the phrase "he found it built" would be completely redundant. Cambyses would have found all of the temples of Egypt "built" when he arrived. The phrase is apparently intended to identify the existence of the Elephantine temple as a unique fact to be explained by the following statement. It is because someone had knocked down all the temples of the gods of Egypt, but had not done any damage to that temple, that Cambyses found it built, i.e., "not destroyed" or "still standing", when he arrived.
3. If Cambyses were the subject of the last sentence it would have been more natural to continue by saying, "He knocked down all the temples of the gods of Egypt, but he did not do any damage to this temple." To understand the subject "they" as a reference to Cambyses' army requires an awkward and curious shift to a plural personal pronoun which has no definite antecedent.
4. It is claimed that the second clause in the last sentence states: "but no one did any damage to this temple". Literally the text says "but a man did not cause damage to this temple in anything", or, if we allow "man" to have the force of "someone", a distinct grammatical possibility, then the clause states: "but someone did not cause damage to this temple in anything." In either case this is a curiously oblique way to refer to Cambyses' supposed sparing of the Elephantine temple.

What is the most appropriate phrasing of the second sentence? The translation "they

knocked down" needs to be changed. In Aramaic the third person plural of the verb frequently expresses an impersonal subject and thus substitutes for a passive construction.<sup>223</sup> Thus "they knocked down" becomes "they were knocked down" or "they were destroyed". The resulting meaning depends entirely on the nuance given to the perfect tenses. The following approximates the sense of the passage.

And when Cambyses entered Egypt he found this temple built (i.e. still standing); and while the temples of the gods of Egypt were (or had been) all pulled down, no damage had been done to this temple by anyone.

Properly translated the petition to Bagoas cannot be construed as an argument for Cambyses' brutal treatment of the Egyptian temples. When he arrived in Egypt the damage was a *fait accompli*.

At minimum the Elephantine papyrus, as reinterpreted above, is consistent with the thesis of an earlier devastation by Nebuchadrezzar. Unfortunately the papyrus postdates the Cambyses expedition by a full century and is therefore open to the criticism, levelled by Gardiner, that it represents a later stage in a developing Cambyses legend. This weakens its evidentiary value. What is needed to confirm the accuracy of the revised history is inscriptional evidence showing that the arrival of Cambyses took place in the reign of Psamtik I, several decades into the Saite dynasty. In view of the brevity of Cambyses' sojourn in Egypt we should consider ourselves fortunate if such evidence should materialize. But fortune smiles. Three monuments combine to provide the necessary argument - a stela, a statue, and a tomb. The statue and tomb of Udjhorresne are the subject of the following chapter. An examination of the stela belongs here.

## Cambyses' Apis Bull

### Serapeum Stelae

In the 6<sup>th</sup> year of Cambyses (524 B.C.)<sup>224</sup> an Apis bull died in Memphis. The Apis cult of the Memphite priests was centered in a complex of buildings and subterranean tombs in the Sakkarah plain near Memphis, the so-called Serapeum. The Apis bull was believed to embody the spirit of the god Osiris and its death precipitated a sequence of events that merit our attention.

On the understanding that at the time of death of the Apis bull the god Osiris was reborn

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<sup>223</sup> Franz Rosenthal, *A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic* (4th printing, 1974), p. 56 (section 181).

<sup>224</sup> Cyrus died in late summer 530 B.C. Since the Persians followed an accession year system of dating (cf. note 38, p. 38) the first official year of his reign began in March/April 529 B.C. If the bull died after March/April 524 B.C. the death would fall in the 6<sup>th</sup> regnal year of Cambyses.

in another bull within Egypt, the death of one Apis led immediately to a widespread search for the god's new domicile, thus for a replacement bull. Meanwhile the deceased Apis was prepared for burial in a selected Serapeum tomb, complete with sarcophagus, a mummification and ritual process taking the traditional 70 days to complete. The entombment was widely publicized, and was celebrated with pomp and ceremony, much as was any royal funeral in Egypt. Usually within a year of the funeral the replacement Apis had been discovered and preparations completed for its coronation, after which the new Apis led a pampered life, the object of worship by devotees of the cult, till its death some fifteen to twenty-five years later. The cycle was then repeated. This sequence is believed to have proceeded without interruption from at least the 18<sup>th</sup> through the 30<sup>th</sup> dynasties in Egypt, or for at least thirteen centuries.

At least during the Saite period an official stela was inscribed and placed in the bull's tomb, containing all or most of five significant pieces of chronological information, namely, 1) the date of the bull's birth, 2) the date of its coronation, 3) the date of its death, and 4) the date of its funeral, all in relation to the years of a reigning pharaoh. Additionally the stela often contained a declaration of the length of the bull's life, from birth to death, stated in years, months, and days.

In addition to these "official" stelae, the tombs often functioned as repositories for other stelae, placed at the time of the bull's funeral by devotees of the god, usually dated at the time of entombment, and containing a wide variety of information deemed relevant by the donator.

When Auguste Mariette excavated the Serapeum tombs in 1851, he recovered from these tombs over 800 such stelae, which were hurriedly excavated, transported by ship to France, and deposited in the Louvre, unfortunately suffering considerable damage en route due to improper crating and rough handling.

We have already utilized information from several of these stelae in preceding chapters, with appropriate acknowledgment. We are here concerned only with those that record the death of the Apis in Cambyses' 6<sup>th</sup> year. If we are to believe the current history, there is only one such stela.

#### Stela Louvre #354

This stela is badly damaged and crudely - apparently hurriedly - inscribed. Posener provides the most complete description, including photograph (figure 23 below), transcription (figure 24), and translation. According to Posener, at least the introductory lines of the text can be established with a degree of certainty by comparison with the official Apis stelae of bulls that died in the reigns of Amasis (Louvre #192), Apries (Louvre #240), and Necho (Louvre #193). Enough remains of the inscription to confirm that the Apis stela of Cambyses used similar phraseology to what was used by the priests in these "earlier" instances.



