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## Carrying off and bringing home the statues of the gods : on an aspect of the religious policy of the Ptolemies towards the Egyptians

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The Journal of Juristic Papyrology 24, 149-190

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1994

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Jan Krzysztof Winnicki

CARRYING OFF AND BRINGING HOME  
THE STATUES OF THE GODS

ON AN ASPECT OF THE RELIGIOUS POLICY  
OF THE PTOLEMIES TOWARDS THE EGYPTIANS\*

According to several Egyptian and Greek sources the Ptolemies used to bring back to Egypt statues of the gods and other sacred objects which were taken away by the Persians. This information is in accordance with our understanding of the policy of the Ptolemies towards the Egyptians and their religion. The Ptolemaic rulers who were recognized as heirs of the Pharaohs by the native population of the Nile valley adopted the traditional role and, thus, reinforced the acceptance of their rule, building temples and patronizing the Egyptian cults. They even held, at least theoretically, the function of the chief priests of these cults.

Most scholars tend to believe that information concerning the retrieval of lost statues and sacred objects is simply untrue. Accounts of such events have been explained as a stereotype formula, conventional phrase, cliché, *topos*.<sup>1</sup> My own studies on the subject have led me to conclude that it is this

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\* An abbreviated version of this paper was read in September 1990 at a seminar held in the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor (USA). I am deeply grateful to Prof. L. KOENEN for inviting me to attend and his help. I am also indebted to the participants of the seminar, especially prof. U. KAPLONY-HECKEL, for several suggestions, which were extremely helpful in my further work. My thanks are due to J. MANNING, who corrected my English.

<sup>1</sup> E.g. H. VOLKMANN, *RE* 23, 1959, 1684; C.B. WELLES, *Historia* 52, 1970, 484; P. KAPLONY, *CdE* 46, 1971, 257 n. 1; W. SWINNEN, [in:] *Les syncretismes dans les reli-*

very view which should be regarded as a stereotype, a *topos* which is given hardly any thought.

Opinions either for or against the reliability of the sources have never been argued efficiently. Scholars who doubt the historical value of the data provided by hieroglyphic texts are firmly convinced that Egyptian priests, the authors of the texts, tended to exaggerate the glory of the rulers. As evidence for this point of view they offer references to two publications, both by Walter Otto, i.e. *Priester und Tempel im hellenistischen Ägypten* (1908)<sup>2</sup> and *Beiträge zur Seleukidengeschichte des 3. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.* (1928).<sup>3</sup> Otto considers the historical value of the Egyptian sources to be considerably limited. He refers to them as examples which reveal the Egyptian priests' lack of knowledge and their incompetence in historical matters. Based on Greek sources, he presumes that Ptolemy III Euergetes returned some statues carried off by the Persians to the Egyptian priests in order to win their favour.<sup>4</sup> Among the sources which he mentions there is also the Greek version of the Canopus decree, although its Egyptian version is in his opinion a stereotype formula of little historical value. Nevertheless, he rightly doubts the reliability of formulae which occur in Egyptian texts.<sup>5</sup> The question this paper will address is whether we are indeed dealing with such formulae in the sources.

As far as I know, the only scholar who supports the historical value of these sources is D. Lorton. He stresses that the Pithom stela reveals several extremely precise data connected with the transportation of these statues,

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*gions grecque et romaine, Colloque de Strasbourg*, Paris 1973, 116-117; W. HUSS, *Untersuchungen zur Aussenpolitik Ptolemaios' IV.*, Munich 1976, 70 n. 296; R. BIANCHI, *LÄ* 5, 1984, 492.

<sup>2</sup> II, pp. 227-228.

<sup>3</sup> *ABAW* 34, 1. Abh., 68 n. 5. The author refers to A. BOUCHÉ-LECLERCQ, *Histoire des Lagides*, I, Paris 1903, 177 n. 1, who interprets the fragment of the Pithom stela as referring to an expedition of Ptolemy II to Persia and calls it "flatterie sacerdotale". The actual goal of the expedition was the "territory of the Philistines", see discussion below.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 69 n. 1; 70. Similarly CL. PRÉAUX, *L'Economie royale des Lagides*, Brussels 1939, 371.

<sup>5</sup> On the subject cf. remarks by W. HELCK, *Jahresbericht des Instituts für Vorgeschichte der Universität Frankfurt a.M.*, 1976, Munich 1977, 7-8; A.B. LLOYD, *JEA* 68, 1982, 167-168; A.R. SCHULMAN, *JARCE* 24, 1987, 21-22.

and states that "it is improbable that such a detailed narration could be a mere fabrication".<sup>6</sup>

There is a number of relevant problems in need of discussion in a broad historical context. The following paper is devoted to presenting: i) A review of the data concerning the relocation of statues in the ancient world; ii) Evidence for the relocation of the statues from Egypt; iii) Sources mentioning the statues brought back by the Ptolemies; and iv) Conclusions.

### I. A REVIEW OF DATA CONCERNING THE RELOCATION OF STATUES IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

The abduction of images of the gods goes back to the second millennium B.C. and is known in the Ancient Near East, Greece and Italy. It is frequently mentioned in cuneiform sources, especially those concerning Assyria and Babylonia. In considering these records, it should be noted first of all that not every conquest was accompanied by acts of violence aimed at the enemy's gods. Such acts usually occurred when an attacked city put up fierce resistance before being taken or when a subjugated province rose in unsuccessful rebellion. The abduction of statues were in such cases means of repression and humiliation of the defeated enemy. Conquests also provided an opportunity to retrieve statues captured earlier by the enemy.<sup>7</sup> Statues were sometimes returned voluntarily, especially if they had been carried off by a predecessor of the current king and the political conditions had changed in the meantime. For instance, Sennacherib (688-681? B.C.) is known to have returned the statues carried off from Elkallate 418 years earlier.<sup>8</sup> Esarhaddon (680-669) recalls that his father Sennacherib had carried off the statues of the Arabs from Adumatu (El-Gauf) and says that upon the Arab king's request:

"I repaired the damages of the images of (names of the gods), the gods of the Arabs, and returned them (...) after having written upon them an in-

<sup>6</sup> *JEA* 57, 1971, 162-164.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. e.g. A.K. GRAYSON, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, Locust Valley - New York 1975, *passim*, also sources mentioned in the following notes and others discussed in part II of this paper.

<sup>8</sup> *Bavian Stela*, 48-50 — D.D. LUCKENBILL, *The Annals of Sennacherib*, Chicago 1924 (*OIP* 2), 83. See J.A. BRINKMANN, *A Political History of Post-Kassite Babylonia*, Rome 1968, 124-126.

scription (proclaiming) the (superior) might of Ashur, my lord, and my own name".<sup>9</sup>

Upon invading Babylonia in 539 B.C. and creating the Persian Empire, Cyrus proclaimed himself the successor of the Babylonian kings, restored the temples in Babylonia, Assyria and Elam, and returned to them statues which the last Babylonian king Nabonidus had carried off.<sup>10</sup> He also ordered the Jerusalem temple to be restored and returned its sacred equipment, instead of the statues which it obviously could not have, which had been seized once by Nebuchadnezzar.<sup>11</sup>

Events took a different turn under Darius. Once he had put down the Ionian revolt of 494, he torched the temple of Apollo at Didymae as an act of repression and carried off the statue of the deity.<sup>12</sup> Xerxes followed a similar policy, knocking down the fortifications and temples of Babylon and taking one of the statues to Susa after having suppressed the revolt there.<sup>13</sup> Later, in 480 B.C. he carried off the statues of Harmodius and Aris-

<sup>9</sup> Prism B IV, 9-14 — R.C. THOMPSON, *The Prisms of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal*, London 1931, 20; A.L. OPPENHEIM, [in:] J.B. PRITCHARD, *Near Eastern Texts relating to the Old Testament*, Princeton 1955, 291-292 (from now on abbreviated as ANET<sup>2</sup>).

<sup>10</sup> *Chronicle of Nabonidus* (Tabl. BM 35382), III, 21-22 (A.K. GRAYSON, *op. cit.* (n. 7), no 7, pp. 104-111); *Panegyric of Cyrus* (BM 38299), VI, 18-24 (S. SMITH, *Babylonian Historical Texts*, London 1924, 83); *Rassam Cylinder* (BM 90920), ll. 32-34 (F.H. WEISSBACH, *Die Keilinschriften der Achämeniden*, Leipzig 1911, 2-9). Cf. O.T. OLMSTEAD, *History of the Persian Empire*, Chicago – London 1970, 54-55.

<sup>11</sup> Esdras 1, 2-11; 4, 1-4; 5, 1-6, 18; 6, 3-5. On Nebuchadnezzar carrying off vessels, 2 Kings. 24, 13; 25, 14-17; 2 Chron. 36, 6; Daniel 1, 1-2. Extensive discussion of the problem in E. DE VAUX, *RB* 46, 1937, 29-57. Cf. L. DEQUEKER, [in:] J. QUAEGBEUR (Ed.), *Ritual and Sacrifice in the Ancient Near East*, Louvain 1993 (*OLA* 55), 67-92.

<sup>12</sup> Herodotus VI 19. The fact is also attributed to Xerxes (Strab. XI 11, 4 (C 518); XIV 1, 5 (C 634); XVII 1, 43 (C 814); Paus. I 16, 3; VIII 46, 3. Cf. F. CAUER, *RE* 3, 1899, 809-813, esp. 811, 10; H.W. PARKER, *JHS* 105, 1985, 61.

