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PERSIAN COLLECTIONS: CENTER AND PERIPHERY AT ACHAEMENID IMPERIAL CAPITALS

Jennifer Finn
Loyola University Chicago

The absence of a true Achaemenid Persian "historiography" necessitates that we look elsewhere to construct Persian ideological interactions with the periphery. Like many Mesopotamian kings before them, the Achaemenids became famous for their collecting practices, and sources often depict them looting and stealing artifacts—many of an antiquarian nature—from conquered peoples. Recently, scholars have argued that we should read this picture as a later Greco-Roman historiographical construct, meant to retroactively vilify the Persian kings for their involvement in Hellenic affairs. However, the archaeological record, read together with cuneiform sources, appears to corroborate these statements. The careful recontextualization in Persian capitals of important cultural heritage items, looted mainly from religious environments in rebellious areas, served not only to demonstrate the superiority and dominance of the Persian center over the periphery but also to situate the Persian kings in an historical continuum of Mesopotamian kingship. A reevaluation of Achaemenid collecting practices from the sixth to the fourth centuries BCE may allow for a more complete understanding of the discursive nature of Persian imperial display.

Scholars have recently identified the Achaemenid Empire as a world-system which functioned "based on an economically dependent and bi-directional relationship between its own center and periphery" (Daryaee & Rezakhani 2014: 5). Every king in the Persian Empire faced the problem of creating or maintaining productive relationships with the states in their imperial purview. But a lack of Persian historiographical sources makes a reconstruction of these interactions uniquely challenging; therefore, we must seek alternative ways to identify the construction of Achaemenid imperial ideology. Some vestiges of Achaemenid attitudes toward conquered peoples—and their role in the historical continuum—can be found in one notable Achaemenid practice: collecting.

The collection of peripheral items into a meaningful central location was not unusual. As Beaulieu (2013: 134) has noted, Mesopotamian people controlled the future by confronting the past. "The study and display of artifacts," he argues, "legitimized the institutions that sponsored antiquarian activities by anchoring them in a remote time continuum." We have several examples of Mesopotamian collections: there appears to have been an Assyrian royal treasure at Nineveh that housed antiquarian items,[1] and the Neo-Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II's palace at Babylon,

1 This is indicated by the mutilated statue of an Akkadian king's head kept there; see Nylander 1980.

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with its variety of items from different locations and dating from the Ur III to the Neo-Assyrian period, may be the most famous example of such collecting behavior.[2] We have every indication that ancient (even at this point) Mesopotamian monuments—and even some destroyed cities—would have been available to Achaemenid kings (Root 1979: 25), and furthermore that these kings, just as those of previous Mesopotamian empires,[3] actively sought to perpetuate the tradition of collecting antiquarian items (Root 1994: 34). The examination of Achaemenid collecting has intrinsic value as an alternative way to formulate a Persian historiography of their empire,[4] and may aid in a better understanding of key events in Achaemenid history.

This article studies items that were found in Persian capitals and yet would have originated from other networked states within the Persian Empire during its heyday. The transference of these items to imperial capitals of the Persian Empire should itself be considered noteworthy, as even in cases where objects are removed from their original context and transmitted more or less directly, "they invariably undergo a process of transformation, as they enter into a new conceptual framework and acquire new meaning for the society that appropriates them" (Ulf 2014: 517). In this context, items of material culture gain a new significance. The Persians were recipients of imported objects whose original meaning changed by virtue of their transfer to Persepolis, Susa, or another notable capital of the empire (Ulf 2014: 528–529). We must also differentiate between the ways of transport; it is the context of the cultural exchange that determines, in Ulf's model, the significance of the object or idea being transferred (Ulf 2014: 551). In our context, some of the foreign items to be discovered in an Achaemenid imperial context likely originated as trade items or ambassadorial offerings, while it is clear in other cases that items seem to have been forcibly removed from their original contexts in the peripheries of the empire.[5] Bahrani, too, has recently emphasized the idea that it is not simply the collection of items in/from ancient empires with which we should be occupied, but that we should also consider "the meanings of dislocation and relocation, redistribution, and re-inscription alongside more well-known forms of appropriation and acquisition […]. These object relations and relocations are all inscribed in techniques of power" (Bahrani 2019: 47–48). In my view, the nature of the movement of items from the periphery into the centers of the Achaemenid empire was always dialogical. That discourse was rarely reciprocal but was instead meant to situate Persian kingship in a Mesopotamian *longue durée*, often serving the dual role of expressing domination. Therefore, we should view Achaemenid collecting practices as the active creation of a narrative of imperial networks, with each artifact triggering different meanings in their recontextualized space. We have varied degrees of evidence for Achaemenid collecting over the course of the sixth to fourth centuries BCE, and often it is difficult to determine a concrete

2 See Thomason 2005: 209–210, with bibliography, particularly on whether we should consider Nebuchadnezzar's collection in the "Hauptburg" as a museum. Beaulieu (2013: 136 n. 19) provides the standard bibliography on the issue; he notes that despite argument about whether we can designate the collection as a "museum," the objects still have "value as ancient witnesses to the past displayed in an official setting" (Beaulieu 2013: 124). See also Beaulieu 1994.

3 Rollinger (2014: 203) points out that the Achaemenid kings were diligent in their collection of antiquarian items in their palaces, "just as their Babylonian and Assyrian predecessors had done."

4 Rollinger (2014) offers an argument as to a concept of history in Achaemenid Persia through their literary inscriptions, but not through monuments.

5 While the theft of objects is considered by some to be a topos, there is no denying that it occurred in the Ancient Near East—and often. See Winnicki 1994 and Bahrani 1995 for two comprehensive studies on this phenomenon. In one of the most famous inscriptions of antiquity, Sargon II of Assyria inventoried items looted during his Eighth Campaign against Rusa of Urartu (Bahrani 2019: 42).

means for the collecting—looting and gift-giving, for instance, are equally possible in many circumstances. However, we will see that many decontextualized artifacts came from rebellious areas and, regardless of the pathway, the recontextualization of objects into Achaemenid imperial capitals symbolized the patent disruption of important cultural norms, deriving in most cases from the native religious sphere.