Figure 23: Apis Stela of Cambyses Year 6<sup>225</sup>



<sup>225</sup> Reproduced from Plate II in G. Posener, *La Première Domination Perse En Egypte* (1936)

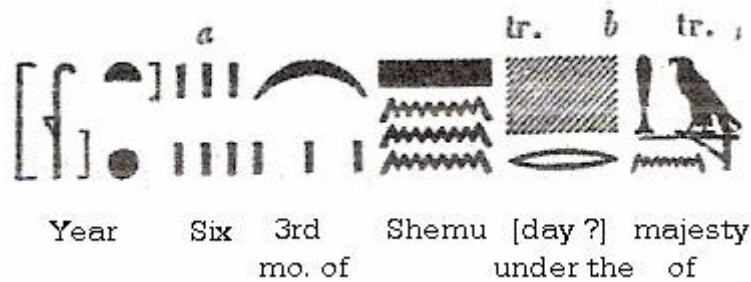
Posener translates:

[The year] 6, third month of the season Shemu, day 10 (?), under the Majesty of the king of Upper and Lower Egypt (Ms.)tjw(?)'-R', given life eternally, the god was conducted in [peace toward the beautiful West and was caused to rest in the necropolis in] its [place] which is the place which His Majesty had made for him, [after he had performed for him] all [the ceremonies] in the funerary chamber.

They made for him clothing of mnh-t garments, they had brought to him all his amulettes and all his ornaments of gold and precious materials ... temple of Ptah, which is in the interior of (?) Hemag ... order ... to ward (?) H-t-k'-Pth (Memphis) saying "Lead (?) ... He did everything just as His Majesty had asked ... in the year 27 ... the year (?) ... [Camby]se, given life <sup>226</sup>

According to Posener, the two dates visible in the inscription - "[year] 6, the 3rd month of Shemu, day 10", and "the year 27" - refer respectively to the date of the funeral and the date of birth of the bull. This opinion is based partly on the readable portion of the surrounding text, and partly by comparison of this stela inscription with "earlier" Apis stelae. We believe he is wrong on both counts. An explanation follows.

Figure 24: Posener's Transcription and Translation of the Dateline on the Cambyses Apis Bull Stela (recording the 3<sup>rd</sup> month of Shemu)



The Egyptian calendar in this Late Period of Egyptian history consisted of a 365-day year, made up of twelve 30-day months plus 5 intercalary days at the year's end. The 12 months are further divided into three "seasons" of 4 months each, entitled Akhat

<sup>226</sup> G. Posener, *La Premiere Domination Perse En Egypte* (1936) p. 33. The English translation omits the footnote indicators.

(Inundation), Peret (Winter) and Shemu (Spring). Thus the 3<sup>rd</sup> month of Shemu refers to the eleventh month of the year. But we question Posener's reading of the month. The number of the month in each season is depicted in the hieroglyphic text using a horizontal crescent moon under which are placed from one to four vertical strokes. The strokes are typically evenly and symmetrically placed to fill the available space. In the photograph of the stela provided by Posener (not in his transcription) we see three strokes clearly visible but positioned as if a fourth stroke were originally present to create the desired symmetry.<sup>227</sup> Posener ignored the anomaly and read what he could see: "3rd month of Shemu". We read instead: "fourth month of Shemu", the likely original.

Figure 25: Magnification of the Dateline on the Cambyses Apis Bull Stela (showing the 4<sup>th</sup> month of Shemu)



Enlargement of the relevant section. Note three strokes visible before arc swings down. Also note faint outline of the fourth stroke.



Same section with balance of arc and the fourth stroke sketched in.

<sup>227</sup> The reader should compare Posener's transcription (Figure 24) with the augmented photographs (Figure 25).

The text deteriorates where the “day” of the month was recorded. Only a guess is possible, hence the question mark in Posener’s translation. He suggests “day 10”. Other scholars named in a footnote read “day 3” and “day 30”.<sup>228</sup> In fact, as we shall soon see, the reading should be “day 21”. We obtain the reading from elsewhere. We can see in figure 26 the approximate position where the “day” would be recorded. The location is very badly damaged. Interpreters are only guessing.

Figure 26: Posener’s Transcription Compared to the Stela Photograph



The question remains whether this 21<sup>st</sup> day of the twelfth month of year 6 of Cambyses refers to a death or a funeral. Based on comparisons with the other “official” stelae, especially Louvre #192, Posener confidently selects the second option, and fills in the lacunae using the phrasing from the other stela. We cannot argue against the inclusion of much of the augmented text. Enough remains to suggest the comparison has some validity. But the fact remains that we do not know what minor variations existed in the original. Different stelae place the four essential dates in different relative positions and

<sup>228</sup> Op. cit. page 32, note a.

employ slightly different phrasing. The stela of year six of Cambyses, by all accounts, was created in haste and was arguably not the production of the official cultic priests. According to Posener, the central portion of the inscription contains some sort of directive issued by Cambyses relating to the movement of the bull (and/or its sarcophagus). Since the intent of the stela appears to be the publication of this directive, distinguishing this stela from the others, we question the extent to which comparisons can be accurately made with "official" stelae from other time periods. And the fact of this comparison raises another question.

When Posener compared Louvre #354 with the Apis stelae of bulls who died in the reigns of Amasis, Apries, and Necho, he naturally assumed that the phrasing on these stelae were a stock in trade of the priests contemporary with Cambyses. But in the revised history these other stelae did not exist; the bulls whose lives they describe had not been born; Necho, Apries and Amasis belong to the future, not the past - a consideration that bears also on the second date mentioned in the Cambyses stela.

The "year 27" mentioned in Louvre #354 can only refer to the date of the bull's birth or of its coronation. Posener opts for the former. In the traditional history, this must be the 27<sup>th</sup> year of Amasis, the predecessor of Cambyses. But the bull mentioned in the official stela from Amasis reign (Louvre #192) died in that king's 23<sup>rd</sup> year. Its replacement must have been born that same 23<sup>rd</sup> year or early the next. It cannot be the same bull that died in the 6<sup>th</sup> year of Cambyses.

To solve the problem scholars conjecture the existence of an interim bull, born in the 23<sup>rd</sup> year of Amasis, which died prematurely only 3 years later. Its replacement, born in Amasis 27<sup>th</sup> year must be the bull described in the Cambyses' Apis stela. But there is absolutely no warrant for this assumption. The typical Apis lived as long as 25 years, and its average life span was well over 15 years. A premature death is possible, but highly unusual. And where, we ask, are the stelae commemorating the life of this hypothetical bull? Not a single inscription attests its existence. We would be surprised if one were found, since we believe that Amasis ruled a century later.