<sup>13</sup> Herodotus I 183. It has been commonly assumed until now that the statue Xerxes abducted was that of Bel-Marduk. This view has been questioned recently by S. SHERWIN-WHITE [in:] H. SANCISI-WEERDENBURG and A. KUHR (Eds.), *Achaemenid History*, II. *Greek Sources*, Leiden 1987, 70-72. Cf. also EADEM, [in:] A. KUHR – S. SHERWIN-WHITE (Eds.), *Hellenism in the East*, Berkeley – Los Angeles 1987, 8-9. She draws attention to the fact that Herodotus mentions a different statue, which it has turned out impossible to identify so far.

together,<sup>14</sup> the assassins of the tyrant Hipparchus, one of the Pisistratidae, in 514 B.C. Although not gods, the pair enjoyed immense popularity in Athens, being widely considered symbols of the struggle for freedom. Indeed, such was their importance to the Athenians that a new pair of images was erected in place of the lost ones already in 477/476 B.C.<sup>15</sup>

The pharaohs of Egypt frequently organized expeditions to Syria, but statues are rarely listed among the booty. One such record says that in year 23 of his reign Thutmosis III captured "a silver statue in form of [...], [a statue] ... with head of gold." A few items down the same list there is record of "a statue of that enemy which was there of ebony worked with gold, its head of lapis [lazuli]".<sup>16</sup> The latter statue is clearly identified as that of the defeated enemy, but in the case of the former two there is no data to indicate their nature. The emphasis on the precious materials they were made of would suggest they were carried off for this reason alone and were subsequently remade to suit the canons of Egyptian art.<sup>17</sup>

There is mention of abducting images of enemy deities in a story written in Demotic describing Djeser's expedition to Assyria. This long, but unfortunately ill preserved manuscript dated to the 1st/2nd century A.D. has not been published yet and is known only from a brief summary and a translation of some of the fragments.<sup>18</sup> The completely mythical character of the story allows no conclusions to be made concerning its date and the historical events it may be referring to. Certain threads of the story draw attention as possibly influenced by Greek culture.<sup>19</sup>

The Greek world was not a stranger to the practice of abducting statues either. In the mythical tales of the sack of Troy, Odysseus and Diomedes were alleged to have stolen the palladion, even before the Greeks took the

<sup>14</sup> Arrian, *Anab.* III 16, 7-8; VII 19, 2; Plin., *NH* XXXIV 69-70; Paus. I 8, 5; Valer. Max. 2, 10, ext. 1. The information has been questioned by M. MOGGI, *Ann. Pisa* (Serie 3) 3, 1973, 1-42, but his line of reasoning is not convincing.

<sup>15</sup> Thuc. VI 53, 3-59; *Marmor Parium* (FGH II 239), A 54; Arist., *Athen. Pol.* 58, 1; Paus. I 8, 5; 29, 15. Cf. A.J. PODLECKI, *Historia* 15, 1966, 129-141.

<sup>16</sup> Annals in the temple at Karnak — K. SETHE, *Urk.* IV, 666-667; A.J. WILSON, *ANET*<sup>2</sup>, 237-238.

<sup>17</sup> W. HELCK, *CdE* 56, 1981, 244.

<sup>18</sup> The papyrus is held by the Institute of Egyptology of Copenhagen University. Cf. A. VOLTEN, *Ar. Or.* 19, 1951, 70-74; J. BARNES, *Akten des VIII. Intern. Kongresses für Papyrologie*, Wien 1955 (MPER 5. Folge), 33-34.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. remarks of D. WILDUNG, *Die Rolle der ägyptischen Könige im Bewusstsein ihrer Nachwelt*, Berlin 1969 (MÄS 17), 91-93.

city. Many later cities, including Rome, claimed to possess Troy's palladion, justifying the old age and importance of their own deities.<sup>20</sup> Information of this sort, which is clearly later than the events it concerns, is hardly reliable. That the images of the Trojan gods were actually carried off seems beyond doubt, but the true causes remain unknown. Surely it was not the idea to transfer the cult of the conquered deity and this element in later myths should be considered as secondary.

Similar instances occurred in Italy. The number of 2000 statues taken from Volsini is noteworthy. The image of the god Vertumnus was presumably part of the loot.<sup>21</sup>

In the Hellenistic period the abduction of statues became almost standard practice. In 311 B.C. Ptolemy I Soter captured images of foreign deities during a punitive expedition in the region of Sinai<sup>22</sup> and so did Ptolemy III Euergetes during a campaign in 246 B.C.<sup>23</sup> It is not irrelevant to recall here that Antiochus IV carried off the equipment of the Jerusalem temple in 169 B.C.; according to Josephus, this was mere robbery because Antiochus was short of money at the time.<sup>24</sup>

Instances of statues being returned to their original temples are also known. When Alexander the Great found the statues of Harmodius and Aristogeiton in the treasury of Susa, he ordered their return to Athens. But not before the reign of Seleucus I or Antiochus I were these statues actually returned.<sup>25</sup> Seleucus I is also presumed to have been the ruler who returned the statue of Apollo which Darius once carried off from the oracle in Didymae near Miletus.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Strab. VI 1, 14 (C 264); Paus. VIII 46, 2. Cf. L. ZIEHEN, *RE* 18, 1949, 171-185.

<sup>21</sup> Plin., *NH* XXXIV 16 (34); W. EISENHUT, *Der Kleine Pauly* 5, 1975, 1219-1221.

<sup>22</sup> *Satrap stela* (I. Cairo 22182), l. 6. Cf. my article in *Anc. Soc.* 22, 1991, 164-185. Cf. also below pp. 170-171.

<sup>23</sup> St. Jerom, *Comm. in Daniel*. XI 7-9.

<sup>24</sup> 1 Mac. 1, 20-24; 2 Mac. 5, 11-21; Jos., *Ant.*, frg. 58 (*FHG* IV, p. 58); Jos., *Ant.* XII 5, 4 (249); IDEM, *C. Apion.*, II 7 (83-84). Cf. E. SCHÜRER - G. VERMES - P. MILLAR, *The History of Jewish People*, I, Edinburgh 1973, 151.

<sup>25</sup> Sources provide contrary data. According to Arrian, *Anab.* III 16, 7-8; VII 19, 2; Plin., *NH* XXXIV 69-70 it was Alexander; Gell. 7, 17, 2 and Valer. Max. II 10 ext. 1 attribute the deed to Seleucus while Paus. I 8, 5; VII 46, 3 — to Antiochus. Cf. J. MILLER, *RE* 7, 1912, 2378; M. MOGGI, *Ann. Pisa* (Serie 3) 3, 1973, 38-40; A. MEHL, *Seleukos Nikator und sein Reich*, Louvain 1986 (= *Studia Hellenistica* 28), 219-220.

<sup>26</sup> Paus. III 16, 7-9; VIII 46, 4, but in I 16, 3 the act is attributed to Xerxes. Cf. B. HAUSSOULLIER, *RPh* NS 24, 1900, 253-254; R.A. HADLEY, *JHS* 94, 1974, 58.

In recording Octavian's abduction of the statue of Athena Alea to Rome, Pausanias (VIII 46) mentions a number of similar instances in the histories of Greece and Persia and concludes: "The emperor Augustus only followed a custom of the Greeks and the barbarians from times of old".

A brief review of the sources permits some general conclusions. While in Oriental sources the information about statues being carried off and returned comes from the actual perpetrators and so leaves little room for doubt, Classical sources, usually recorded much later than the relevant events, relate different motivations from event to event, compromising to an extent the reliability of these sources. In different periods the reasons for abducting divine images were different. The motives may have been of a repressive nature, aimed at humiliating conquered populations, as the case was in Babylonia, Assyria and Persia. A ruler could also wish to emphasize in this way his successes and the power and importance of his deity to his subjects. In the case of statues made of precious stones and metals, common robbery could have certainly been a cause. For the Romans, divine images were important as trophies, while Octavian appreciated them as collector item as well. The Ptolemies retrieved lost statues undoubtedly as means of gaining the favour of local priests and villagers, and this constituted an important element of their religious policies.

## II. THE EVIDENCE FOR CARRYING THE STATUES OFF FROM EGYPT<sup>27</sup>

The fact that for many centuries Egypt enjoyed freedom, suffering only from brief episodes of foreign occupation, should doubtless be attributed to the country's geographical location and its status in respect to its neighbours. Although it is assumed that the private and royal statues as well as other objects from Egypt of the Middle Kingdom found in Syria were taken there by the Hyksos who allegedly plundered Egyptian temples and tombs, the fact is not documented in any of the sources and remains in need of full clarification.<sup>28</sup> Invasions, during which acts of violence such as the

<sup>27</sup> For the statues of Egyptian deities see G. DARESSY, *Statues de divinités*, Cairo 1906 (CGC); F. VON BISSING, *Ägyptische Kultbilder der Ptolemäer- und Römerzeit*, Leipzig 1936 (= *Der Alte Orient* 34); J. VANDIER, *Manuel d'Archéologie Égyptienne*, III, Paris 1958, 353ff.; S. CURTO, [in:] *Studien zur Sprache und Religion Ägyptens. Fs. W. Westendorf*, II, Göttingen 1984, 717-734; S. CAUVILLE, *BIFAO* 87, 1987, 73-117.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. W. HELCK, *UF* 8, 1976, 101-115; W.A. WARD, *UF* 11, 1979, 799-806; G.S. MATTHIAE, *UF* 16, 1984, 181-188; D.B. REDFORD, *Egypt, Canaan and Israel in Ancient*



abduction of divine images could have occurred, came only after the fall of the New Kingdom, i.e. in the first millennium B.C.<sup>29</sup> The Nubian conquest is unique in this respect and should presumably be excluded, since Napatan civilization was an offshoot of that of Pharaonic Egypt. The Nubian kings adopted the Egyptian religion and regarding themselves as its defenders they protected the temples from devastation.<sup>30</sup> Of course, individual excesses of soldiers are always possible regardless of royal piety or policies.

The Assyrians and the Persians should certainly be considered as possible perpetrators of the abduction of statues from Egypt. There are, however, no Egyptian records dealing with the period of Assyrian domination. From cuneiform sources it is known that after the first unsuccessful expedition of 673 B.C., the Assyrians invaded Egypt on three separate occasions. Each

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*Times*, Cairo 1993, 120-121. The abductions of statues and other objects from the same period, found in the territory of Nubia, must have occurred under different circumstances. Cf. D.B. REDFORD, *op. cit.*, 112 and bibliography there.