EARLY ACHAEMENID COLLECTING

Despite the overall lack of evidence for early Achaemenid collecting, a letter discovered in the archive in the Eanna temple at Uruk may be indicative of a larger trend (BM 113249). The text dates to the third year of Cambyses (r. 530–522 BCE), and records an order to the temple assembly at Eanna as follows:

Rs 16 … ^{lú}*mar šip-ri šá* lugal ù ^{lú}gar.umuš tin.tir^{ki}
iq-ta-bu-ú um-ma a-su-mit-tu$_4^{meš}$ *šá-ṭa-ri*
šá lugal^{meš} *la-bi-ru-tu šá ina* é.an.na *šak-nu*
kul-lim-a-a-in-ni a-su-mi-tu$_4^{meš}$ *šá-ṭa-ri*^{meš} *la-bi-ru-tu*
šá ti-da-a$_4$ ^{lú}*mar šip-ri* lugal *kul-lim-a'*
mim-ma šá ha-as-sa-tu-nu u ti-da-a$_4$
^{lú}*mar šip-ri šá* lugal *kul-lim-a'*

The messenger of the king and the governor of Babylon spoke thus: "Show me the *stele*s, the inscriptions of the old kings, which are located in the Eanna. The *stele*s and the old inscriptions that you know, show them to the messenger of the king. Whatever you understand and know, show to the messenger of the king!"
(text edition in Kleber 2008: 270–271)

Although there is no expressed intent to steal the *stele*s of the Eanna, this letter is one of our first indications of Achaemenid antiquarian interests. In her treatment of the text, Kleber assumes that Cambyses wished to erect his own stele in the temple and hence wanted to firmly orient his kingship in relation to that of his predecessors. Such behavior has been argued as concomitant with the prerequisites of Achaemenid kingship, the effectiveness of which heavily relied on the kings' ability to place themselves in a continuous ancient and legitimate line of rulers in their native territories (Kleber 2008: 271; Jursa 2007: 78). Ultimately, we do not know what Cambyses hoped to do with the information that he retrieved from the stele and inscriptions of the kings in Uruk; however, Jursa (2013: 20) suggests that this behavior was not confined to Eanna but also extended to the Esagila temple in Babylon.

In this context, we can position the comment of Diodorus (1.46.4) that during Cambyses' conquest in Egypt (*c.*525–522 BCE),[6] the Persians burned Egyptian temples and seized as war booty 'silver and gold and extravagant pieces of ivory and stone' (τὸν δ' ἄργυρον καὶ χρυσὸν καὶ τὴν δι' ἐλέφαντος καὶ λιθείας πολυτέλειαν). In 1.49.4-5, Diodorus further relates that Cambyses stole the circular border of gold that crowned a monument decorating a chamber with the sacred animals of Egypt. The golden border was also inscribed with a representation of the Egyptian astrological calendar. Finally, St. Jerome's commentary on the Book of Daniel (XI.7-8) records a pronouncement by Ptolemy that, during the Third Syrian War (246–241 BCE), he returned upwards of 2,500 divine images and 40,000 talents worth of silver and precious items that had

6 For a very detailed examination of the Herodotean *logoi* associated with Cambyses' Egyptian campaign, see Irwin 2017.

been plundered during Cambyses' campaign in Egypt (Winnicki 1994: 176).[7] Indeed, some items discovered at Persepolis may corroborate Diodorus' claims about Cambyses' interest in antiquarian items from Egypt. Schmidt (1957: 67–68, 81–83) includes in the finds from the Persepolis Treasury four votive objects and several pieces of royal tableware of Egyptian origin, some bearing the names of pharaohs of the twenty-sixth dynasty of Egypt, the last native Egyptian dynasty to rule before Cambyses' conquest. These items may have been plundered by Cambyses and later stored in the Treasury at Persepolis, providing some of the first evidence for Achaemenid collecting in important capitals of the empire.

Although most scholars find Herodotus' account of Cambyses' religious indiscretions in Egypt (most notably, killing the Apis bull in Hdt. 3.27-29) as representative of a later Egyptian tradition hostile toward Persian kings,[8] Briant (2002: 60) has shown that religious institutions were particularly hard-pressed during the reign of this king. For instance, steles marking royal generosity toward Egyptian temples, numerous before 525 BCE, disappeared in the reign of Cambyses, and drastic limitations on temple revenues were enacted (Devauchelle 1995: 75). Although in some inscriptions Cambyses is represented as a proper Egyptian pharaoh, presiding over a funeral for the Apis, a native Egyptian inscription of the high official Udjahorresnet indeed references great disturbances in the land, which may substantiate the idea that many instances of "outrage against both goods and persons were perpetrated by the troops" (Briant 2002: 56–57). Harrison (2011: 75) has more recently rather strongly argued for interpreting this inscription, together with the Apis bull incident, as evidence that Cambyses did indeed retaliate against specific Egyptian temples.[9] It is also worth noting that Herodotus' account of Cambyses' Egyptian campaigns, far from being programmatic, replicates the tension in the reception of Cambyses as it appears in Egyptian and Persian inscriptional evidence (Irwin 2017: 111). As we will discuss below, items collected by the Achaemenid kings originate primarily from religious contexts; these are also the contexts in which we find the most evidence for resentment of Achaemenid rule in peripheral states. Combined with the later collection of similar items of importance to Mesopotamian kingship in capitals of the empire, we may be witnessing here an initial stage of what would later become a movement to displace important cultural heritage items from peripheral areas of the Persian Empire.[10]

While Cambyses displayed some interest in artifacts of previous Mesopotamian empires, it was in the reign of Darius that the first concerted efforts at the construction of a dialogue

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7 Scolnic (2014) has shown that the author of Daniel 11 used or at least was aware of a Ptolemaic narrative of events, but was more concerned about his anti-Seleucid program than a Ptolemaic one and thus should not be considered pro-Ptolemiac *per se*. While Hölbl (2001: 81) does not doubt the numbers given here, Pirngruber (2017: 170) argues that the value of the booty given by St. Jerome might be derived from Ptolemaic propaganda; however, he does not dismiss the truth-value of either the capture of booty in general or the repatriation of statues. Additionally, the disturbances associated with Ptolemy's invasion of Babylon are recorded in *BCHP* 11; although the tablet does not explicitly mention looting, it does recall battles and immense slaughter (see the edition of van der Spek at <www.livius.org/sources/content/mesopotamian-chronicles-content/bchp-11-invasion-of-ptolemy-iii-chronicle/>). For more on Ptolemaic propaganda and the return of stolen statues, see below.

8 On this story, see the comprehensive overview of Depuydt 1995 and Briant 2002: 55–60, who views Herodotus' story as a fabrication.

9 Dillery (2005) presents a balanced view of the reception of Cambyses in Egypt, noting that Herodotus' tradition contains both positive and negative representations of the Persian king and was likely derived from the priestly classes in Egypt; their situations were "enormously complex" during the Persian period and hence their varied experiences produced inconsistent accounts.

10 Already in the reign of Cyrus, Egyptian treasures—including those from temples—were sent to Ecbatana and Sardis (Briant 2002: 57). Thus, in Achaemenid terms, there was nothing unusual about Cambyses' behavior.

between center and periphery can be found. This program is evidenced in practical constructions like the Suez Canal and other canal systems connecting Egypt, Arabia, and Persia, by which Darius created physical links from the periphery to the center (Daryaee & Rezakhani 2014: 8). The "centripetal traffic of the products of the Empire" was evident in many forms, from the famed luxury of the king's table to the royal paradises common in Achaemenid capitals (Briant 2002: 200–203). Most conspicuously, Darius also established connections between the center and periphery in his palace at Persepolis, whose construction was begun in 518 BCE and whose iconography focuses on the universality of his empire (Root 1979). One of the most conspicuous elements of this program was the tribute-bearer reliefs on Wing B of the Apadana, a representation of twenty-three different groups from across the empire who had come to offer gifts to the king. The intent of Darius' visual program at Persepolis was repeated at other imperial capitals. Root (1979: 16) suggests that we view the hybrid architecture at Susa, for instance, in just such a manner: the variety of structural elements can "be understood as a statement of the Persian king's domination over every culture represented by borrowed elements." Therefore, we should not be surprised to find that evidence from Persepolis hints at Darius' desire to operationalize his imperial vision through the collection of objects from powerful ancient empires of the past.