In the revised history Psamtik I was governor/king of Egypt under the aegis of the Persian government in the 6<sup>th</sup> year of Cambyses. In the eyes of the Memphite priests Psamtik I, not Cambyses, would be the reigning pharaoh. They would have dated their inscriptions relative to his reign, not that of Cambyses. The 6<sup>th</sup> year of Cambyses was 524 B.C. This would be the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Psamtik I, whose reign began in 543 B.C.<sup>229</sup> We should not be surprised, therefore, to find a stela referring to an Apis deceased in the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Psamtik I. In fact there exist 168 such stelae!<sup>230</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> The Saite dynasty, unlike the Persian, followed a non-accession year system of dating (cf. notes 39 & 211). Therefore 543 was Psamtik's 1<sup>st</sup> year and 524 must be his 20<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>230</sup> Most are actually dated to Psamtik's 21st year, the date of the funeral, when access to the Serapeum would have been provided to worshippers. Cf. the discussion by Pierre Prevot,

There was but a single stela dated to the 6<sup>th</sup> year of Cambyses, and that one crudely made. Viewed in the context of the revised history that is surprising. The renewal of national life in Egypt after 40 years of upheaval ought to have precipitated an outpouring of sentiment and multiple expressions of gratitude on the part of clergy and laity alike. For this the votive stela was a most appropriate means. Of the 800 plus stelae in the Louvre collection, removed from the Serapeum by Mariette, one out of every five celebrates the life of the Apis bull that died in Psamtik's 20<sup>th</sup> year. That is an incredible statistic, and one that requires some explanation. What was so special about the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Psamtik I in the national life of Egypt in the traditional history? The question awaits an answer. Scholars do not even raise the question.<sup>231</sup>

Among the 168 stelae dated to Psamtik's 20<sup>th</sup> year is the "official" stela erected by the cultic priests, #190 in the Louvre collection. The translation provided by Breasted supplies the answers to many questions raised in our preceding discussion.

Year 20, fourth month of the third season (twelfth month), day 21; under the majesty of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Wahibre (W' h-yb-R'); Son of Re, of his body, Psamtik (Psamtik I); went forth the majesty of Apis, the Living Son, to heaven. This god was conducted in peace to the Beautiful West in the year 21, second month of the first season (second month), (on) the twenty-fifth day. Now, he was born in the year 26 of King Taharka; he was received into Memphis in the fourth month of the second season (eighth month), (on) the ninth day; which makes 21 years, 2 months [7 days]. BAR IV 960-62

We summarize below the information from this inscription, adding the data from the Cambyses' Apis stela. Note that the lifespan of this bull according to Louvre #190 is 21 years, 2 months and 7 days. Since the bull died only days before the end of Psamtik's 20<sup>th</sup> year we must assume that the 26<sup>th</sup> year of Taharka was not followed immediately by the 1<sup>st</sup> year of Psamtik. Taharka must have lived into his 27<sup>th</sup> year, which in turn preceded the 1<sup>st</sup> year of Psamtik, as we argued in chapter 1 (cf. above p. 32). The stela Louvre #354 merely confirms the existence of Taharka's 27<sup>th</sup> year.

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"Informations et Documents," RdE 43 (1992) p. 215-6. Many of these stelae are included in the most recent attempt to collate and renumber the Serapeum stelae, that by M. Malinine, G. Posener, J. Vercoutter, *Catalogue des Steles Du Serapeum De Memphis, Tome Premier* (1968) Nos. 192-252. The official stela Louvre #190 discussed below is #192 in this *Catalogue*. Unfortunately the *Catalogue* terminates with the Apis stelae from the reign of Psamtik I. It does not include the other stelae mentioned in this chapter. For consistency we maintain the use of the Louvre numbers current before the publication of the *Catalogue*.

<sup>231</sup> Prevot (cf. previous note) attributes the inflated statistic to an increased laxity in the conditions which authorized the erection of such stelae. He is merely guessing. There is no evidence that priests ever prevented devotees from erecting these costly monuments. We could as reasonably assume that the priests received a financial consideration for their part in the process and might encourage the creation of as many stelae as possible. Motivation seems to be the only reasonable parameter affecting numbers.

Table 12: Summary of Vital Statistics for the Apis Bull from Year 20 of Psamtik I (Lifespan: 21 years; 2 months; 7 days)

	Year	Month	Day
Birth	26th Taharka	10th	14th
Coronation	*27th Taharka	8th	9th
Death:	20th Psamtik I = *6th Cambyses	*12th	21st
Funeral:	21st Psamtik I	2nd	25th

\* Denotes information supplied by or corroborated by Louvre #354

From the Psamtik stela we can confirm:

1) The perfect correspondence between the 6<sup>th</sup> year of Cambyses (524 B.C.), 12<sup>th</sup> month and the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Psamtik I (524 B.C.), 12<sup>th</sup> month. It is regrettable that the day of the month is illegible in the Cambyses' stela.

2) The initial date on Louvre #354 must refer to the death of the Apis. There is no ambiguity on the Psamtik stela. It is significant that both stelae begin with this date, an unusual feature not duplicated in most other "official" Apis monuments. Only the continuation "went forth the Apis ... to heaven" is missing from Louvre #354. The omission may be accidental. We can only conjecture.

3) The reference to a "year 27" in the Cambyses stela refers to the time of coronation of the bull in the reign of king Taharka, not the birth of a fictional bull during the reign of Amasis. Louvre #190 does not mention the coronation, and gives only the year of the bull's birth - year 26 of Taharka. But subtracting the bull's age at death from the date of death places the birth in the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the 10<sup>th</sup> month, late in Taharka's 26<sup>th</sup> year. The coronation, which typically takes place within a year, must have occurred in Taharka's 27<sup>th</sup> year.