<sup>29</sup> Quoted sometimes by scholars, e.g. A. VOLTEN, *Zwei altägyptische politische Schriften*, Copenhagen 1945 (= *An. Aeg.* 4), 87; H.-J. THISEN, *Studien zum Raphia-dekret*, Meisenheim am Glan 1966 (= *Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie* 23), 60, mention of the abduction of divine images in "Instructions for King Merikare" is based on an erroneous interpretation of the text. Cf. E. ROWIŃSKA – J. K. WINNICKI, *ZÄS* 119, 1992, 130-143. The note on abductions in the times of Bocchoris mentioned by U. WILCKEN, *Hermes* 40, 1905, 552, is the result of an erroneous understanding of the text of the "Oracle of the Lamb". Cf. below pp. 182-185.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Diodor III 2, 2-3; E. OTTO, *Ägypten — der Weg des Pharaonenreiches*, Stuttgart 1966<sup>4</sup>, 222; E. ENDESFELDER, [in:] *Ägypten und Kusch*, Berlin 1977 (= *Schriften zur Geschichte und Kultur des Alten Orients* 13), 149. 160. King Pi made offerings in every temple he conquered (*Urk.* III 35, 6-9; 38, 10-11; reed. N. GRIMAL, *Stèle triomphale de Pi(c'ankh)y au Musée du Caire*, Cairo 1981 [= *MIFAO* 105]). According to Diodorus (I 65, 3. 5-8) Shabaka (c. 716-702 B.C.) was more pious than his predecessors. For Pi, Taharka, Shabaka cf. A. SPALINGER, *CdE* 53, 1978, 23-33, esp. 25. On homage paid to Egyptian gods by Tanutamon cf. the *Dream Stela* (Cairo JE 48863; *BAR* IV §919-934; N. GRIMAL, *Quatre stèles napatéennes du Musée du Caire*, Cairo 1981 [= *MIFAO* 106], 3-20). We cannot share the opinion of P. KAPLONY, *CdE* 46, 1971, 257 n. 1, that Nubians spirited sacred writings off from Egypt. Kaplony assumes that the expedition mentioned in the Satrap stela, according to which statues and holy writings were retrieved, concerned Nubia and refers this data to information in *P. Bremner-Rhind* (P. BM 10188) of 306/305 B.C. where there is supposed to be mention of "Raub eines heiligen Buches". The Satrap stela actually concerns the expedition of Ptolemy I to Syria and the region of the Sinai (cf. my article in: *Anc. Soc.* 22, 1991, 164-185), while the colophon of *P. Bremner-Rhind* indicates that its author was aware of the danger foreign invasions brought. Cf. below p. 166.

time the pharaoh, first Taharqa and then Tanutamun, retreated to the south, to the family seat at Napata, and returned from this refuge to attack the Assyrian garrisons left on the Nile and to reach accords with the chiefs of the nomes recruited from among the Egyptians. It is hardly surprising then that reprisals aimed at the population, sacking of the cities and extensive booty-taking, accompanied subsequent Assyrian invasions.<sup>31</sup>

Two cuneiform sources specifically mention statues of Egyptian gods being carried away. The first is a stela erected on the Nahr el-Kelb river (formerly Lykos) in Syria shortly after Esarhaddon's invasion of Egypt in year 10 of his reign, i.e. in 671 B.C.<sup>32</sup> The stela reads:

"I entered Memphis, his royal residence, amidst (general) jubilation and rejoicing ... afterwards ... [I en]tered; and his personal property (lit. palace), the gods and goddesses of Tirhakah, king of Nubia, together with their possessions ... I declared as booty".

A similar but more detailed report is to be found in the chronicle originating from Babylon which according to the colophon was recorded in year 22 of Darius I (500/499). The chronicle concerns events from about the middle of the 8th to the middle of the 7th century B.C. and records for year 10 of Esarhaddon's reign:<sup>33</sup>

"In the month Nisan the army of Assyria marched to Egypt (text broken).<sup>34</sup> On the third, sixteenth (and) eighteenth days of the month Tammuz — three times — there was a massacre in Egypt (Var. adds: It was sacked (and) its gods were abducted). On the twenty-second day Memphis, the royal city, was captured (and) abandoned by its king. His (king's) son and bro[ther were taken pr]isoner. (The city) was sacked, its inhabitants plundered (and) its booty carried off" (IV, 23-28).

After the death of Esarhaddon, Taharqa regained control of Egypt, but Ashurbanipal sent his troops to conquer the country again. His second cam-

<sup>31</sup> For Assyrian occupation cf. K.A. KITCHEN, *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt*, Warminster 1973, 391-398; A. SPALINGER, *Orientalia* 43, 1974, 295-326; IDEM, *JAOS* 94, 1974, 316-328. Demotic romances of the Petubast Cycle and the *Chronicle of John, Bishop of Nikiu* refer to this occupation, however. Cf. A. SPALINGER, *JARCE* 13, 1976, 140-142; IDEM, *SAK* 5, 1977, 240.

<sup>32</sup> D.D. LUCKENBILL, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, II, Chicago 1927, §§ 584-595; A.L. OPPENHEIM, *ANET*<sup>2</sup>, 293.

<sup>33</sup> A.L. OPPENHEIM, *ANET*<sup>2</sup>, 302-303; A.K. GRAYSON, *op. cit.* (n. 7) No. 1, IV, 23-28 (pp. 85-86). On this chronicle cf. *ibidem*, pp. 14-17. 69.

<sup>34</sup> The remark refers to the text which was copied, cf. A.K. GRAYSON, *op. cit.*, 85 (commentary to IV, 23).

paign in 663 B.C. ended with the sack and destruction of Thebes. The fall of the city had such repercussions throughout the ancient world that fifty years later the prophet Nahum (3, 8-10) gave Thebes as an example of the fate awaiting the Assyrian capital of Niniveh.<sup>35</sup> The surviving lists of the booty plundered from the city do not mention any statues.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, the matter seems to be obvious. Jeremiah (43,10-13), in foretelling Nebuchadnezzar's attack on Egypt in 586, speaks of "the houses of Egyptian deities being burned down, the gods themselves being burned or abducted".<sup>37</sup>

Thus, for this period there is evidence of the abduction of images of Egyptian deities. Perhaps part of the booty was discovered in the ruins of Essarhaddon's palace at Niniveh; the finds included fragments of three life-size statues of Egyptian kings, two of them with cartouches of Taharqa.<sup>38</sup>

No records exist for any seizure of Egyptian gods during the period of the Persian occupation.<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, there is every reason to believe that

<sup>35</sup> The caravan of plunder from Ashurbanipal's sack of Thebes, which passed through Palestine and Syria, may have been the source of this opinion. It may have also given rise to the legend about the incredible wealth of "hundred-gates Thebes" recorded in the *Iliad* (IX 381-384). The latter opinion was repeated, together with a quote from the *Iliad*, by Diodorus (I 45, 4-7). Cf. W. BURKERT, *Wiener Studien* N.S. 10, 1976, 5-21. Great amounts of booty are also mentioned in a cuneiform tablet Brit. Mus. K 8692 which presumably concerns the occupation of Memphis by Assyrians. Publ. W.G. LAMBERT, *JJS* 33, 1982, 392-397.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. *Rassam Cylinder*, col. II. 28-48 (D.D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.* (n. 32). II, § 778; A.L. OPPENHEIM, *ANET*<sup>2</sup>, 295); Brit. Mus. K 228 + K 2675 (D.D. LUCKENBILL, *op. cit.*, §§ 900-907; A.L. OPPENHEIM, *ANET*<sup>2</sup>, 297).

<sup>37</sup> Cf. J. SCHWARTZ, *BIFAO* 48, 1949, 76-78; A. SPALINGER, *SAK* 5, 1977, 237-244; E. EDEL, *GM* 29, 1978, 13-20; A. LEAHY, *JEA* 74, 1988, 183-189.

<sup>38</sup> According to W.K. SIMPSON, *Sumer* 10, 1954, 193-194, they were abducted around 670 B.C. by Esarhaddon or they could have been taken by Ashurbanipal around 663 B.C. Similarly J. YOYOTTE, *Biblica* 37, 1956, 463. The opinion of V. VIKENTIEV - I.E.S. EDWARDS - W.K. SIMPSON, *Sumer* 11, 1955, 111-116; 129-133; 193-194, that they were sent by Taharka himself is less probable.

<sup>39</sup> The only Egyptian source in which scholars see an allusion to the abduction of a divine image (of Arsafes; J.J. CLÈRE, *RdE* 6, 1951, 152 n. 5; G. ROEDER, *Die ägyptische Götterwelt*, Zürich-Stuttgart 1959, 217) is the inscription of Semtutefnakht (Stela Naples Museum 1035 — K. SETHE, *Urk.* II, 1-6; P. TRESSON, *BIFAO* 30, 1931, 369-391; G. ROEDER, *op. cit.*, 214-219; M. LICHTHEIM, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, III, Berkeley - Los Angeles - London 1980, 42-43 (transl.); O. PERDU, *RdE* 36, 1985, 105g). The phrase which actually occurs there: "You have turned your back to Egypt" (*ir.n.k s3.k r B3k.t*, l. 8) does not include more than just an allusion to the Persian in-

statues were carried off from Egypt at that time, too. It is necessary first to present in brief terms the situation in Egypt at the time. It is known that the Persians conquered Egypt twice. During the first Persian conquest (525-404 B.C.) considerable numbers of Persian troops were engaged in crushing numerous revolts. In 404 BC the Egyptians won independence for some time. After several expeditions organized by subsequent rulers, the Persians recaptured Egypt in 343 and the country again became a Persian satrapy.<sup>40</sup>

Greek writers accused the Persians of numerous excesses against Egyptian religion. According to Herodotus, Cambyses was the ruler who was infamous for having killed the sacred Apis bull,<sup>41</sup> thrashed a number of priests, burnt the statues of gods in Memphis and committed many other crimes against the Egyptians.<sup>42</sup> Later Greek sources provide further details. Diodorus says that the Egyptians rose in rebellion, as they were unable to endure the harshness of Persian dominion and their lack of respect for the native gods. He also mentions that the temple of Amon in Thebes<sup>43</sup> was demolished and that "the silver and gold and costly works of ivory and rare

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vasion. Cf. e.g., Israel stela: "In einem einzigen Jahr sind die Tjehenu aufgezehrt (verbrannt) worden, denn Seth hat ihnen den Rücken (*ḥ3*) gekehrt" (l. 11; *KRI* IV, 15; E. HORNING, *Festgabe H. Brunner*, Wiesbaden 1983 (= *ÄAT* 5), 228); Tutankhamun Restoration Stela: "This land (Egypt) had been struck by catastrophe, (because) the gods had turned their backs (*mkḥ3*) to it" (l. 8; *Urk.* IV, 2027, 11-12).