At Darius' signature capital of Persepolis we may have our first material indicators for Achaemenid collecting habits, though on a smaller scale than will be seen in the reign of Xerxes at Susa. In his excavation reports, Schmidt catalogues several small antiquarian items collected in the Treasury at Persepolis.[11] Many of these votive items give an indication of having been ordered by Mesopotamian kings, with most objects dedicated to certain deities. The artifacts include items related to Sargon II (a bead and an eye stone), eye stones containing the name of Nebuchadnezzar II, and items from Assyrian kings, such as beads, cylinders related to the reign of Assurbanipal, and more eye stones inscribed with the name of Esarhaddon. Also discovered in the storage halls of the Treasury (rooms 38 and 41) were eight vessels belonging to pre-Achaemenid Egyptian kings, which Schmidt (1957: 88) suggests were originally of Egyptian origin and arrived in Persepolis in a finished state. Finally, a bronze plaque written in pre-Achaemenid Elamite was also found here. The item has an extensive inscription and appears to have been displayed as a memorial plaque, perhaps recounting the founding of a temple or an account of prebendary offerings. The most common name (Ururu) listed on the plaque is not known from any other context, although the item seems to have had some sort of religious significance. The byways through which these items arrived in Persepolis are also uncertain; Cahill (1985: 387–388) suggests that most of them were acquired through imperial gift-giving practices. Many of the artifacts can be safely classified as religious (votive) objects (Curtis & Razmjou 2005: 55) and are distinguished by their symbolic value.

Some of the more interesting finds in the Treasury include a stone bowl of Assurbanipal with elaborate handles fashioned in the shape of lions, which themselves may have been decorated with semiprecious stones. The inscription is typical of Assyrian royal inscriptions, marking the item as deriving from the palace of Assurbanipal. Schmidt conjectures that this piece may have been captured during the sack of Nineveh in 612 BCE and taken as spoils of war to Ecbatana. Following

11 Cahill (1985: 374–375) notes that the items left at Persepolis do present a biased sample, as the Treasury was looted by Alexander and his troops during his invasion of the capital in 330 BCE. However, this archaeological circumstance does not diminish the importance of what the Treasury contents *can* tell us about Persian collecting; we can still make some educated conclusions from what remains.

the capture of Ecbatana under Cyrus in 550 BCE, the vessel was likely taken to the Persian king's new capital at Pasargadae, where it was later transferred—probably by Darius or Xerxes—to the Treasury at Persepolis (Schmidt 1957: 83–84). Additionally, excavators discovered a bowl sherd with an inscription in Hittite hieroglyphics (though too difficult to read and thus date) for which the same potential travel route as the bowl of Assurbanipal may be proposed (Schmidt 1957: 84). Although these items are all small, personal pieces of material culture, they are royal and religious in nature, and they were clearly placed in the Treasury in an intentional manner. We should not be surprised to see this, as Darius himself provided an appropriate example of an "archaeology of intentionality" (Dusinberre 2016: 126) in his careful placement of the foundation deposits at Persepolis, which visually recreated the creation of the world, showing "deliberate care in the choice of media and messages, care taken by Darius as king and creator" (Nimchuk 2010: 227). Additionally, Root (1994: 28–32) has noted Achaemenid interest in antique ritual precedent and continuity, and classical sources corroborate a Persian interest in collecting antiquities;[12] we may read some of these items as vestiges of that prerogative. Perhaps more importantly, the presence of these items at Persepolis may indicate a much longer process of relocation originating under the first Achaemenid king, Cyrus the Great, and reveal a policy of collecting that was early on important to the Persian imperial enterprise. Cahill (1985: 380) notes that all of the objects at Persepolis display unique characteristics: they were foreign in origin, they had no redistributive economic value (i.e., they were primarily symbolic), and they all date prior to 436 BCE. The display of these rare items in the Treasury would have served to evoke the breadth and power of Persian rule; the relocation of important cultural heritage items from so many and so varied previous Near Eastern empires would have also served to underline the superiority of the Persians in the continuum of Near Eastern kingship.

XERXES' CABINET OF CURIOSITIES AND DIALOGUES OF EMPIRE

While the Treasury at Persepolis reveals one type of assemblage, the reign of Xerxes can be interpreted as a watershed moment for the practice of Achaemenid collecting. Despite the fact that both Darius and Xerxes failed to fully subjugate the Greek mainland, to Greek historians and playwrights it was Xerxes in particular that became a tragic character, cast as the prototypical barbarian, and becoming, in essence, "one of those celebrities who is known for being a celebrity, but no-one can quite remember what they do or did" (Pelling 2007: 145). Recently, scholars have made attempts to uncover a more balanced narrative about the king's reign, using Achaemenid inscriptions and material culture, as well as nuanced readings of Greek literature (e.g., see Stoneman 2015; Bridges 2014). Literary sources and archaeological material suggest that Xerxes had a penchant for stealing statues from those peoples against whom he had led conquests[13] and displaying them in Susa, a city that had experienced a notable lacuna of such behavior from the Neo-Elamite period until the early Achaemenid period.[14]

12 Diod. 17.71.1; Strabo 15.3.6.

13 As examples, see the statue of Apollo at Didyma (Strabo 11.11.4, 14.1.5, 17.1.43; Paus. 1.16.3, 8.46.3; also attributed to his father Darius by Hdt. 6.19); the statue of Bel-Marduk at Babylon (Hdt. 1.183); and the statues of Harmodius and Aristogeiton from Athens (Arrian Anab. 3.16.7–8, 7.19.2; Pliny NH 34.69–70; Paus. 1.8.5; Val. Max. 2.10 ext. 1). See Winnicki 1994: 152–153 and below.

14 In the intervening period, we have no firm evidence for the deliberate placement of ancient monuments in the city. Harper and Amiet (1992: 181) give the last Mesopotamian monument as a stele with an Elamite ruler approaching a seated god (no. 117), which they argue was recarved at Susa in the eighth century BCE.