The agreement is substantial! Is this merely coincidence? We can at least wonder at the fact that the Saite dynasty can be wrenched from its moorings and thrust into a Persian context 121 years distant, and find such a convenient parallel. And we can lament the preventable damage to the stela Louvre #354, caused by Mariette's haste and inexperience. For it can be stated unequivocally that had Louvre #354 been preserved

intact, the data it contained would have established beyond question the accuracy of the revised chronology. But hindsight cannot heal the damage and the damage introduces a small element of doubt - so we continue.

Before leaving behind Cambyses' Apis bull, there remains to be discussed a problem related to its sarcophagus.

### The Apis Sarcophagus

The Apis bulls of the Saite, Persian, and Ptolemaic periods were entombed within a self-contained common vault of the Serapeum known to Egyptologists as the "Greater Vaults". These burial chambers were constructed following a cave-in of the "Lesser Vaults" further to the east – an event dated with some precision to the 52<sup>nd</sup> year of Psamtik I (see below). These Greater Vaults consisted of close to 360 meters of corridor with separate offset galleries to hold the individual bulls. Many of the bulls were buried in wooden sarcophagi that have long since decomposed, but 24 were provided with granite sarcophagi, and four of these contain inscriptions. Three of the four inscribed coffins name the pharaoh in whose reigns the bulls died - Amasis (23<sup>rd</sup> year), Cambyses (6<sup>th</sup> year) and Khababash (2<sup>nd</sup> year), the latter an obscure pharaoh usually assigned to the years immediately preceding Alexander's invasion in 332 B.C. Amasis - Cambyses - Khababash is therefore the traditional chronological order in which these kings reigned in Egypt. Since all of the other stone sarcophagi are assigned to the 27<sup>th</sup> and following dynasties, the granite sarcophagus of Amasis is considered to be the first of its kind. Amasis is duly credited by scholars with this innovation, in spite of the fact that he claims otherwise.<sup>232</sup>

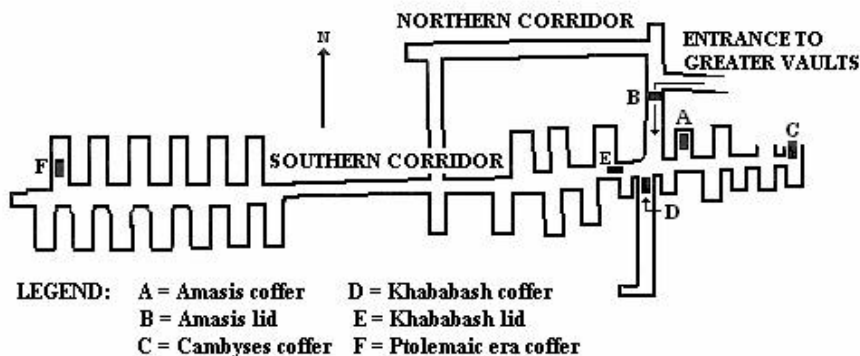
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<sup>232</sup> The inscription on the Amasis coffer contains a declaration that Amasis had "made a great sarcophagus in granite ... *like* all kings at all times" That at least was the understanding of prominent early Egyptologists such as Wiedemann and Piehl., who supplied the word "like" "*gleichwie* and *comme*" to the translation. Breasted translated the passage the same way but omitted the supplied word. Thus we read "Behold, his majesty found it good to make it of costly stone [---] all kings of all time" BAR IV p. 513. For these Egyptologists there was no question of how to translate the existing hieroglyphs, only what nuance to supply to the concluding phrase. Any hesitation they may have had results from the fact that their translations are in conflict with the existing evidence in the Serapeum (as interpreted by traditional scholars). Thus Battiscombe Gunn - whose article on the inscribed coffins in the Serapeum we have been following - objected to these earlier translations, and supplied a corrected version. According to him these other prominent Egyptologists had failed to properly interpret the passage in question, the final phrase in particular. The details are unimportant. We mention this situation to draw attention to the fact that the errant traditional history often influences how Egyptologists translate hieroglyphic texts. The interested reader can evaluate the translation of Battiscombe Gunn for themselves., s.v. "Two Misunderstood Serapeum Inscriptions," ASAE 26 (1926) 92-93 Needless to say Egyptologists since the time of Gunn have accepted his argument uncritically, in spite of its weakness.



These sarcophagi were extremely large. According to Mariette: “As to their dimensions, they measure on an average 7 feet 8 inches in breadth, by 13 feet in length, and 11 feet in height, so that, allowing for the vacuum, these monoliths must weigh, one with the other, not less than 65 tons each.”<sup>233</sup>

Figure 27: Sketch of Greater Vaults of the Serapeum Showing Location of Inscribed Sarcophagi<sup>234</sup>



The task of transporting the sarcophagi into the tomb must have been Herculean, notwithstanding the downhill slope. The sarcophagus and the lid, itself of considerable size and weight, were brought in separately, first the sarcophagus, then the lid.

In the traditional history the sarcophagus of the Amasis bull was placed in the gallery twenty years before the one belonging to the reign of Cambyses and two centuries before the one bearing the name of Khababash. Apparently a difficulty was encountered moving the sarcophagus lid. It appears to have become jammed part way along the entrance corridor en route to the tomb. There it was found by Mariette. The sarcophagus had earlier been moved down the same passageway and safely deposited in its own chamber. As noted by one early Egyptologist:

The coffer and the cover are separated; the coffer is in its own chamber, but the cover lies close to the entrance and would block the thoroughfare southwards from the latter had not flights of stone steps, leading to its upper surface, been built on the northern and southern sides of it.<sup>235</sup>

<sup>233</sup> Auguste Mariette, *Monuments of Upper Egypt* (1877), a translation into English of his *Itineraire de la Haute Egypte* (1872) by his brother Alphonse Mariette, p. 93.

<sup>234</sup> Drawing based on Fig. 1 in Battiscombe Gunn, op. cit. note 235 below, p. 82.