<sup>40</sup> The more important bibliography concerning Persian rule is given in J.D. RAY, *The Persian Empire. Egypt 525-404 B.C.*, [in:] *CAH* IV, 1988, 833-839. Cf. also J.D. RAY, *Egypt: Dependence and Independence (425-343 B.C.)*, [in:] H. SANCISI-WEERDENBURG (Ed.), *Achaemenid History. I. Sources, Structures and Synthesis*, Leiden 1987, 79-95; P. BRIANT, *Ethno-classe dominante et populations soumises dans l'empire achéménide: Le cas d'Égypte*, [in:] A. KUHRT – H. SANCISI-WEERDENBURG (Eds.), *Achaemenid History. III. Method and Theory*, Leiden 1988, 137-173; A.B. LLOYD, *Herodotus on Cambyses. Some Thoughts on Recent Work*, *ibidem*, 55-66; V. WESSETZKY, 'Fragen zum Verhalten der mit den Persern zusammenarbeitenden Ägypter', *GM* 124, 1991, 83-88.

<sup>41</sup> The killing of Apis is also recorded in Plutarchus, *De Iside* 44 (*Mor.* 368F); Justinus I 9; Clemens of Alexandria, *Protrepticus* 4, 52, 8.

<sup>42</sup> Herodotus III 29; 37. Strabo X 3, 21 (C 473) with reference to Herodotus, says that Cambyses ordered the temples of the Cabyri and of Hephaestus in Memphis to be destroyed. Justinus (I 9) mentions temples of Apis and other gods.

<sup>43</sup> Diodorus (I 46, 2-4) does not mention the name of this temple, but his description leaves no doubt as to the identification. According to Strabon (XVII 1, 46 [C 816]) many temples in Thebes were destroyed by Cambyses. Pausanias (I 42, 3) attributes the destruction of the monumental statue of Memnon to him.

stone were carried off by the Persians, when Cambyses burnt the temples of Egypt".<sup>44</sup> Strabo tells of a devastated temple in Heliopolis, "which affords many evidence of the madness and sacrilege of Cambyses, who partly by fire and partly by iron sought to outrage the temples, mutilating them and burning them on every side".<sup>45</sup> Polyaeus (*Strat.* VII 9) says that Cambyses ordered the sacred animals of Egypt to be driven in front of his troops so as to break down the resistance of the Egyptians at Pelusium. St. Jerome (*Comm. in Dan.* XI 7-9) attributes the abduction of divine statues from Egypt to this particular ruler.

Likewise, Artaxerxes III Ochus is thought to have killed the sacred Apis bull in Memphis and the sacred ram in Mendes.<sup>46</sup> Diodorus summed up Persian policy towards the Egyptians at the time in the following terms:

"Artaxerxes, after taking over all Egypt and demolishing the walls of the most important cities, by plundering the shrines gathered a vast quantity of silver and gold, and carried off the inscribed records from the ancient temples, which later on Bagoas returned to the Egyptian priests on the payment of huge sums by way of ransom" (XVI 51; *Loeb*).<sup>47</sup>

The accumulation of negative stories and particularly the fact that Cambyses and Ochus are accused of the same or similar acts may raise doubts as to the reliability of these horror stories. It is believed that Herodotus, who travelled in Egypt around 450 B.C., based his opinions upon the information provided by Egyptian priests disenchanted with Cambyses because of his fiscal policies toward the temples as recorded in the Demotic Chronicle.<sup>48</sup> The matter seems to be rather more complicated and as yet unex-

<sup>44</sup> Diodorus I 44, 3; 46, 4; 49, 5. Similarly I 95, 4-5, where the author contrasts what Cambyses did with Darius' attitude toward priests and religion. A similar contrast is to be found in the *Demotic Chronicle*, *Verso* c, 7-8 (W. SPIEGELBERG, *Die sogenannte Demotische Chronik des Pap. No. 215 der Bibliothèque Nationale zu Paris*, Leipzig 1914 (= *Demotische Studien* 7). Cf. E. BRESCIANI, *EVO* 4, 1981, 217-222.

<sup>45</sup> XVII 1, 27 (C 805). Herodotus (IX 13) mentions Mardonius, a general of Xerxes, burning the temples in Athens in 480 and provides a number of details suggesting the act was not an attack on Greek religion.

<sup>46</sup> Deinon in Plut., *De Iside* 11, 31 (*Moralia* 355c; 363c; *FGH* 680 F 21); Aelianus, *De Nat. Animalium*, X 28; *Var. hist.* IV 8; VI 8; Curt. 4, 1(5); 7(29); Sulpicius Severus 2, 14, 4ff; 16. 8; Souda, s.v. ἄσατο.

<sup>47</sup> The same author (XVII 49, 2) says the Egyptians welcomed Alexander because "the Persians had committed impieties against the temples and had governed harshly".

<sup>48</sup> P. Bibl. Nat. 215, *Verso* d — W. SPIEGELBERG, *op. cit.* (n. 44). According to this document, only three temples, in Memphis, Letopolis (*Wn-hm*) and a locality to the north of Heliopolis (*Pr-H<sup>c</sup>pj-Iwn*; *Pr-H<sup>c</sup>pj-mht*; readings uncertain), retained the full

plained.<sup>49</sup> Thus, I would like to discuss these issues in some detail, appreciating that it will hardly be an exhaustive treatment of the problem.

It is noteworthy that Ochus invaded Egypt only after a number of rebellions had occurred, after the Persians had made several unsuccessful attempts to reconquer the country and incurred heavy losses while crossing the northern Sinai and, finally, after the stout resistance Nectanebo II put up. In this light, the repressive measures taken against Egyptian cities and temples by the Persians appear quite likely. Diodorus' reference (XVI 51) to a detail connected with the looting of the Egyptian temples appears particularly credible. We learn from it that the inscribed records carried off from the old temples (ἐκ τῶν ἀρχαίων ἱερῶν ἀναγραφαί) were returned by Bagoas on payment of ransom. The Greek term ἀναγραφαί refers to practically any form of written record.<sup>50</sup> Kept in the ancient temples, however, these records must have been old as well and, therefore, of great value. Hence the priests were willing to pay a high price for having them back. It may be conjectured, then, that the records were in some way connected with the cult. The eunuch Bagoas had been a grey eminence at the court of the last Persian kings, and the commander of the Persian armies during the invasion. He poisoned the rulers one after the other and raised their successors to the throne. He shared the fate of his victims at last and died probably in 335 B.C.<sup>51</sup> The year of his death indicates the approximate date of his

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income from the earlier period; the rest got only half the cattle supplied to them, and were supposed to acquire birds and other products for offerings by themselves. In the opinion of E. BRESCIANI, *EVO* 6, 1983, 67-83, the mentioned temples are the only establishments to retain their income in the area of Memphis, not the whole of Egypt. It is worth mentioning that Darius, who presumably took some action to improve the situation (E. DRIOTON - J. VANDIER, *L'Égypte, des origines à la conquête d'Alexandre*, Paris 1975, 602), is well remembered in Classical sources (Herodotus II, 110; Diodorus I 95, 4-5; Polyaeus, *Strat.* VII 11, 7). Cf. also n. 44.

<sup>49</sup> The opinion of I. HOFMANN, *SAK* 9, 1981, 179-199, that the image of Cambyses recorded by Herodotus was formed in Babylonia and subsequently transferred to Egypt and adapted not always fortunately to local realities, seems rather unlikely. Cf. remarks by T.S. BROWN, *Historia* 31, 1982, 387-403; A.B. LLOYD, *op. cit.* (n. 40), 55-66.

<sup>50</sup> Diodorus uses this term more frequently (e.g. I 46, 7; 69, 7; 96,1). 'Αναγραφαί or ἱεραὶ ἀναγραφαί are mentioned as sources by Classical authors writing about Egypt. Cf. F. PFISTER, *Historia* 10, 1961, 46-47; O. MURRAY, *JEA* 56, 1970, 143, also e.g. *P. Tebt.* III.1 703, 63. 102. 167. 210. 211.

<sup>51</sup> On Bagoas cf. F. CAUER, *RE* 2, 1896, 2771-272 No.1.

transaction with the Egyptian priests, because it seems obvious that the transaction could not have taken place during the campaign itself.

The references to the period of Persian domination in contemporary and later Egyptian sources are few. They indicate that certain Persian kings attempted to legalize their authority by adopting titlature similar to the Pharaohs,<sup>52</sup> by worshipping Egyptian gods,<sup>53</sup> and by building and restoring temples.<sup>54</sup> In contrast, the records mention the presence of Persian troops in some of the temples and the resulting disturbances in temple proceedings and priests abandoning the temples.<sup>55</sup> There is information about

<sup>52</sup> Only Cambyses and Darius I had Egyptian titlatures (J. VON BECKERATH, *Handbuch der ägyptischen Königsnamen*, Munich – Berlin 1984 (= *MÄS*), 113-114. 278). In the case of Cambyses, we know that it was prepared by Udjahorresne, fleet commander under Amasis and Psammetichus III and priest of Neith, who later served as chief physician to Cambyses and Darius in addition to other offices. The information comes from his biographical inscription prepared in the 3rd year of Darius I (519) on a statuette now in the Vatican Museum (Inv. No. 158 [113], l. 13 — G. POSENER, *La première domination perse en Egypte*, Cairo 1936 (= *IFAO*, *BdE* 11), 1-26. 164ff.; M. LICHTHEIM, *op. cit.* (n. 39), 36-41 (transl.); A.B. LLOYD, *JEA* 68, 1982, 166-180; U. KAPLONY-HECKEL, *Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments*, I, Gütersloh 1983, 603-608 (transl.); I. RÖSSLER-KÖHLER, *GM* 85, 1985, 43-54. A text on a figurine from the mid 4th century B.C. found at Mit Rahina probably refers to the same person. Cf. E. BRESCIANI, *EVO* 8, 1985, 1-6. On the legitimacy of both rulers cf. remarks by K.M.T. ATKINSON, *JAOS* 76, 1956, 167-177.