Susa was a veritable storehouse of the most treasured and recognized Mesopotamian antiquities. Its long history saw its capture several times, notably its sack by the Assyrian king Assurbanipal in 647 BCE. The centrality of the city made it a popular trading thoroughfare, and the site was inhabited by its conquerors throughout the ages. Most of the Mesopotamian pieces discovered there were excavated under the guidance of Jacques de Morgan in the early twentieth century. Some of these monuments date from well before the reign of Shutruk-Naḫḫunte I (*c.* 1158 BCE), including the famous stele of Narām-Sîn, a sculpture of the Akkadian king Maništušu, and the law code of Hammurabi. The inscriptions on these monuments demarcate them as objects of plunder, as some bear original Akkadian inscriptions with secondary inscriptions in Elamite. Some of these pieces also bear signs of intentional destruction (Bahrani 1995: 368–370). It is likely that all these monuments were still visible at Susa in the Persian period; for the law code of Hammurabi, this is almost certain (Beaulieu 2013: 124). While some have dismissed Xerxes' tendency to collect items at Susa as Greek embellishment (see below), I will suggest that the display of captured royal monuments was part of Xerxes' program of an "archaeology of intentionality,"[15] quite in line with the programs of the Mesopotamian and Achaemenid kings who ruled before and after him.

Egypt

Shortly after the death of his father, Darius, and his subsequent accession to the Persian throne, the now-king Xerxes found himself overwhelmed with the prospect of an enormous military enterprise in the West. Opportunism was rampant in subjugated provinces of the empire, and Egypt was one of the first to test Xerxes' limits. The Greek sources provide very little information regarding the Egyptian revolts in the reign of Xerxes, which have been dated to 484 BCE. Herodotus only gives a brief notice of the revolt and its aftermath:

> τούτους μέν νυν καταστρεψάμενος καὶ Αἴγυπτον πᾶσαν πολλὸν δουλοτέρην ποιήσας ἢ ἐπὶ Δαρείου ἦν, ἐπιτράπει Ἀχαιμένεϊ ἀδελφεῷ μὲν ἑωυτοῦ, Δαρείου δὲ παιδί (Hdt. 7.7.1)
>
> And now, having thoroughly subdued them and made the whole of Egypt's servitude even harsher than it was under his father Darius, he entrusted the satrapy to his brother Achaemenes, son of Darius.

Briant (2017: 172) argues that the imposition of Persian rule in Egypt was considered particularly burdensome because of the tributary demands of the Persian king. According to him, tribute was both a cause for and a punishment for revolt. Such burdens may date back to the reign of Cambyses.[16] The reign of Xerxes seems to have been a watershed in Egyptian-Persian relations, however, as he ceased all conciliatory outreach to Egyptian temples. Furthermore, after Xerxes' suppression of the revolt, we no longer see Persian kings attempting to appear as Egyptian pharaohs, claiming the favor of Egyptian gods, or dispensing benefactions to Egyptian temples (Ruzicka 2012: 28). Finally, there are no traces of Egyptian-style temple building under Persian kings after Darius (Curtis 2005: 43). If the text of the Satrap Stele (Cairo CG 22812) is any

15 As Bahrani (2008: 160) has succinctly argued, "War was fought at the level of monuments as much as land and natural and economic resources. War was a means of unsettling and reordering space, monuments, and populations and reconfiguring them into new formations."

16 Fried (2004: 74–76) cites Cambyses' attacks on Egyptian temples, his likely pillaging of cult statues, the cessation of temple gifts, and the absence of priestly names from many temples during the Achaemenid period. She traces these circumstances through the Achaemenid period, despite the protestations of some scholars who argue for benevolence in the reign of Darius.

indication, the reign of Xerxes may have been so distressing that it became synonymous with "evil" in Egyptian memory.[17]

The artifact par excellence of Egyptian provenance at Susa is the so-called Statue of Darius. Excavated in 1972 at the west wall of the gateway to the Palace of Darius at Susa, the colossal work is a marvel of Achaemenid-period sculpture. Darius stands in an Egyptian pose with his left foot forward, though he is garbed in Persian court dress and typical Iranian accoutrements. Most interestingly, the vertical pleats of Darius' robe contain the typical trilingual format of inscriptions, while the folds of the robe on the left are inscribed with Egyptian hieroglyphs. The statue is dated to the last years of the reign of Darius. Although scholars are rather certain that the statue was commissioned by Darius in Egypt and intended for an Egyptian audience,[18] the circumstances under which it was later transported to Susa are not as clear. Razmjou (2002: 92) sees the movement of the statue to Susa soon after its creation and installation,[19] while Perrot (2013a: 222) argues that the statue was placed at the Gate of Darius at Susa after the major planning operations for the construction of the palace had taken place, and it was transferred to Susa when troubles in Egypt began in 487 BCE, or following the Egyptian revolts in 484 BCE[20] (he is followed in this by Hinz 1975: 120–121; Ray 1988: 263; Boucharlat 2013: 518).[21] The latter chronology seems most sensible for several reasons. For one, in the central room of the Darius Gate area, archaeologists found four columns with a trilingual inscription of Xerxes (XSa) that attribute the building of the gate to his father (Ladiray 2013: 168). Moreover, we must consider the practical difficulties inherent in the idea of commissioning a statue in Egypt, one designed for a clearly Egyptian audience, to only then immediately move it to Susa.

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17 Lloyd (2011: 95) sees the Satrap Stele as part of a wider Ptolemaic capitulation to the Egyptian priesthood. Conversely (but complementary to this idea), Gorre (2017: 58–66) argues that the name of Xerxes was invoked by the Egyptian priesthood anachronistically in the Stele, so that it would resonate more fully with the Greeks. In either argument, there is no reason to disbelieve that the Ptolemies executed the repatriation of statues. However, see Colburn (2015: 173–181), who believes the Satrap Stele to be a propagandistic document meant to "present [Ptolemy's] rule in Egyptian idiom" (Colburn 2015: 180), although he concedes that looting did inevitably occur during Persian invasions of Egypt. Klinkott (2007: 46) argues similarly, recognizing the Satrap Stele as Ptolemaic propaganda, which announced "nicht nur das Ende des Niederganges im Achaimenidenreich und dessen Überwindung kennzeichnete, sondern ihn in der politischen Folge Alexanders zeigte."

18 Root (1979: 71–72); Razmjou (2002: 84–87), with bibliography. In iconography and text, the statue is a study in the visual representation of Darius' imperial program. On the front and the back of the base are carved the fecundity figures of Upper and Lower Egypt, shown binding together the lotus flower and papyrus, a gesture which Razmjou (2002: 83) argues is a "symbolic display of unification under the rule of Darius." Additionally, the bound prisoners on the base of the statue, traditionally Egyptian in style, were personified in such a way as to depict them as cooperative agents supportive of the Achaemenid imperial ideal (see Root 1979: 131–161). The text on the statue presents a "theological eulogy" of Darius, expressing the traditional Egyptian union of Upper and Lower Egypt (Yoyotte 2013: 260–266). The design, incorporating Mesopotamia, Egyptian, and Persian features, "implies that the cultures that informed these different artistic traditions were the superordinate centers from which Darius drew his charismatic authority" (Colburn 2013: 787–788). For a stylistic and representational overview of the statue in an Egyptian context, see Wasmuth 2017: 101–124.