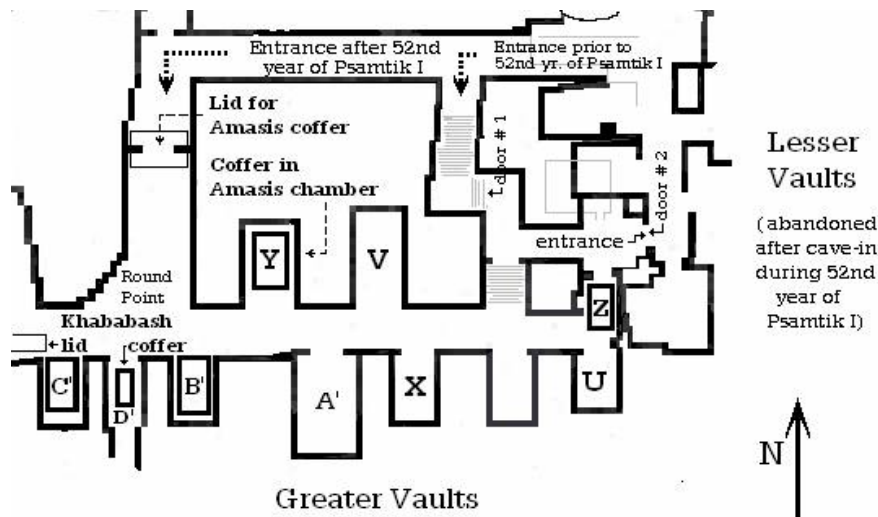
<sup>235</sup> Battiscombe Gunn, "The Inscribed Sarcophagi in the Serapeum," *ASAE* 26 (1926) p. 82-83.

Further down the eastern branch of the southern corridor, at the end of that branch and off from corridor, we find the sarcophagus of the Cambyses bull protruding from the back of a vestibule, the front of which opens near the entrance to the abandoned Lesser Vaults. Apparently the priests have broken open the back of the vestibule in order to gain easier access to the coffin for servicing.

The Khababash sarcophagus and lid, separated from one another, lie south and west of the point where the other two bulls had supposedly made their eastern turn into the southern corridor (the so-called "round point"). Both obstruct corridors.

For convenience we reproduce a closeup view of the relevant section of the Serapeum vaults, using as our guide a map originally produced by Mariette, edited slightly for greater clarity (see figure 28 below).

Figure 28: Closeup of the 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> dynasty section of the Greater Vaults of the Serapeum<sup>236</sup>



Legend:	A' Darius I	U Psamtik 53rd
	B' Darius II	V Neco 16th
	C' Darius II	X Apries 12th
	D' Khababash	Y Amasis 23rd
		Z Cambyses 6th

<sup>236</sup> Mariette's maps of the entire Greater and Lesser Vaults are reproduced in M. Malinine, G. Posener, J. Vercoutter, *Catalogue des Steles Du Serapeum De Memphis, Tome Premier* (1968), plans A and B following page xvi.

Multiple questions are raised by the positioning of the Saite and Persian bulls in the Greater Vaults of the Serapeum. Most must await developments in subsequent chapters. At this time we ask only two questions based on the location of the inscribed stone sarcophagi. Both require lengthy two or three page answers.

1) If the lid from the Amasis bull, which is assumed to have preceded the other two bulls in time, blocked access into the southern corridor, how did the priests move the two massive coffers of the Cambyses and Khababash bulls past the obstructing lid, assuming in fact that they arrived at their present location via this route. Steps might suffice to allow the priests or other devotees to climb over the obstruction, but it is difficult to imagine the sarcophagi following that same route. And the question applies equally to other coffins in the same vicinity as the Khababash coffer. According to Mariette, a wooden coffin from the time of Darius I, and two stone sarcophagi from the time of Darius II (which Egyptologists reassign to the time of Darius I) also followed the identical route as the coffin of the Amasis bull to their respective chambers (A', B' and C'). How did the priests move these 65 ton monoliths past the obstruction to their ultimate destination? Even assuming that the massive coffins were laboriously moved up and down the steps over the Amasis lid, and that the ceiling was sufficiently high to facilitate this transport, the question remains: Why not simply move the lid?

To be fair this argument assumes that all of the Saite and Persian dynasty bulls on the southern corridor were brought to their destination along the identical route followed by the Amasis bull. A century of scholarship has agreed with Mariette that this was the case, but recently the Serapeum specialist Vercoutter has argued otherwise.<sup>237</sup> In order to explain the present location of the Cambyses bull he has theorized that the route containing the jammed lid was not built until the 34<sup>th</sup> year of Darius I, and that until that date the southern corridor was constructed by degrees beginning from the east with the Psamtik bull in chamber U. Thus all bulls of the Saite dynasty, beginning with the 53<sup>rd</sup> year of Psamtik I, and all the Persian period bulls through the reigns of Cambyses and Darius I, were transported along the ancient route to the Lesser Vaults then down a flight of stairs into the Greater Vaults, travelling westward to their present locations. We both agree and disagree with Vercoutter's theory. He is correct that the route to the southern corridor past the jammed Amasis lid was not built until *around* the 34<sup>th</sup> year of Darius I, since in the revised history that date *roughly* corresponds to the 52<sup>nd</sup> year of Psamtik I, precisely when that corridor *was* built according to the revised history. He is totally incorrect, however, in assuming that the Saite dynasty and early 27<sup>th</sup> dynasty bulls must have followed the ancient route to the Lower Vaults, then detoured down to the southern corridor of the Greater Vaults. The confusion arises, as we might have expected, from the displacement of dynasties in the traditional history.

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<sup>237</sup> J. Vercoutter, *Textes Biographiques du Serapeum de Memphis* (1962) s.v. "texte K", p. 75-77. We will examine Vercoutter's text K in chapter 8 (pp 265-267). It affords convincing proof of the correctness of our revised chronology.

Sufficient here to enquire how Vercoutter can defend the second part of his theory in the context of the traditional history. We wonder in particular how the Amasis lid became jammed in a corridor that was not built until 60 years after the death of the Amasis' bull?

Vercoutter has only two pieces of evidence to advance his theory. On the one hand he cites an Apis stele which dates from the 34<sup>th</sup> year of Darius which mentions the construction of a new corridor. In a later chapter we will examine this stele (see note 237). It is compelling evidence in favor of the revised history. For Vercoutter, following the traditional history, it implies that the Saite bulls must have travelled to their location in the Greater Vaults via some other route. For the revised history it implies no such thing. The second item cited by Vercoutter in defence of his theory is the presence of the Cambyses coffer outside the entrance to the Lesser Vaults. According to him that is evidence that all the Saite and Persian dynasty bulls, beginning with the bull from the 53<sup>rd</sup> year of Psamtik I through those which died in the early years of Darius I, travelled this ancient route. This part of his argument is a *non sequitur*. We reserve our criticism for the following section.