<sup>53</sup> In reference to Cambyses see a statuette of Udjahorresne, ll. 13-15. 22-23. 25-27. We also know he asked advice of the oracle at Buto (Herodotus III 64). Presumably in the times of Darius I, the general Amasis observes in his stela from the Serapeum in Memphis (Louvre 359), ll. 4-5: "J'ai placé le respect pour toi (Apis) dans les coeurs du peuple et des étrangers qui étaient en Egypte" and says that he convinced the Persian heads of the nomes to make offerings to the dead Apis (G. POSENER, *op. cit.*, 41-47). The same author (*op. cit.*, 177-178) is right in emphasizing that in this case Amasis was only fulfilling the orders of a satrap or king. According to Polyaeus, *Strat.* VII 11, 7, Darius gave 100 talents of gold to bury Apis.

<sup>54</sup> The restoration of the temple of Neith by Cambyses is mentioned on a statuette of Udjahorresne, l. 19. We also know that Darius built a temple at Hibis in Khargeh oasis (H.E. WINLOCK, *The Temple of Hibis in el-Khargeh Oasis*, I, New York 1941; N. DE GARIS DAVIES, *The Temple of Hibis in el-Khargeh Oasis*, III, New York 1953), at Tod (J. GRENIER, *Tod*, Cairo 1980 [= *FIFAO* 18.1], 259 n. 164), Kasr el-Goueita (A.B. LLOYD, [in:] B. TRIGGER e.a., *Ancient Egypt. A Social History*, Cambridge 1983, 294), El-Kab (?; G. POSENER, *op. cit.* (n. 52), 179), Busiris (J. VON BECKERATH, *LÄ* 1, 1975, 383-384; *Porter-Moss*, IV, 44).

<sup>55</sup> See Udjahorresne's statuette, ll. 17-23. Inscriptions on a statue and statue-bases of Djedhor, a priest in Athribis, also refer to the second period of Persian rule (Cairo JE 46341; Chicago OI 10789); they were recorded at the beginning of the Ptolemaic period

strife and rebellion, resulting in damages incurred by cities and their residents.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, Cambyses<sup>57</sup> and Artaxerxes<sup>58</sup> are said to have confiscated temple revenues and several temples were apparently destroyed.<sup>59</sup>

The small number and the analytic nature of the data can hardly lead to definite conclusions about the Persian occupation. Still less can be said

and reveal that the presence of soldiers in the temple at Athribis had presumably interfered with daily proceedings at the temple (E. JELÍNKOVÁ-REYMOND, *Les inscriptions de la statue guerisseuse de Djed-Her-le-Sauveur*, Cairo 1956 (= *IFAO, BdE* 23); P. VERNUS, *Athribis, Textes et documents relatifs à l'histoire d'une ville du delta égyptien à l'époque pharaonique*, Cairo 1978 (= *IFAO, BdE* 74), Doc. 160 and 300; E.J. SHERMAN, *JEA* 67, 1981, 100). He mentions that he carried out the burials of the sacred falcons in secret "hidden before the foreigners (*ḥ3s.wt*)" (Chicago, B 9; similarly Cairo, TM 131). He also mentions the presence of numerous unembalmed falcons in "the chamber of 70 (presumably a kind of kiosk in which the mummified falcons rested for 70 days following their embalming)" (Chicago, B 9-10; Cairo, 42-43). The term *ḥ3sw.t* used here seems to be unequivocal in referring to the Persians. Cf. E.J. SHERMAN, *JEA* 67, 1981, 95(u). In his biography prepared in the first years of the rule of the Ptolemies, Petosiris, priest of Thot in Hermopolis, speaks of the temple being abandoned by the personnel and priests in the Persian period (Tomb of Petosiris, inscription 81, ll. 29-33 — G. LEFEBVRE, *Le tombeau de Petosiris*, II, Cairo 1923; M. LICHTHEIM, *op. cit.* [n. 39], 46 [transl.]).

<sup>56</sup> According to the texts on the statuette of Udjahorresne, ll. 33-34. 40-41, the city of Sais and its inhabitants suffered during "the very great turmoil (*nšn*) when it happened in the whole land" under Cambyses. See also inscription of Petosiris 81, ll. 29-33, which mentions revolts and turmoil (*nšn*) in Egypt in the Persian period. E. OTTO, *Die biographischen Inschriften der ägyptischen Spätzeit*, Leiden 1954, 181 n. 4, assumes, however, that the text refers to the time of Macedonian rule. Revolts are also mentioned in Greek sources: Diodorus XI 71, 4; Thuc. I 104. 109-110; Herodotus III 12; VII 1. 7.

<sup>57</sup> *Demotic Chronicle, Verso d* (cf. n. 44).

<sup>58</sup> *Satrap stela*, l. 9 (cf. n. 19). H. GOEDICKE, *BES* 6, 1984, 39, assumes that *Ḥšryš* in the text is a transcription of the name Arsēs. Cf. however, remarks by A. SPALINGER, *ZÄS* 105, 1978, 151-152.

<sup>59</sup> A graffito in the temple of Satis on Elephantine from the year 282/281 speaks: "Die Ruhestätte der grossen Sothis, der Herrin von Elephantine, war zum Einsturz gebracht worden; (denn) der Meder war nach Ägypten gekommen" (ll. 1-4a; E. LÜDDEKENS, *MDAIK* 27, 1971, 203-206; U. KAPLONY-HECKEL, *MDAIK* 43, 1986, 160-161). *Mendes stela*, l. 9 (after 265/264; I. Cairo 22181 — K. SETHE, *Urk.* II, no. 13 (pp. 28-54); H. DE MEULENAERE — P. MACKAY, *Mendes II*, Warminster 1976, 174-177 [transl.]), mentions the destruction of the temple at Thmuis presumably by Artaxerxes III. A general note on damages done by the Persians in Egypt in the *Canopus Decree* (238 B.C.) and the *Memphis Decree* (217 B.C.) discussed below.



about the individual policy of each ruler. Our opinions are based on suppositions and not on definite knowledge. There seems to be a considerable discrepancy between the sources in the accounts they provide. On the one hand, the Persian kings appear to have maintained a favourable attitude towards Egyptian religion, and on the other, the very same rulers are known to have occupied Egyptian temples, destroyed them and confiscated their revenues. But this discrepancy might very well be only illusory. The privileged position of temples in Egypt was hardly acceptable to the Persians. The confiscated temple revenues most likely replenished the financial resources of the Persian kings, who probably wanted to increase their own income, not to oppress Egyptian priests, though the purpose of reducing their role may have been pursued as well.

The presence of Persian troops in some temples was not necessarily a form of repression. The walls surrounding the temples made them easily defendable against possible attacks in occupied territory. There is evidence for a comparable occupation of a temple in Athribis by Macedonian troops during the rule of Ptolemy I as satrap.<sup>60</sup> If Udjhorresne, one of the Egyptian collaborators, reports that the soldiers who stayed in the area of the temple of Neith in Sais built their houses there,<sup>61</sup> it may suggest that the troops were stationed there for a longer period of time. Under such circumstances, it is only natural that the temples must have been seriously limited in their religious function, the more so that the foreign troops were not familiar with Egyptian religious customs. In the second century B.C., for example, the priests of the Buchis bull cancelled the ceremony of the enthronement of the new bull twice because of the presence of foreign soldiers in the temple of Amon in Thebes.<sup>62</sup>

Assuming this explanation, it is all the more difficult to understand why the Persians deliberately destroyed Egyptian temples. Since most of the information on the subject dates to the Ptolemaic period, it is possible that the facts mentioned in the sources are not true and were only attributed to the Persians, while the texts, which were of a public nature, reflected a certain policy of the priests supported by the new rulers, as suggested by some scholars. It would seem, however, that it is not just propaganda intended for

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<sup>60</sup> See the inscription of Djedhor (n. 54) — Cairo, ll. 24-28. Cf. E.J. SHERMAN, *JEA* 67, 1981, 100.

<sup>61</sup> Statuette of Udjhorresne, l. 20.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. J.K. WINNICKI, *Ptolemäerarmee in Thebais*, Wrocław — Warszawa 1978, 52, 61-62.

the general public devoid of a justification in reality. Sources today at our disposal may always be questioned as biased. Consequently, records not intended for the masses take on a special importance.

A common element of temples built in the Graeco-Roman period are hidden rooms found also in some of the Pharaonic temples. The entrances to these rooms were masked, making them accessible only to people in the know. These rooms served to hold objects of cult as indicated by texts and representations sometimes found on the walls inside them.<sup>63</sup> The inscriptions in the crypts of the temple of Denderah are particularly important; the building was erected in the reign of Ptolemy IX Soter and decorated in the times of Ptolemy XIII. One of these records goes as follows :

“Portes par où l'on accède au Magasin de Dendera pour y cacher les dieux et pour dissimuler les idoles parèdres à celui qui vient du dehors quand les Asiatiques (*St.tj.w*) marchent contre l'Égypte”.<sup>64</sup>

Two other texts of a similar content are to be found in the crypt.<sup>65</sup> We find there *St.tj.w* “Asiatics” and *hmj.w* “destroyers” as peoples threatening the temple. The former comes from *St.t* which refers to the region north-east of Egypt and was sometimes used in the 4th century B.C. as a reference to the Persian empire.<sup>66</sup> There is no doubt the texts concern the last Persian occupation. Beside the mentioned nations, the texts also refer to Phoenicians (*Fnh.w*), Greeks (*H3w-nb.w*) and Bedouins (*hrj.w-š*; *c3m.w*) whose presence near the temple could have been considered as a danger. It is unlikely that the latter attacked temples, but the threat certainly existed.

One of the funerary papyri dated to 306/305 indicates how extensive this feeling of being threatened by foreigners was; in the colophon we read:

<sup>63</sup> Cf. H. BONNET, *Reallexikon*, 401-402; C. TRAUNECKER, *LÄ* 3, 1980, 823-830. It is probably just such a crypt full of Egyptian statues hidden from the Christians that is described in the early 6th century A.D. by Zacharias Rhetor in his *Life of Severus* (transl. from Syriac by M.A. KUGENER, *Patrologia Orientalis* 2, 1907, 16-35). I know the text only from A. BERNARD, *Le delta égyptien d'après les textes grecs*, I, *Les confins libyques*, Cairo 1970, 211.

<sup>64</sup> Eastern crypt no. 2 — E. CHASSINAT, *Le temple de Dendara*, V, Cairo 1952, 97.