19 The original location was initially assumed to be Heliopolis but see Bresciani 1998: 103–111, who argues for initial installation at Pithom (followed by Yoyotte 2013: 256).

20 Perrot (2013b: 461) proposes a more elaborate timeline, arguing that, once he became king, Xerxes inscribed the column bases here to alleviate any confusion about the fact that he was not the original creator of the statue but that he had brought it to Susa and commissioned its matching replica.

21 Yoyotte (2013: 257) is more careful, proposing either a date late in the reign of Darius or one in the reign of Xerxes.

Typically our sources give the impression that Darius exhibited a congenial attitude toward Egyptian religion[22] and was well-received by the Egyptian priesthood.[23] However, while the reigns of Darius and Cambyses were generally remembered for encouraging continuity and adherence to Egyptian custom (Ruzicka 2012: 14–25; Wasmuth 2015: 204–215), we have some evidence that temple administrators were one social group for whom Persian domination was particularly onerous (Briant 2002: 60–61). Greek sources attest to "numerous excesses against Egyptian religion," although the extent to which this may represent a deliberate policy of the Persians is still up for debate (see especially Winnicki 1994: 159–169). Furthermore, several Ptolemaic-era texts, including an inscription from Adulis on the Red Sea coast, the so-called Canopus Decree,[24] and a newly reconstructed decree from Alexandria (Burstein 2016: 83) all attest to Persian theft of statues from Egypt that were later repatriated by the Ptolemies.[25] Tensions between these priestly groups and the Persians in earlier periods may have come to a head because of the revolts under Xerxes, at which point we can conjecture a migration of the Darius statue to Susa.

The movement of this Egyptianizing statue seems strange at first sight, and the piece is particularly interesting in that it represents an imperial narrative disseminated in the periphery, which has been decontextualized and (re)moved to the center. There are several possible (and not mutually exclusive) causes for the removal of the statue. First, recontextualization would ensure its protection from potential vandals in a tenuous Egyptian environment. Bahrani (2003: 182) notes that in Mesopotamia "the fear of having one's image destroyed or name effaced was beyond just the loss of an object of aesthetic or intrinsic value, or degradation through a political act. The fear was of a supernatural maleficent result that affected the subject, even beyond the grave." More importantly, we must remember that the statue of Darius had value as a symbol of Darius' conquest of Egypt (Razmjou 2002: 89), and its travel down the Nile river to Susa was evocative of the interconnectedness and magnitude of the Persian imperial domain. As Wasmuth (2019: 50) has recently argued, the contextualization of this statue, viewed together with the complementary Persian-style statue of Darius flanking the gate, would have served a dual role in announcing both the traditional role of the Great King and his rule over Egypt (and, by extension, the ancient world). Therefore, we can—and should—envisage

22 Lloyd (2000: 286, 294): "[Darius'] regard for Egyptian religious sentiment and concern for the general well-being of the country won him the respect and, sometimes, the devotion of the native Egyptian population."

23 Diod. 1.95.5 recounts that Darius was the subject of great honor, being the only king who was addressed by the Egyptians as a god in his lifetime (ὧν ἕνεκα καὶ τοὺς Αἰγυπτίους αὐτῷ περιτεθεικέναι τὴν ἀρχὴν οὐκ ὄντι γένους βασιλικοῦ).

24 See Winnicki 1994: 175–177, with Müller 2016: 184–187 and bibliography, for scholarly treatments of these texts; some scholars accept the historicity of Ptolemy's claims while others believe that the inscriptions claim the repatriation of statues only as an ideological topos.

25 While some have dismissed this record as Ptolemaic propaganda, Clarysse (2000: 59–62) has argued that these decrees were written by an Egyptian priesthood literate in Greek idiom. At the very least, we must understand the repatriation of sacred statues as a prerogative of the Egyptian priesthood, whom the Ptolemies were doubtless eager to please; certainly, the Ptolemies would have been held accountable for their (in)action in this regard, as it was in return for these kingly acts of euergetism that the Ptolemies received pharaonic titles from the priesthoods (Ma 2005: 180). One stele from Pithom describes the festivities held to celebrate Ptolemy's return of statues to Egypt, and the mention of the repatriation of statues in synodal decrees, sacerdotal decrees, and royal inscriptions seems to confirm the authenticity of the Ptolemaic claims. See Fischer-Bovet (2016: 111, 122–123). On the other hand, see the recent contribution of Agut-Labordère (2017), who argues that the Ptolemaic claims about the Persians are an example of a "memory graft," where Egyptian trauma under the Assyrians is translated into Greek experience in the Persian Wars, used by the Ptolemies to depict the Seleucids as the forerunners of the Achaemenids.

the intentional display of an Egyptianizing statue which served as a commemorative monument to "remind the world that the Persian had taken Egypt by the grace of Ahuramazda and his military might" (Yoyotte 2013: 257). Although the statue was originally a Persian installation, we can still consider it an antiquarian item transported from a foreign area to the internal capitals of the empire. Therefore, the placement of the Egyptianizing statue at the Darius Gate at Susa is entirely consistent with Xerxes' program of displaying decontextualized objects from the periphery in the center to express his domination of those areas, much as the Mesopotamian kings at Susa before him.

Babylonia

Just as for the Assyrians, Babylonia under Achaemenid rule inspired a mixture of awe and intractability. The satrapy revolted under Darius I from 522 to 521 BCE. A group of rebels, calling themselves after the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, rejected Persian rule; to discourage further disobedience, Darius erected a stele on Babylon's processional way.[26] In 484 BCE, in Xerxes' second year, the satrapy revolted again (Waerzeggers 2003/2004: 151–156). The repercussions of the revolts under both Darius and Xerxes were widespread, with increased taxes and changes in temple personnel enforced under both kings (Waerzeggers 2015: 192–194). The religious sphere seems to have suffered the most deleterious consequences under Persian domination; sources from these priestly circles attest to a most egregious abuse of the Babylonian priesthood under Darius, who conscripted priestly delegations as corvée labor in the building of his capital at Susa (Waerzeggers 2015: 200). Additionally, (likely unwelcome) innovations were introduced into Babylonian cults, as indicated by a rare prebendary offering to a statue of Darius in Sippar from the year 485 BCE, before the outbreak of revolts in Egypt and Babylonia (Waerzeggers 2014). However, the revolts under Xerxes have been the subject of particularly intense debate (Waerzeggers 2018a), since Greek sources refer to it to varying degrees of detail. Herodotus (1.183) accuses Xerxes of stealing a statue from the Esagila during the revolt (not specified as the statue of Bēl-Marduk, as Kuhrt and Sherwin-White (1987) have pointed out) but provides no more information. Ctesias mentions a revolt of Babylon in the reign of Xerxes (F13[26]) but also gives no further details. Strabo (16.1.5) and Arrian (3.16.4) are the only sources to mention Xerxes' destruction of sacred structures in Babylon; these last sources have often been interpreted as Hellenic propaganda, a wholesale vilification of Xerxes to accord with their victory over his forces during the Persian Wars.