We admit that the Khababash bull, at least, might have arrived at its present location via an alternate route, especially if it does belong to the late 4<sup>th</sup> century, as argued by Egyptologists. The reader will note in figure 27 that a northern corridor was later constructed to give access to chambers further west than the Darius group of tombs. It is not known precisely when this extension of the northern entranceway was constructed, but it probably dates from late in the 5<sup>th</sup> century<sup>238</sup>

Setting aside for the moment Vercoutter's theory of an alternative route into the southern corridor of the Greater Vaults, and accepting the evidence from the tombs at face value, it appears certain that at minimum several massive sarcophagi dated to the 27<sup>th</sup> dynasty must have entered the southern corridor via the passageway blocked by the Amasis lid. And in the traditional history they all must postdate the time of Amasis. We repeat our earlier question. Why was the lid not moved?

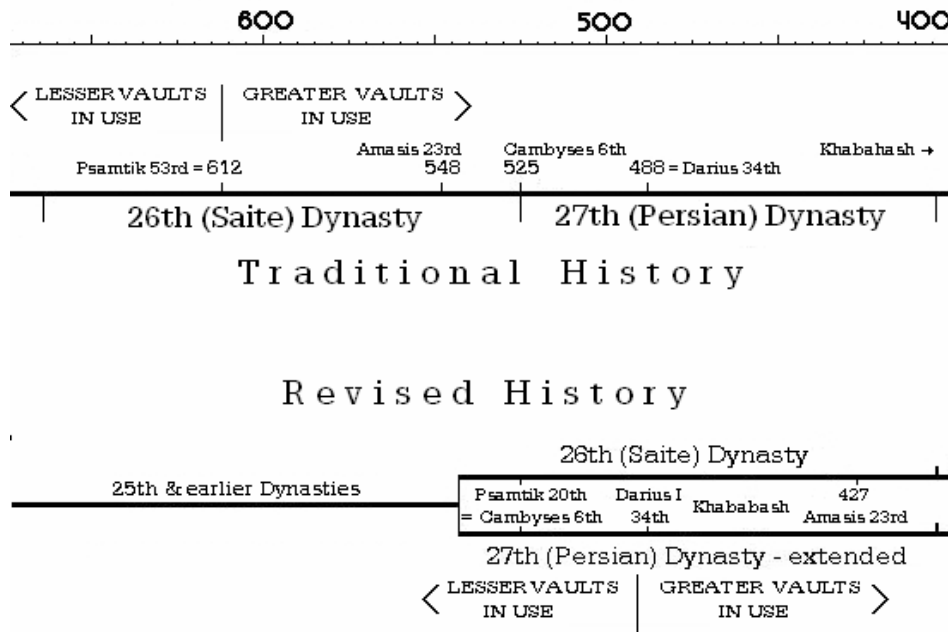
The problem with the location of the inscribed sarcophagi, and with the coffer(s) which Mariette and contemporary Egyptologists date to the early years of the reign of Darius I, has an obvious solution. The reigns of Cambyses and Khababash and Darius I must have preceded the reign of Amasis. The Cambyses and Darius I sarcophagi were secure in

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<sup>238</sup>The northern corridor leads off the entrance passageway above where the Amasis lid jammed in the passageway, and it extends far to the west and circuitously back to the present location of the Khababash bull. We suspect it was constructed to better facilitate the transport of these massive stone coffins, especially in view of difficulties already encountered. If so it was probably constructed soon after the 23<sup>rd</sup> year of Amasis, near the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.. All of the stone coffers west of the chamber C' must have entered via this route. In a moment we will argue that the stone coffers in chambers B' and C' may actually belong to the reign of Darius II, precisely as Mariette suggested. If so they may also have arrived circuitously at this destination via the northern corridor.

their burial chambers when the Amasis bull was interred and the lid jammed in the entranceway. The Khababash bull is less certain, but we question why this bull would be buried where it was if it does not belong in the interim between Darius I and Darius II. It too was likely moved through the entrance corridor before the lid became jammed. By the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, where Amasis properly belongs, the galleries down the eastern section of the southern corridor were fully occupied. An alternative entrance via an extended northern corridor was probably already planned. Rather than expend the effort to move the jammed coffer lid, the priests merely built steps over it to provide continued access for Serapeum personnel to the Saite/Persian tombs beyond.<sup>239</sup> The northern corridor off the main entrance, once constructed, was used to transport future bulls. It continued in use through dynasties 28 to 33.

Figure 29: Relative Chronology of the Bulls Deceased in the Reigns of Amasis, Cambyses, and Khababash



<sup>239</sup> Not only did the priests abandon the Amasis coffer lid, they left several of his stelae along the alternative route into the Saite dynasty section of the Greater Vaults. This route was apparently used by the priests when they carried items of modest size to the Greater Vaults, possibly after the lid jammed in the alternative corridor and before the steps over it had been constructed.

As suggested by the evidence of the stone coffers, the chronological order of the three named kings must have been Cambyses - Khababash - Amasis. We will have more to say later concerning both Khababash and Amasis. We are not yet finished with Cambyses. He reappears in our discussion of the life of Udjahorresne, which follows in the next chapter, and he is party to the second question related to the positioning of the stone coffers.

2) This second question concerns the location of the coffin of the Cambyses bull. In the traditional history the death of this bull (524 B.C.) followed the abandonment of the "Lesser Vaults" of the Serapeum in the 52<sup>nd</sup> year of Psamtik I (613 B.C.) by almost 90 years (see figure 29). The first bull buried in the "Greater Vaults" must have been the one deceased in Psamtik's 53<sup>rd</sup> year, followed by bulls who died during the reigns of Necho, Apries, Amasis, Cambyses, and Darius I. If this ordering is correct then how do we explain how the Cambyses coffer came to rest in a vestibule (not in a burial chamber) at the eastern extremity of the southern corridor, near the entrance to the "Lesser Vaults" and across from the chamber supposedly occupied by the bull buried in Psamtik's 53<sup>rd</sup> year? In what order were the burial chambers constructed? And which route was followed by the massive sarcophagus of the Cambyses bull as it was transported to its present location?