<sup>65</sup> Eastern crypt no. 2 — *ibidem*, V, 60-61; R. GIVEON, *Les Bédouins Shosou des documents égyptiens*, Leiden 1971, Doc. 53 a-b.

<sup>66</sup> K. SETHE, *Urk.* II 3, 16; 4, 4; E. CHASSINAT, *Edfou* VI, p. 236, 3-4. Cf. remarks by R. GIVEON, *op. cit.*, 172-173.

“As to any one of any country, (34) an Ethiopian of Kush or a Syrian who shall displace this book (35) or who shall remove(?) it from(?) me, they shall not be buried, ...”.<sup>67</sup>

The fragment is an incantation against tomb robbers and expresses fear of foreigners invading. The text’s author was obviously aware of such a threat.

There is also an objective non-Egyptian source on the subject of temple destruction, namely an Aramaic letter written in 407 B.C. by the Jewish priests from Elephantine to Bagoas, the Persian governor of Judea. The authors of the document ask for permission to restore their temple which was destroyed by the Egyptians three years before. They emphasize:

“Or (c’est) depuis les jours des rois d’Egypte (que) nos pères avaient construit ce sanctuaire à Eléphantine-la-forteresse; lorsque Cambyse entra en Egypte, il trouva ce sanctuaire construit; et les sanctuaires des dieux des Egyptiens, on les saccagea tous, et personne n’endommagea rien dans ce sanctuaire-là”.<sup>68</sup>

Even if there is some exaggeration in this report, we can assume that the Persians indeed committed acts of violence against Egyptian temples.<sup>69</sup> The letter is sometimes understood as a reference to the devastation of the Egyptian temples by Cambyses,<sup>70</sup> but the text does not lead directly to such a conclusion.

There is no data on why the Persians destroyed Egyptian temples. Possibly strife and revolts in Egypt, not always strictly against the Persians as a matter of fact,<sup>71</sup> should be considered in this respect. In similarity to the Persians, rebelling Egyptians could have used the temples as fortified places of resistance, effectively leading to the destruction of the buildings.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>67</sup> R.O. FAULKNER, *The Bremner-Rhind Papyrus (Brit. Mus. 10188)*, Brussels 1933 (= *Bibl. Aeg.* 3). The translation here slightly differs from that of R.O. FAULKNER, *JEA* 23, 1937, 11.

<sup>68</sup> A. COWLEY, *Aramaic Papyri in the Fifth Century B.C.*, Oxford 1923, no. 30, 12-13. Translation by P. GRELOT, *Documents araméens d’Egypte*, Paris 1972, no. 102.

<sup>69</sup> I cannot share the opinion of B. PORTEN, *Archives from Elephantine*, Berkeley – Los Angeles 1968, 291, that this fragment of text was “apparently little more than popular Egyptian propaganda against the Persians”.

<sup>70</sup> E.g. R. DE VAUX, *RB* 46, 1937, 36.

<sup>71</sup> P. BRIANT, *op. cit.*, (n. 40), 139-143 notes that often the cause of revolts were taxes introduced by the invaders.

<sup>72</sup> Examples of actions of this kind are found in sources from the Ptolemaic period. In the Rosetta decree (*OGIS* 90) issued in 196, the priests congratulate Ptolemy V Epi-

Looting divine images, which were often of precious stones, may have taken place during the suppression of occasional rebellions in Egypt or during the invasion of Egypt by Artaxerxes III who ordered strict punishments.

The interpretation presented above explains a seeming inconsistency in our Egyptian sources. There is also no essential difference between the contemporary records of the Persian period and those from later times. The Persians may have reacted harshly on occasion, but they hardly pursued a deliberate policy against Egyptian religion. Therefore, information derived from the Classical writers concerning the excesses of Persian rulers becomes untrustworthy.<sup>73</sup>

To recapitulate, it may be said that during the Assyrian occupation divine images were abducted from Egypt and the sources suggest that Esarhaddon was responsible and a possibility that Ashurbanipal was also responsible for such an act. There is much also to indicate that the Persians followed suit, although in their case it is difficult to suggest anyone in par-

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phanes on having punished the rebels "who had wrought much evil against the temples and those dwelling in Egypt" (εἰς τε τὰ ἱερά καὶ τοὺς ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ κατοικοῦντας πολλὰ κακὰ συντετελεσμένοι; l. 23) and vanquished the rebels who had "troubled the country and did wrong to the temples" (τὴν χώραν ἐνοχλήσαντας καὶ τὰ ἱερά ἀδικήσαντας; l. 27). In a petition to the strategos of the Arsinoite nome from the year 164, the author mentions the destruction of the temple of Amon by the men of Antiochus IV in 168 and goes on to describe the attack by rebels (τῶν Αἰγυπτίων ἀποστατῶν [ἐπιβαλόντων] who did much damage to the temple itself (*P. Tebt.* III.1 781). From Diodorus (XXXI 17b) we know that in 165/164 the insurgents escaped to Panopolis and the siege of the city by royal forces led to its destruction. It is difficult to interpret these facts beyond all doubt and conclude as the actual run of events. It would seem, however, that regardless who actually damaged the temples, the culprits in this kind of documents were always the rebels. The retreat of the rebels to the temple at Edfu during the great revolt in the Thebaid in 206-186 assumed on the basis of a dedicatory inscription (e.g. Cl. PRÉAUX, *CdE* 11, 1936, 532; P.W. PESTMAN, *CdE* 40, 1965, 160; E. BRESCIANI, *Assuan*, Pisa 1978 [= *Biblioteca di Studi Antichi* 16], 142) is based on an earlier interpretation of the text. Cf. now C. DE WIT, *CdE* 36, 1961, 74. 288; S. CAUVILLE - D. DEVAUCHELLE, *RdE* 35, 1984, 35. The work on the construction of the temple could have been interrupted as a result of the rebellion.

<sup>73</sup> It is presently assumed (e.g. G. POSENER, *op. cit.* [n. 52], 170. 174; A. KLASENS, *JEOL* 3, 1944-1948, 346-348; E. DRIOTON - J. VANDIER, *op. cit.* [n. 48], 601; E. BRESCIANI, *SCO* 7, 1978, 334) that Cambyses did not kill the Apis bull. On the basis of a stela from the Serapeum at Memphis it is known that Apis died in year 6 of Cambyses and was buried with full ceremony, and that the king had a splendid sarcophagus prepared for him.

ticular. We do know that Cambyses sent some 6.000 captives back to Susa,<sup>74</sup> and we have a Babylonian sale contract of a female slave abducted from Egypt in 525 B.C.<sup>75</sup> It would seem then that the booty this ruler seized on the Nile was sent back, as was the custom, to his land. It is difficult to be sure whether there were any divine images included in it. Cambyses himself was forced to return to Susa speedily upon hearing of the usurpation of Smerdis (Gaumata). It is highly doubtful that he would have devoted any thought to carrying statues off with him. Moreover, he planned to reach Babylon over the desert road through Petra, a route which his successor Darius followed after Cambyses' death in southern Syria. The desert route is not an easy one to travel; it requires special preparations and puts constraints on the number of the travelling party.<sup>76</sup> It is hard to imagine booty including statues being shipped under such unfavourable conditions.

Nor is there any certainty regarding Xerxes. He is known, however, as the author of abductions in Greece and Asia Minor,<sup>77</sup> and in Egypt he put down a rebellion. Herodotus (VII 4-7) characterizes his reign as harsh and his death presumably sparked off another revolt.<sup>78</sup>

Without excluding any of the rulers mentioned already, it would seem that the most probable candidate as far as abductions are concerned is Artaxerxes III who reconquered Egypt following several disasters which met the Persian armies and a fierce resistance put up by Nectanebo II.<sup>79</sup>

There is no evidence as to which particular statues were abducted and where they were taken. It can be assumed that divine images were sent to the capitals of the invaders, to Niniveh and Susa respectively, usually by the route through Syria, Mesopotamia and onward. In this way information from the Ptolemaic period concerning the abduction of statues by the Persians becomes trustworthy.

<sup>74</sup> Ctesias (*FGH III C* 688 F 13); Ioannes of Nikiu, 51; Jamblichus, *Vita Pyth.* IV. See A. KLASENS, *JEOL* 3, 1944-1948, 345.

<sup>75</sup> B. MEISSNER, *ZÄS* 29, 1891, 123-124. The text is dated to 22 Kislev of the sixth year of Cambyses (= 3rd Oct., 524).

<sup>76</sup> See my article in *Anc. Soc.* 20, 1989, 80-81.

<sup>77</sup> See above part I.

<sup>78</sup> Diodorus XI 71, 3.

<sup>79</sup> Perhaps the Egyptian military standard(?) with the name of Apries, found at Persepolis and now in the Iran Bastan Museum in Teheran, once constituted part of the booty of one of these rulers. Cf. M. KOROSTOVTSSEV, *ASAE* 45, 1947, 128-131. This author (*op. cit.*, 131) signals the presence of other hitherto unpublished Egyptian objects in this museum, perhaps also part of the Persian booty.

It is easy to imagine how Egyptians reacted to these acts of the invaders when Egyptian gods failed to prevent profanation in an obvious way. The text of the Bentresh stela should presumably be considered in this context.<sup>80</sup> Bentresh, the daughter of the ruler of Bakhtan somewhere in Asia Minor, had fallen ill. Her father turned to Ramses II to request a doctor and the statue of god Khonsu from Thebes to be sent to her. The statue was indeed shipped and the princess was healed, but the ruler of Bakhtan kept the statue. After three years and nine months he dreamt of the god in the shape of a golden falcon flying off to Egypt. Frightened and afraid of the consequences, the ruler quickly returned the statue to its place of origin.

These events were set in the reign of Ramses II and some parts of the text have close parallels to the text of a marriage treaty of this ruler with a Hittite princess. Other parts allow us to believe, however, that it was written at a later date, although it is impossible to specify when exactly. The Persian and the Ptolemaic periods have been proposed, but there is no conclusive evidence for either of these. The former possibility is more likely judging by the character of the text.<sup>81</sup>

It appears probable that the author of the stela, which was presumably set up in front of the temple, used an authentic event to introduce a commentary about contemporary plunder of divine images from the temples under foreign occupation. The text's message apparently is that a statue of the god may fall into captivity, but the god can free himself of bondage if he only wishes to.