Although many have put forth arguments attempting to devalue the commentary of the Greek sources on Xerxes' behavior as elaborate mnemonic constructs,[27] we should not disqualify their testimony so easily.[28] While we cannot deny embellishment or misinterpretation at points, it has

26 For this stele, which was found broken in 11 different pieces, see Seidl 1999.

27 Wiesehöfer (2002) generally follows the conclusions of Kuhrt and Sherwin-White (1987), arguing that the picture of Xerxes in the Greek sources is a matter of traditional *topoi* and that there is no good evidence for discontinuity of practice in Babylonia between Cyrus and Xerxes.

28 Foster (2005: 369) remarks that the Kedor-Laomer texts, which describe destructive Elamite invasions of Babylonia, were inscribed during the Persian period and may have been of interest to scribes of this period due to "analogies between the Elamites and the rapacious post-Darius Persian monarchs." Nielsen (2015: 70) notes that Elam was often equated with Persia in narratives about Nebuchadnezzar I's defeat of Elam and could be manipulated by the Babylonian elite depending on the current relationship with Persia. Additionally, accounts in Ctesias and Herodotus can be understood as representing memories of the Babylonian revolts under Xerxes. See Waerzeggers 2018a: 1 n. 4.

been argued persuasively that Herodotus, our main source for the revolts, was himself at least lightly acquainted with the contents of the Bisitun inscription of Darius I (Seidl 1999; Tuplin 2005: 36) and moreover his representation of the Persian kings is based on native oral sources, and not simply formulated from Greek biases (Munson 2009). In persuasively demonstrating the "end of the archives" after the revolts against Xerxes, Waerzeggers (2003/2004: 161) has also denied our ability to ignore Herodotus, proclaiming that, at the very least, "the passage should…be credited as a report of disruptions in the religious sphere during Xerxes' reign." Even without questioning Herodotus' credibility, it is difficult to believe that *every* subsequent reference in Classical authors to Xerxes' destruction of Babylonian temples is based on a misinterpretation of one statement in Herodotus.[29] Ultimately, the approach of Dandamaev (1993: 43) seems most prudent: "It is true that there is no contemporary Babylonian documentary evidence that corroborates Greek sources, but it is also important to note that Babylonian documents do not refute the Greek accounts."

In the last fifteen years, the availability and interpretation of archaeological material has aided in a better understanding of the revolts. Cuneiform texts have shown that the rebels were concentrated in Borsippa, Babylon, and Dilbat;[30] these are the same places in which reprisals seem to have been executed by the Persians. Archaeological material may also attest to Xerxes' violence against the Babylonian temples (Waerzeggers 2003/2004). In his excavations at Babylon, Schmid discovered stratigraphic and structural evidence for deliberate damage of the ziggurat's superstructure, resulting in a depression that is still visible today. Regarding the date of the destruction, one argument places it after the completion of the ziggurat and before the reign of Alexander, when rebuilding efforts were begun (George 2010: 475–477). Additionally, no building inscriptions have been discovered from the last 200 years of Persian rule in Babylonia (Waerzeggers 2015: 196). Therefore, the revolts clearly instigated larger institutional changes in Babylonia, and these seem to have been concentrated in a temple setting. The alterations in the prebendary system after the revolts give every indication that Xerxes took significant and consequential actions in response to the uprising (Nielsen 2015: 57).

It has been argued that Xerxes' Babylonian victory was not commemorated either in his texts or in his monuments (Waerzeggers 2018a: 1). However, this statement runs counter to the presence of two possible vestiges of Xerxes' subjugation of Babylonia in Susa: the first is a damaged cylinder of Nebuchadnezzar II, found at Susa, most likely on the Acropolis (George 2010). The second is a stele of black basalt, which has come to be known as the "Tower of Babel stele," also dating from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II (George 2011); its text records the king's completion of the E-temen-anki, the ziggurat of Marduk at Babylon. If, as has been proposed, the stele was originally embedded in the brickwork of Babylon's ziggurat (see George 2010: 479), its presence in Susa would stand as an example of Persian hegemony over the older Babylonia. The stele consists of a "ground plan" of the ziggurat of Marduk at Babylon and a cuneiform inscription that closely parallels that of the Nebuchadnezzar cylinder described above (George 2011: 162). While the provenance is uncertain, George (2011: 164–165) suggests

29 This argument is made by Kuhrt (1988: 133); Kuhrt (2014: 168) furthermore attributes the story of Xerxes in Ctesias to a dependence on Herodotus. Even if every Greek author who discusses the reign of Xerxes had read Herodotus, we simply cannot assume that every portrait of the Persian king is dependent on Herodotus' account. Additionally, Waerzeggers (2010: 804) has shown that the Greek sources on the itinerary of the migrant Persian kings accord with the cuneiform documentation relating to their presence at Susa.

30 The texts can be found in Cameron 1941: 325 n. 49.

that the stele was originally a part of a foundation deposit at the ziggurat in Babylon and was removed as a complex with the aforementioned cylinder by Xerxes' men in their destruction of the Esagila temple. In the same vein, he proposes that notable damage to the inscription of the stele would have been caused by a hostile agent, providing a parallel with other artifacts at Susa (most particularly the Code of Hammurabi).[31] It is important to remember in this connection that spoils from Babylonian temples, and indeed, from the Esagila itself, were also discovered at Persepolis (Schmidt 1957: 57). Further, we will recall that the Babylonian rebels in the reign of Darius called themselves after "Nebuchadnezzar"; thus, artifacts recalling his era would serve both to punctuate the Persian victory over Babylon while also placing the Achaemenid kings in a Mesopotamian royal continuum. The symbolism behind decontextualizing and/or destroying a monument of their namesake was probably not lost on Xerxes.

While the archaeological material in this case is severely limited, the timeline of events and the literary sources may provide support for Xerxes' removal of this material to Susa. Susa had served as an important and regular meeting point for highly placed Babylonian officials since the reign of Darius. Many of those who are known to have supported the rebels had been present in Susa on delegations during the reign of Darius (Waerzeggers 2018b: 113). However, relations between the Babylonians and the Persians show a clear break after the revolts, as cuneiform texts no longer record Babylonian delegations traveling to Susa after this time (Waerzeggers 2010: 801–802). This change means that any foreign delegation or visitor to Susa would now experience the Babylonians only as an artifact of empire, by viewing everything from the Code of Hammurabi to the broken cylinder of Nebuchadnezzar. Much like the statue of Darius, these decontextualized artifacts were taken out of their religious environment and, through their royal associations, came to represent the subjugation of another great empire of the Mesopotamian world.