According to the traditional history the Saite dynasty bulls, beginning with the bull deceased in the 53<sup>rd</sup> year of Psamtik I, were carried along the entranceway noted in figure 28, past where the Amasis lid was later abandoned, as far as the "round point" at the juncture with the southern corridor. There they turned left and moved east to their respective chambers. Typically the priests only constructed the corridors far enough to accommodate each successive deceased Apis. In this instance, since the bull deceased in the 53<sup>rd</sup> year of Psamtik I is supposedly buried at the extreme eastern end of the corridor, they must have decided to initially extend the southern corridor till it reached the edge of the abandoned "lesser vaults". There they buried the Psamtik bull. Then they moved backward with subsequent burials (westward) to inter the bulls deceased under Necho, Apries, and Amasis. If this was the case we wonder whence the Cambyses coffer came to rest in its present location. In theory it should be buried next, either in gallery A' or B' near the Amasis bull which it immediately followed. And why was it located in a vestibule, not a gallery? We understand now why Vercoutter believed the Cambyses bull did not travel down the corridor blocked (later) by the Amasis lid. Its present location almost demands that this bull was transported the ancient route down to the entrance to the Lesser Vaults. According to Vercoutter it was enroute to its intended burial chamber near the Amasis bull. Then why was it abandoned? The best reason Vercoutter can come up with is that its intended burial chamber was not ready in time. Let the reader decide if that makes sense.

Something is amiss. If the Cambyses bull arrived at its present location via the ancient route leading to the Lesser Vaults, why did the Saite dynasty bulls travel a different route, this according to most Egyptologists. And if Vercoutter is correct, and they were

all transported to the Greater Vaults past the entrance to the Lesser Vaults, why was the Cambyses bull abandoned half way to its destination? The answer is readily at hand in the revised history.

In the revised history the evidence must be interpreted differently. When the Cambyses bull was buried there were no Greater Vaults. It was the 21<sup>st</sup> year of Psamtik I. The Lesser Vaults remained in use. The Cambyses coffin must have been brought into the Serapeum via the route typically taken by deceased bulls at that time (see figure 28)<sup>240</sup>. It was destined for burial *in* the “Lesser Vaults”. Whether the massive coffin would not fit through the final entrance door (door no. 2) into the vaults<sup>241</sup>, or whether the priests wanted no part of a coffin requisitioned by a foreign king, and therefore left it outside the sacred vaults, we do not know. Regardless, the coffer was abandoned outside the doorway, in an existing vestibule, but deep underground where the Persian authorities would never know, if indeed they cared. This vestibule was doubtless a work area for the priests, turned to this secondary use. The bull itself may have been taken inside and buried in the extreme north of the Lesser Vaults, a location where Mariette found at least 40 stelae celebrating the life of the bull deceased in Psamtik’s 20<sup>th</sup> year (= the 6<sup>th</sup> year of Cambyses). But at least nine stelae of this same Psamtik/Cambyses bull were found in various locations outside the Lesser Vaults, near the entrance door no. 2, only meters from the Cambyses coffer.<sup>242</sup>

Any other bulls deceased under Psamtik I before that king’s 53<sup>rd</sup> year must be buried in the Lesser Vaults. This is particularly the case with the hypothetical bull which died between the 20<sup>th</sup> and 53<sup>rd</sup> years of Psamtik. Here the revised history is in agreement with

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<sup>240</sup> This of course is precisely what was argued by Vercoutter (see above, note 237) The present location of the Cambyses coffer is what motivated this scholar to propose his theory. This location does not fit the circumstances that prevail in the interpretation of the Serapeum evidence provided by the traditional history. It could only be reached, reasonably, if the coffer was moved along the ancient route to the Lower Vaults. So far, so good. But Vercoutter was then compelled to believe that the Cambyses bull was traveling that route in order to reach the southern corridor where it was destined to be buried west of the Amasis bull.. For Vercoutter, Cambyses followed Psamtik by 90 years. The Lower Vaults were long since abandoned. They could not be the intended destination of the Cambyses bull as is the case with the revised history.

<sup>241</sup> In the revised history the Cambyses bull was the first to use a stone sarcophagus. This was a Persian innovation. It is quite likely that the coffin was simply too large or too cumbersome to transport into the Lesser Vaults, which were designed for the more maneuverable, and likely smaller, wooden coffins. If not the dimensions of the outer door (#2), the problem may have been with the corridor or entrance to the intended burial chamber inside.

<sup>242</sup> Almost half of the stelae dedicated to the bulls deceased in the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Psamtik have been published (many for the first time) in the *Catalogue des Steles du Serapeum de Memphis* (tome premier) by Malinine, Posener and Vercoutter (1968). These scholars have assigned yet another set of new numbers to these stelae. Elsewhere we continue to use the more familiar Louvre numeration system, this for consistency, if not to avoid confusion. Here only we use the Catalogue numbers employed by Malinine et al. At the door no. 2 Mariette found stelae nos. 193, 196, 198, 199, 201, 215, 225, 238, and 251.

the traditional history. Neither has any certain knowledge of the whereabouts of this bull, nor the precise year when it died, save to state the obvious. It must be buried somewhere in the “Lesser Vaults”. Which leaves us to discuss briefly the bull deceased in the 53<sup>rd</sup> year of Psamtik and supposedly buried near the Cambyses’ bull, in a chamber at the eastern end of the southern corridor, Mariette’s chamber U.