### III. SOURCES CONCERNING THE RETRIEVAL OF STATUES BY THE PTOLEMIES

There are five basic sources which mention the Ptolemies retrieving divine images; four are in Egyptian and one in Greek and all were recorded shortly after the events they concern.<sup>82</sup> The oldest sources — the satrap

<sup>80</sup> Louvre C 284. Publ. recently in *KRI*, II, 284-287; transl. M. LICHTHEIM, *op. cit.* (n. 39), 90. Cf. M. BROZE, *La princesse de Bakhtan*, Brussels 1989 (= *Monographies Reine Elisabeth* 6).

<sup>81</sup> The text has been the object of several studies. A critical review of the discussion is presented in S.N. MORSCHAUSER, *SAK* 15, 1988, 203-223. I am indebted to H.-J. THISSEN for drawing my attention to this paper.

<sup>82</sup> In a stela from Hermopolis dated to the eighth year of Nectanebo I (presently in Cairo) we read about the king "Der herbeibrachte die [Bilder] der Götter(?) dieses Landes als König beider Länder" (l. 2; G. ROEDER, *ASAE* 52, 1954, 375-416). The text, how-

stela and the Pithom stela — commemorate the granting of land and various revenues, and were originally placed in front of the temples. Beside the privileges granted, they also mention certain events of general importance. Two other texts are the famous decrees by priestly synods, one edited in Canopus, the other in Memphis. It is known that representatives of the priests met every year by order of the ruler, presumably together with him or his representatives. At least some of these meetings ended in decrees which recognized the ruler's beneficial role in respect to the population and the temples. The decrees were usually trilingual, carved on stone stelae and set up in front of all the larger temples in Egypt.<sup>83</sup>

This group of documents is supplemented by a Greek inscription from Adulis which was copied by Cosmas Indicopleustes in the 6th century A.D. The text was incomplete already at this time and there is no knowledge of the circumstances of its creation. A reference to statues being retrieved may possibly be found in a Demotic letter from Fayum dated to 149 B.C. which is contemporary to the events it describes. We also have the remarks of St. Jerome contained in his commentary to the Book of Daniel. Furthermore, the subject is taken up in two prophecies whose interpretation still remains unclear.

The satrap stela was made in November of 311 B.C.<sup>84</sup> The priests of a temple at Buto in the western Delta announce that the ruler has granted them the land which the Persians had confiscated earlier. Ptolemy I, who was then ruling as satrap on behalf of the minor Alexander IV, did this presumably because he had received a favorable and successful prophecy from the local oracle, which he had customarily requested before embarking upon the expedition.<sup>85</sup> On this occasion the priests enumerate a number of the king's other actions of a general Egyptian nature. Firstly, the return to Egypt of divine images and other objects of Egyptian cult found in Asia. Secondly, moving the royal residence to Alexandria. Thirdly, organizing an expedition to Phoenicia, and fourthly, another expedition to the Sinai. The return of the statues is described as follows:

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ever, does not concern the retrieval of images from abroad, but the restoration of the temple and cult after a period of internal confusion which brought Nectanebo to power, a fact which is referred to in the next line.

<sup>83</sup> W. OTTO, *SBAW* 1926, 2. Abh., 25-36.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. above n. 22.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. J.K. WINNICKI, *Anc. Soc.* 22, 1991, 165, n. 51.

"He (Ptolemy I) brought back the images of the gods which were found in Asia together with all the equipment and all the souls of Re of the temples of Upper and Lower Egypt" (l. 6).

The fact that the return of the statues is mentioned in first place in the text presumably reflects the importance it had for the priests who were the authors of the text on the stela. The events which we currently know to have preceded the carving of the stela permit us to conclude that the return of the images must have taken place during the expedition mentioned later in the text. The only expedition of Ptolemy I this can refer to is the campaign against Demetrius Poliorketes which started with the battle of Gaza in the late autumn of 312 B.C. and then spread to include Phoenicia where Ptolemy stationed his garrisons. Although the exact extent is not known, it is probable that Sidon was the farthest point reached to the north. It should be remarked that during this campaign Ptolemy I organized a punitive expedition to the Sinai and brought home the statues of foreign deities.<sup>86</sup> Ptolemy celebrated the end of this campaign by organizing a series of ceremonies in Egypt. The Egyptian term *ir hrw nfr* "to make a good day" refers to a feast.<sup>87</sup> It can only be assumed that the feast was indeed a royal one with the ruler himself present at it.<sup>88</sup>

Diodorus (XIX 80, 4) draws attention to the significant fact connected with this campaign that the Egyptians took part in the battle at Gaza, as fighting troops, as well as in the transport and supply columns. There can be no doubt that it is the class of warriors, called *machimoi* which we are dealing here and which was described by Herodotus (IX 32) as the only Egyptians capable of fighting. They are known from many sources in the Ptolemaic period.<sup>89</sup>

Priests surely accompanied the Egyptian troops everywhere and it was they who were presumably responsible for identifying and recovering statues of gods and other objects of cult along the way. It is noteworthy that the stela provides no information on how the statues got to Syria, saying simply that they originated from Egypt. Should this be considered an accidental

<sup>86</sup> Cf. J.K. WINNICKI, *Anc. Soc.* 20, 1989, 55-92; 22, 1991, 147-201.

<sup>87</sup> D. LORTON, *JARCE* 12, 1973, 23-31.

<sup>88</sup> This kind of scene is to be found on relief fragments from Karnak dated to the Amarna period and is described in a number of texts from the reign of Amenhotep III; the most comprehensive description is to be found in the Decree of Horemheb. Cf. A.R. SCHULMAN, *Ceremonial Execution and Public Reward*, Freiburg - Göttingen 1988 (= *Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis* 75), 141-143.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. my article in *Aegyptus* 65, 1985, 41-55.



omission or is it perhaps that the accusations directed at the Persians were part of the politics of later rulers ?

“The souls of Re” (*b3.w R<sup>c</sup>*) listed among other objects found in Syria may generate some doubts. This is a general term used in the Late and Graeco-Roman periods to denote sacred books kept in the Houses of Life adjoining the temples.<sup>90</sup> It is hard to imagine papyri rolls being found in Syria, although the discoveries at Qumran indicate that it is not quite impossible.<sup>91</sup> It should be remembered that Artaxerxes III carried off the sacred books (*ἱεραὶ ἀναγραφαί*) from the ancient Egyptian temples. Diodorus adds that Bagoas returned the books on payment of enormous ransom. Possibly not all the rolls returned to their owners at the time.

The broadest report of statues of Egyptian gods coming back to their original locations is provided by the Pithom stela set up by the priests of Atum at Pithom (Heroonpolis).<sup>92</sup> The record dates to year 21 of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (265/264 B.C.), but concerns events from the sixth year of his reign on. The retrieval of the statues occurred between years 6 and 12 of Philadelphus, i.e. between 280/279 and 274/273 B.C., and most likely should be associated with the campaign against Antiochus I in 274/273 B.C.<sup>93</sup>

The translation of the part of text of concern to us in a slightly revised form reads:

“Der König (Ptolemy II) ging nach dem Gau Asien, er gelangte nach *P3rstt*. Er fand dort sämtliche Götter(Statuen) von Baket (Egypt) und brachte sie nach Kemet (Egypt). Sie kamen zusammen mit dem König von Ober- und Unterägypten Ptolemaios nach *Hmtj*. Seine Majestät überwies sie

<sup>90</sup> References to this term were collected by S. SCHOTT, *Bücher und Bibliotheken im alten Ägypten*, Wiesbaden 1990, 68-70. Cf. Ph. DERCHAIN, *Le papyrus Salt 925*, Brussels 1965, 55; W. BARTA, *ZÄS* 97, 1971, 6-7; M. WEBER, *LÄ* 2, 1977, 791; A.E.A. REYMOND, *From Ancient Egyptian Hermetic Writings*, Vienna 1977 (= *MPER* 10), 38-41. It remains unclear what the relation was between *b3.w R<sup>c</sup>* and *mḏ3.t ntr*, discussed by J. QUAEGBEUR, *Anc. Soc.* 11/12, 1980/1981, 227-240.

<sup>91</sup> The Greek papyri taken from the Berlin Museum during the last world war surface in Poland from time to time. *B3.w R<sup>c</sup>* were certainly not inscriptions cut in stone, because the sacred books were something rather hidden from the public eye. Cf. A.H. GARDINER, *JEA* 11, 1925, 2; D. WILDUNG, *op. cit.* (n. 19), 21-25; E. HORNUNG, *ZÄS* 100, 1973, 33-35; H. ALTENMÜLLER, *LÄ* 2, 1977, 510.

<sup>92</sup> I. Cairo 22183 — K. SETHE, *Urk.* II no. 20 (pp. 81-105); A.B. KAMAL, *Stèles ptolémaïques et romaines*, Cairo 1904-1905, I, 171-177; II, pl. 57; G. ROEDER, *op. cit.* (n. 39), 114-128 (transl.).

<sup>93</sup> Cf. my article in *JJP* 20, 1990, 157-167.

nach Kemet, damit sie von den Einwohnern von Kemet mit Jubel empfangen würden bei der Zuweisung dieser Götter.

Nach diesem vollzog Seine Majestät Verklärungen (Sprüche), um die Götter von Kemet von dort nach Kemet zurückzuführen. Sie kamen vor Seine Majestät, weil er sie erhöhen wollte, und Atum würde sein Königtum verlängern bis in Ewigkeit. Er (Ptolemy) war auf dem Ufer, während sie sich auf dem Kanal des Landes des Ostens von Ägypten bis nach dem Harpunen-Gau begaben. Ganz Ägypten war in Freude und dankte Gott wegen seiner Macht, denn er war ein rechter König für diese Götter. Niemals war Gleiches diesem Lande getan worden.

Sie (statues of the gods) gingen zu der Treppe des Ptah (god of Memphis), und sie liessen sich auf ihr nieder.