Greece

Scholars often lament that we cannot recover a Persian version of the "Great Event." Perhaps we have not looked hard enough. When examining the ideologies that surround the immediate memory of the Persian Wars, we are, for the most part, beholden to Greek historiography and its inherent biases. The most-discussed event in Xerxes' career is undoubtedly his invasion of Greece. After the famous defeat of the Spartans at Thermopylae in 480 BCE, the Persian king marched on Athens (Garland 2017). There, we are told, he pillaged and burned the Acropolis. Our Greek sources relate that Xerxes pillaged from the Agora the statues of Harmodius and Aristogeiton, the famous Athenian tyrannicides, whose actions allowed for the foundations of Athenian democracy (see the bibliography in Müller 2016: 173 n. 3). The statues were among other works of art and other votive offerings from Greece that were sent to Persia by Xerxes (Arrian 7.19.2). The tyrannicide statues would have joined other pieces of war booty at Susa,

31 Bahrani (2008: 164) notes that the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal exhibited statues of Elamite kings at the southwest palace at Nineveh. He had taken them from Susa and brought them to Nineveh, where they were mutilated and displayed in damaged condition in the palace. Bahrani (2008: 236 n. 4) also mentions that the removal of architectural sculpture and the demolition of statues is portrayed in various reliefs like that of Tiglath-Pileser III at Nimrud. She describes this behavior as "biopolitics": "The reordering of space (or, perhaps, space and time, if historical monuments are involved) is not only the seizure of land and the resulting imperial territorial expansion, or even the suppression and destruction of monuments. It is a production. It is a constitutive act. It creates a new space and a new world order that allows new social contracts and state formations" (Bahrani 2008: 181).

such as the bronze weight of Apollo of Didyma (André-Salvini & Descamps-Lequime 2005),[32] whose temple was also destroyed by Xerxes (Hdt. 6.19).[33] After its theft, another statue group at Athens was erected to replace the one that had been carted off to Persia.

Recently scholarship has challenged the idea that Xerxes actually stole these statues (Müller 2016: 181–187), citing the blame as a vestige of Macedonian propaganda on the accomplishment of the (alleged) panhellenic mission, which became an important topos of the Second Sophistic when Arrian was composing his *Anabasis* of Alexander.[34] However, the evidence from several statues on the Acropolis attests to a pattern of destruction that is congruent with Persian attacks on other cities (Kousser 2009: 266). And we know that the replacement group on the Acropolis was constructed within five years of the Persian Wars, sometime around 477/476 BCE, by Kritios and Nesiotes.[35] Who but Xerxes might have stolen the group in the years immediately previous? One further note: we should also remember that these are not the only Greek items that were victim to theft by the king (see above). If nothing else, the theft of the statue of Apollo from Didyma to Susa is almost certain, given the discovery of a bronze weight of Apollo from Didyma at the Acropole there;[36] we might see this action in light of the common Ancient Near Eastern practice of god-napping as a strategy for the assertion of a conqueror's hegemony over defeated peoples (Zaia 2015). Thus, there is no reason to question our sources in their attribution of Xerxes as the king who carried off the tyrannicides to Susa. It is notable that other Athenian finds, like an Archaic bronze cauldron and a shield, were also discovered at Persepolis (Schmidt 1957: 38–39), indicating that Xerxes' behavior was part of a larger trend of collecting Athenian items of great cultural import, whether by looting or by gift exchange.

It is tempting to distrust our Greek sources and attribute much of our evidence for Achaemenid collecting behavior to a hostile tradition stemming from their interactions during the Persian Wars. However, put together, the evidence of cultural heritage items (particularly those associated with local government and religion) originating from Egypt, Babylonia, and Greece and displayed at Susa suggests a reevaluation of recent skepticism of our (particularly Greek) evidence.[37] We have rather convincing evidence for Cambyses' disrespect for Egyptian custom

32 Several other important statues were carried off, including the water-carrier, which Themistocles had consecrated at Athens; the statue of Artemis from Brauron; and the statue of Apollo from Didyma (see Müller 2016: 174 n. 9 for sources).

33 Rocchi (1980: 426) notes Xerxes' consistent offenses against the main gods of the Greek pantheon.

34 *Contra* Azoulay (2017: 202 n. 52), who rejects the idea that the theft of the statues was a fallacy devised to justify the restitution of the group in the Hellenistic period. Additionally, it should be kept in mind that Alexander the Great—whom all Diadochs sought to emulate—timed the return of the tyrannicide statues from Athens at the same time as his famous "Exiles Decree," indicating that the action was part of a wider policy (per an Assyro-Babylonian model) of repatriating peoples (and their statues) from conquered cities (Finn 2014: 401). Azoulay (2017: 120) argues that the statues were returned in 323 BCE after an Athenian embassy to Babylon (Arrian 7.19 20) as part of a customary exchange of courtesies, and was perhaps granted by way of thanks for the statue that had been voted to Alexander at Athens (see Worthington 2001) in 324. The erection of this statue was in the same space as that of the tyrannicides in the Agora, and thus would have represented Athens' illustrious history but also "disguised subordination."

35 Marm. Par. Ep. 54.70; they are also mentioned in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* 630 ff. and *Ecclesiazusae* 681 ff.

36 Hammond (1988) shows that all the references to the theft in the authors contemporary to Alexander indicate that Herodotus also believed the statue to have been stolen in the reign of Xerxes. According to Paus. 1.16.3 and 8.46.3, Seleucus is said to have returned this very statue.

37 Thus, we may be able to revisit the assertion of Oppenheim (1985: 566): "The basic tenor of the Greek reports on Xerxes' politics is confirmed by the stern measures following the rebellion in Egypt and the reconquest of that satrapy, especially the measures directed against religious institutions."

and even the words of Xerxes himself, who in his famous *daivā* inscription (XPh) claims to have reestablished order and "destroyed sanctuaries of the demons (*daivā*)."[38] The archaeological evidence corroborates the notion that most items stolen from Egypt and Babylon derived from a religious sphere; unsurprisingly, the temple environment is also where we have the most concrete information for disruption, particularly in the reigns of Darius and Xerxes. Although in his thefts Xerxes appears to have been following royal precedent, the items collected by this king at Susa can be viewed in a different frame than other Achaemenid collections (particularly at Persepolis), for they were all prominently displayed, large-form monuments concentrated in one imperial capital. Particularly distinct are the items from Greece; if viewed in a similar fashion as other items collected in the Achaemenid imperial capitals, the demonstration of Greek capitulation through its decontextualized monuments would represent a patently ahistorical and imagined narrative of peripheral interaction with the center.[39]

ACHAEMENID COLLECTING AFTER XERXES

Following the reign of Xerxes, our evidence for Achaemenid collecting is reduced. However, we can still pinpoint some instances of de/recontextualization.[40] One notable find is a marble statue discovered at Persepolis, thought to be representative of Penelope, the wife of Odysseus, probably carved in the mid-fifth century BCE (Palagia 2008). The statue is white marble speckled with glittering crystals, likely produced in a workshop of the Aegean islands (Schmidt 1957: 66). One possibility is that the statue was given as a gift to Artaxerxes I from the island of Thasos after its inhabitants maintained good relations with Xerxes during the Persian Wars; therefore, Palagia concludes, it was not stolen.[41] Counter to this, we also find the suggestion that there were two copies of the statue, one displayed on the Acropolis at Athens and another presented to the Persians by Callias upon his diplomatic mission to concretize the peace signed in his name in *c.*449 BCE (Hölscher 2011). Regardless of the means of the statue's arrival, we must take into account the Near Eastern historical and archaeological context of such an act. As noted by Bahrani (2019: 47), if the statue was indeed a gift, it "would most likely have been