It should come as a surprise to no-one that we do not believe that this chamber was occupied by the final Psamtik bull. A glance at our revised timeline reveals clearly that the end of Psamtik’s reign coincided with the final years of the reign of Darius I. In a later chapter we will demonstrate that the bull deceased in the 53<sup>rd</sup> year of Psamtik I is buried in chamber A', the tomb assigned by Mariette to a bull deceased late in the reign of Darius I. This Psamtik bull is the same as Vercoutter’s Darius bull, dated by him to Darius’ 34<sup>th</sup> year. All agree that this bull arrived at chamber A' via the passage later blocked by the Amasis lid. The passage had only just been constructed. Henceforth all bulls of the Saite and Persian dynasties would travel this route. It follows that the bulls in the Greater Vaults of the Serapeum were buried in the typical way. The entrance corridor was first dug to the position where the first bull was to be buried, then extended gradually over time to accommodate each successive burial. The southern corridor was not extended to its eastern extremity before being used, as we reasoned earlier on the assumption that the Psamtik year 53 bull rested in chamber U. The burials began in chamber A' with Vercoutter’s Darius 34<sup>th</sup> year bull (= Psamtik’s 53<sup>rd</sup> year bull) and gradually moved east for the burial of bulls deceased under Necho and Apries. The priests then turned back and buried the Khababash bull, and possibly another bull from the 5<sup>th</sup> year of Amasis. Finally, chamber Y was filled with the massive coffer of the bull deceased in the 23<sup>rd</sup> year of the reign of Amasis, the lid of which now obstructs the passageway to the southern corridor.

Further details concerning this sequence of burials will be provided in chapters 8 and 9, where the Apis bulls again become part of our argument.

We are left to answer one anticipated query concerning this hypothetical sequence of burials. All the evidence is accounted for with the exception of a single burial chamber. If the bull deceased in the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Psamtik was transported in the stone sarcophagus of Cambyses, and the bull deceased in the 53<sup>rd</sup> year of Psamtik is buried in chamber A', then what bull is buried in Mariette’s chamber U?

We have just finished arguing that the Saite/Persian section of the southern corridor was occupied from the west, as the priests first filled chambers A', V and X and then turned back and buried the Khababash bull. They turned back because the two remaining chambers, assuming they had been excavated by this time, were conveniently positioned to act as a work area for the priests and were likely being used for that purpose, especially since the sarcophagus of the Cambyses’ bull now occupied their former workshop. We note that a new set of stairs was constructed at this location, leading



down to the southern corridor from a point not far from the entrance to the Lesser Vaults. We believe they were built to give workers access to the Greater Vaults,<sup>243</sup> and in particular to chamber U and the adjacent chamber. Those two chambers were well situated for the storage of supplies and religious apparatus for the priests who superintended both vaults. It is surely significant that Mariette has identified no bull with the chamber situated immediately to the west of chamber U, a room now assigned the letter W by modern scholars. The only remaining question is why he identified chamber U with the name of Psamtik and why scholars continue to call this the burial chamber of the bull deceased in the 53<sup>rd</sup> year of the reign of Psamtik I.

One would think, since it is associated with Psamtik I, that chamber U must have contained multiple stelae celebrating the life of the bull deceased in the 53<sup>rd</sup> year of that king. But that is not the case. No such stelae exist. The fact that a bull was deceased that year is assumed on the basis of two pieces of evidence. The first, and by far the most compelling, is the official stela of the bull deceased in the 16<sup>th</sup> year of Wahemibre Neco, found in or near chamber V. It reveals *inter alia* that this bull was born on the 19<sup>th</sup> day of the 5<sup>th</sup> month of the 53<sup>rd</sup> year of Psamtik. Since the birth of a replacement bull typically occurs less than a year after the death of its predecessor, the Psamtik bull most likely died late in Psamtik's 52<sup>nd</sup> year or early in his 53<sup>rd</sup> year.

Confirmation is supposedly found in the stela Louvre #239, understood by many Egyptologists as recording a cave in the Lesser Vaults of the Serapeum in the 52<sup>nd</sup> year of Psamtik I. The collapse was apparently sufficiently large and intrusive that it led to the abandonment of the Lesser Vaults and the beginning of the construction of the Greater Vaults. We have mentioned the event several times previously. What we have not mentioned is the fact that this stela has been variously interpreted, some considering it as evidence that an Apis death had only recently occurred and that the collapsed ceiling took place during its burial; others, including Breasted (BAR IV 963) that this stela merely describes the restoration of a coffin so badly damaged that the decaying flesh of the Apis corpse within was exposed to view.

We will not belabour the point. In a subsequent chapter we examine Vercoutter's stela K that mentions the construction of the Greater Vaults, and we will furnish evidence that a cave-in did occur in year 52 of Psamtik, and that an Apis did die the next year. The two events were unrelated, though the cave-in did delay the burial of the Apis. The stela Louvre #239 is mentioned here for an entirely different reason.

When we asked earlier what evidence Mariette found in chamber U to suggest that this was the crypt belonging to the bull deceased in Psamtik's 53<sup>rd</sup> year, the answer was predictable. This must be the location where Louvre #239 was recovered.<sup>244</sup> But that

<sup>243</sup> Not to transport coffers from above ground to the southern corridor of the Greater Vaults as argued by Vercoutter.

<sup>244</sup> The only source I have been able to find to confirm this fact is J. Vercoutter, *Textes Biographiques du Serapeum de Memphis* (1962) s.v. "texte K", p. 75, note 3. Vercoutter does not

stela, as Breasted says, has nothing to do with the death of an Apis. It cannot be used to identify chamber U as a burial crypt. Mariette has misread the evidence. The stela, properly understood, is a written directive to the Serapeum personnel concerning the restoration required following the recent collapse, and it served as a reminder of the generally high standard of workmanship required of them. What better place to keep this stela than in one of the workrooms used by the Serapeum staff.

We conclude this visit to the Serapeum by reading the stela inscription:

In the year 52 under the majesty of this good god (Psamtik I) came one to say to his majesty: This temple of thy father, Osiris Apis, and the things therein are beginning to fall to ruin [better: have collapsed to ruin]. The divine limbs are visible in his coffin, decay has laid hold of his (mortuary) chests. His majesty commanded restoration in his temple, and that it should be more beautiful than that which was there before. His majesty caused that there be done for him all that is done for a god on the day of interment. Every office had its duties, that the divine limbs might be splendid in ointment, wrappings of royal linen, and all the raiment of a god. His (mortuary) chests were of ked wood, meru wood, and cedar wood, of the choicest of every wood. Their troops were subjects of the palace, while a king's companion stood over them, levying their labour for the court... BAR IV 966

It is time to move on to Udjahorresne.

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use the same terminology we are using, but he is clearly referring to the stela Louvre 239 and he claims that it was found in Mariette's chamber 1, which is identified elsewhere (in his Figure 5 on page 76) with Mariette's chamber U.