38 The scholarly debate on this inscription is vast. A conservative starting point is Briant's (2002: 550–553) argument that the inscription is non-specific and accords well with other Persian royal inscriptions. A middle ground can be found in Bridges 2014: 92–93, that we should view Xerxes' behavior in the suppression of revolts (and in the destruction of places where the "daiva" was worshipped) "not as an act of religious persecution but rather as a form of response to unrest, and as a reassertion of the king's authority over unruly subjects," a program that was in line with that instituted by his father Darius. I find most convincing the more progressive view of Harrison (2011: 80–82) that we should not doubt Xerxes' destruction of temple complexes, but that we should see the destructions in the context of political rebellion rather than as a result of religious intolerance (with the sack of the temple of Apollo at Didyma during the Ionian revolt as a key example).

39 This proclamation seems to be borne out also in Xerxes' royal inscriptions, where a list of subjugated countries in the famous *daivā* inscription (XPh) includes the Ionians living near the sea, the Ionians living beyond the sea, and the inhabitants of Skudra. It is perhaps also confirmed by the account handed down in Dio Chrysostom 11.149, which gives a biased report highlighting Xerxes' victory over the Spartans at Thermopylae; his destruction of Athens; and the imposition of tribute on the Greeks (Briant 2002: 541–542).

40 An interesting example can be found in the immediate aftermath of Xerxes' reign, when the decontextualization of material remained a strategy for Achaemenid political proclamations, as Xerxes' son (and murderer) repurposed his father's material to manipulate his predecessor's memory. Studying the Treasury reliefs and the several copies of the *daivā* inscription which were reused as building materials, Abdi (2010) has argued that Artaxerxes recontextualized these specific items because he no longer considered them representative of the empire's message.

41 Palagia 2008: 230. See, however, the recent article by Lazzarini and Poggio (2017), who argue that the long-distance trade in Thasian marble prevents exclusion of other areas of origin for the statue.

a gift that performed an act of submission." The statue at Persepolis is unique in our corpus, as it represents a more "monumental" piece like those at Susa. However, it too would have performed the work of exhibiting the dominance of the Achaemenid empire. Perhaps most importantly, in its allusions to the Trojan War, the presence of a statue so clearly removed from its originally intended context would also insinuate a Persian usurpation of Greek mythohistory.

Finally, for the reign Artaxerxes III, we have some interesting information. Diodorus reveals that upon his subjugation of the Egyptian revolt in the years 343–342 BCE,

> Ἀρταξέρξης δὲ παραλαβὼν πᾶσαν τὴν Αἴγυπτον καὶ τῶν ἀξιολογωτάτων πόλεων τὰ τείχη περιελὼν τὰ μὲν ἱερὰ συλήσας ἤθροισεν ἀργύρου τε καὶ χρυσοῦ πλῆθος, ἀπήνεγκε δὲ καὶ τὰς ἐκ τῶν ἀρχαίων ἱερῶν ἀναγραφάς, ἃς ὕστερον Βαγώας πολλῶν χρημάτων ἀπελύτρωσε τοῖς ἱερεῦσι τῶν Αἰγυπτίων (16.51.2).
>
> Artaxerxes, after he had taken control over all of Egypt and pulled down the walls of the noteworthy cities, gathered together booty taken from all the shrines, a huge sum of silver and gold, and carried away the inscriptions from the old temples, which later Bagoas ransomed to the priests of Egypt for a huge sum.

Diodorus further notes that Artaxerxes returned to Babylon with much plunder in tow and became famous for his military successes. The repatriation of these archives may have occurred under Ptolemy, if the Satrap Stele (ls. 16-18) can be trusted. First impressions might indicate that Artaxerxes is being conflated in these sources with Cambyses, as, like the latter Achaemenid king, Artaxerxes is also pegged with killing the Apis bull and disrespecting Egyptian religion (Aelian *VH* 6.8; Briant 2002: 687–688). But Plutarch (*De Iside* 11 [355C]) also describes Artaxerxes as the "most savage" of Persian kings. Lloyd (2014) even finds the reign of Artaxerxes to be a denouement in what had previously been an inconsistent Persian attitude toward Egyptian religion. Indeed, we may need to reevaluate our mistrust of Diodorus, as his comments that Artaxerxes carried away inscriptions from the old temples are a virtual mirror of our cuneiform source describing similar prerogatives of Cambyses in Babylon approximately 200 years earlier (see above).

DEFINING ACHAEMENID COLLECTING

In an imperial context, collections serve many purposes: to express domination over peoples and time; to impose order on knowledge; to centralize an empire or community; and to create a false notion of unity imposed by the imperial process (Gahtan & Troelenberg 2019: 12–18). While it is true that it is often difficult to corroborate our archaeological evidence for collecting with matching textual materials, cuneiform and Greek sources combined with the archaeological evidence *do* attest to the phenomenon of a Persian interest in the collection of antiquarian and foreign items, whether through gift-giving or theft (the latter particularly in the reign of Xerxes).[42] When considered as a complex, we can also set many of the objects transported into imperial capitals against the evidence for Persian rule in resistant areas (e.g., Greece, Babylon, and Egypt) from which they derived. Every artifact in a Persian collection defined imperial rule: when items were looted, they expressed Persian power through the suppression of rebel-

42 Since we are limited by our sources, it is indeed probable that more valuable items were collected in these capitals and plundered in later periods (particularly in the reign of Alexander the Great; e.g., in his destruction of Persepolis). Even so, I suggest a consistency in the items collected at Persian imperial capitals, with Xerxes' assemblage at Susa representing a particular historical moment in Achaemenid history.

lion. But these same assemblages also served a similar goal as those that were received in acts of gift-giving: they reified the role of the (re)location of Achaemenid kings in the longue durée of Mesopotamian kingship, and symbolically defined the borders of Persian rule. Collected and antiquarian items were representative, then, of both change and continuity. The artifacts (mostly of a votive nature) collected in Persian imperial capitals derived their discursive power from the act of recontextualization, which allowed for the imposition of a new (meta)historical and sometimes patently false interpretation of Achaemenid interaction with the periphery.[43] Reading these items as artifacts of empire allows us to attempt a different approach to formulating the dialogic nature of the relationship between center and periphery and the construction of imperial power at the height of the Persian Empire.

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43 The appropriation of material remains for the construction of a vision of history is well known in the Roman period (particularly in Late Antiquity); for a pertinent example of Constantinople as a city whose history was constructed from a "culture of spolia," see Bassett 2015.

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