Am 10. Tag des 4. Monats der *pr.t*-Jahreszeit sagte Seine Majestät zu seinem Königsschreiber: 'Veranlasse, dass die Ausfertigung eines königlichen Befehls an die Tempel von Ober- und Unterägypten abgeschickt wird, um zu veranlassen, daß die Berater, die ausgewählt sind aus den Priestern des Adels in den Gotteshäusern, herbeikommen, und dass sie Götter von Baket begrüßen'. Sie (the priests) zogen hin und kamen zu dem Ort, an dem Seine Majestät angesichts dieser Götter war. Sie fanden, dass die (Götter)statuen aus dem östlichen Harpunen-Gau waren, und verbrachten dort 10 Tage mit Seiner Majestät. Die Götter von Baket kamen nach Kemet, (und) die Götter von Per-Atum kamen nach Teku, um dort zu ruhen.<sup>94</sup> Es war ihre Stätte der Ewigkeit. Das Gesicht Seiner Majestät war darüber aussergewöhnlich froh.

Nach diesem machte Seine Majestät einen Erlass an diese Götter, um [sie zu ehren durch] seine Hofleute. Der König nahm sie zu seinem Schiff mit sich, und sie kamen nach Teku. Sie liessen sich dort nieder. Seine Majestät erhöhte sie vor seinem Vater Atum, dem grossen Gott, dem lebenden von Teku, als ein König in Ewigkeit" (ll. 11-14).

The text is obscure in several places and many details of this translation may generate doubts or be interpreted differently. What is certain is that the king indeed went to the "land of the Philistines" (*P3rstt*), which certainly corresponds to Palestine in the etymological sense, but not necessarily the

<sup>94</sup> D. LORTON, *JEA* 57, 1971, 163, understands the text in similar fashion, although his "Western Harpoon Nome" appears to be a misprint. G. ROEDER: "Sie wurden zu dem Ort gebracht, an dem Seine Majestät war, angesichts dieser Götter. Der grosse Leiter des östlichen Harpunen-Gaues ermittelte, dass sie 10 Tage verbringen würden bis zu dem Ort, an dem Seine Majestät war. Die Götter von Baket, sie kamen nach Kemet. Die Götter von Per-Atum (Pithom) von Teku, sie kamen, um dort zu ruhen".

territorial one. During the campaign the king found the statues of Egyptian gods and brought them back to Egypt with him. The statues first reached *Hmtj*, which is not encountered elsewhere and its localization has not been determined.<sup>95</sup> In late Egyptian texts there is the phenomenon of geographical names being distorted in writing. And so *3ḥ-bi.tj* is written as *Hb*, — Chemmis, a town in the Delta where Horus grew up,<sup>96</sup> *Hw.t- wr.t/Hwr.t* — Hour in the Delta,<sup>97</sup> *Hnt-Mn/Šmn* — Achmim (Panopolis),<sup>98</sup> *Š.t-p. t/(?) Šrp* — the name of Wadi Natrun,<sup>99</sup> *T3-šj/Tš* — the lake land (Fayum),<sup>100</sup> *Tbn-ntr/Dd-bn-ntr/Tbn.t* — Sebennytos,<sup>101</sup> *Dm3/T3j-m3<sup>c</sup>.t* — Djeme.<sup>102</sup> This is not the place to explain the details of this notation. It can be said that part of these are abbreviated records. The authors have written the names down phonetically, not necessarily understanding them.<sup>103</sup> Thus, it would seem probable that the *Hmtj* in the text of the stela is also an abbreviated form, originating perhaps from (*P3*) *Htm T3r(w)* “The Fortress of Tjel”, which usually occurs as *T3r(w)* and corresponds to the present Tell el-Ahmar near el-Qantara. In confirmation of this assumption is the fact that this locality is known in Egyptian sources as a place where the Egyptians greeted the Pharaoh returning after an expedition. In the Graeco-Roman period there was a military post there and later a seat of a bishopric called Sella or Sele.<sup>104</sup> To judge by Pharaonic reliefs, the site was located on the bank of a canal, the same which according to the stela text was used to transport the statues into Egypt. A few years ago the route of this canal was traced almost in its entirety.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>95</sup> Sinai peninsula (H. GAUTHIER, *Dict. géogr.*, III, 176; G. ROEDER, *op. cit.* [n. 39], 120) and Hamath on Orontes (H. GOEDICKE – D. LORTON, *JEA* 57, 1971, 164) are untenable.

<sup>96</sup> *Wb.* I, 13, 3-4; III, 251.

<sup>97</sup> H. GAUTHIER, *Dict. géogr.*, IV, 22.

<sup>98</sup> W. ERICHSEN, *Demotisches Glossar*, 364.

<sup>99</sup> *Wb.* IV, 528, 3.

<sup>100</sup> W. ERICHSEN, *Demotisches Glossar*, 658.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibidem*, 624. 692. Cf. A.H. GARDINER, *JEA* 27, 1941, 58 n. 2.

<sup>102</sup> W. ERICHSEN, *Demotisches Glossar*, 679. On the etymology of this name cf. H.-J. THISSEN, *Die demotischen Graffiti von Medinet Habu*, Sommerhausen 1989 (= *Demotische Studien* 10), 219. Cf. J.D. RAY, *GM* 45, 1981, 57-58.

<sup>103</sup> W.F. ALBRIGHT, *JEA* 10, 1924, 6-8, notes that *T3rw* is a Semitic root.

<sup>104</sup> A.H. GARDINER, *JEA* 6, 1920, 99-116, esp. 104. 116; IDEM, *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica*, II, Oxford 1947, 202-204.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. W.H. SHEA, *BASOR* 226, 1977, 31-38.

The statues were then transported presumably on a canal cutting through the eastern part of the Delta ("land of the East")<sup>106</sup> to the Harpoon Nome.<sup>107</sup> After a description of the joy which the peoples of Egypt expressed upon this royal act, there follows the information that the statues then proceeded on to Memphis. Philadelphus gathered all the priests of Egypt and arranged a ceremony to celebrate the return of the gods. Some of the statues were then moved to Pithom. Judging by the text of the stela, it can be surmised that there were more statues, but that the authors of the stela were interested only in those which belonged to them.

The report concerning the statues is not limited to a brief note. It contains several details connected with the journey to Egypt, with the ceremony in Memphis graced by priests from all over Egypt and with the transportation of a number of statues to Pithom where the stela was erected. It is hard to believe then, that such a detailed narration is nothing but a conventional phrase.<sup>108</sup>

The next ruler to bring back statues of the gods was Ptolemy III Euergetes and this matter comes up in a number of sources. The oldest report is contained in an inscription from Adulis dated to 245-243, preserved in a copy made in the 6th century A.D.,<sup>109</sup> which presents the expedition of this ruler in the following terms:

"Ptolemy (...) led a campaign into Asia (...). Having become master of all the land this side of the Euphrates and of Cilicia and Pamphylia and Ionia and the Hellespont and Thrace and all the forces and Indian elephants in these lands, and having made subject all the princes in the (various) regions, he crossed the Euphrates river and after subjecting to himself Mesopotamia and Babylonia and Sousiane and Persis and Media and all the rest of the land up to Bactriane and having sought out all the temple belongings that had been carried out of Egypt by the Persians and having brought

<sup>106</sup> The term *t3 i3bt n Km.t* does not appear elsewhere. It would seem, however, that it should be connected with *i3bt* which refers to the eastern part of the Delta. Cf. H. GAUTHIER, *Dict. géogr.*, I, 18.

<sup>107</sup> The Harpoon Nome, *Wc* (?) is definitely identical with the Eastern Harpoon Nome, *Wc* (?) *i3btj*, which appears further down in the text and covers Wadi Tumilat and *Tkw*, where some of the images were later sent. Cf. H. GAUTHIER, *Dict. géogr.*, I, 187; W. HELCK, *Die altägyptischen Gaue*, Wiesbaden 1974, 172-174.

<sup>108</sup> D. LORTON, *JEA* 57, 1971, 162-164, drew attention to this.

<sup>109</sup> *OGIS* I 54. Latest publication of the text: W. WOLSKA-CONUS, *La topographie chrétienne de Cosmas*, II, Paris 1962 (= *Sources chrétiennes* 141), 58-59. For date of the text see H. HAUBEN, *AfP* 36, 1990, 30.

them back with the rest of the treasure from the (various) regions he sent (his) forces to Egypt through the canals that had been dug".<sup>110</sup>

The trilingual Canopus decree is a record of the honors Egyptian priests, gathered together in 238 B.C., granted the royal couple in appreciation of their contributions, both to the temples and the country alike.<sup>111</sup> The decree gives several reasons, including the fact that:

"the king marched out and brought back safe to Egypt the sacred images, which had been carried out from the country by the Persians, and returned them to the temples whence each had originally been taken away."<sup>112</sup>

Similar information is provided by the commentary of St. Jerome on the Book of Daniel:

"and he (Ptolemy) came with great army, and entered into the province of the king of the north, i.e. Seleucus called Callinicus (...) and obtained so much as to take Syria and Cilicia and the upper parts across the Euphrates, and almost all Asia. And when he heard that a rebellion was afoot in Egypt, plundering the kingdom of Seleucus he took 40.000 talents of silver and costly vases, and 2.500 images of the gods, among which were those Cambyses had carried away to Persia when Egypt was taken" (XI 7-8).<sup>113</sup>

<sup>110</sup> Transl. R.S. BAGNALL – P. DEROW, *Greek Historical Documents. The Hellenistic Period*, Chico (California) 1981, no. 26 (p. 50): ... ἐξστράτευσαν εἰς τὴν Ἀσίαν (...). Κυριεύσας δὲ τῆς τε ἐντὸς Εὐφράτου χώρας πάσης, καὶ Κιλικίας καὶ Παμφυλίας καὶ Ἰωνίας καὶ τοῦ Ἑλλησπόντου καὶ Θυράκης καὶ τῶν δυνάμεων τῶν ἐν ταῖς χώραις ταύταις πασῶν καὶ ἐλεφάντων Ἰνδικῶν, καὶ τοὺς μονάρχους τοὺς ἐν τοῖς τόποις πάντας ἠπηκόους καταστήσας, διέβη τὸν Εὐφράτην ποταμὸν καὶ, τὴν Μεσοποταμίαν καὶ Βαβυλωνίαν καὶ Σουσιάνην καὶ Περσίδα καὶ Μηδείαν καὶ τὴν λοιπὴν πᾶσαν ἕως Βακτριανῆς ὑφ' ἑαυτῷ ποιησάμενος καὶ ἀναζητήσας ὅσα ὑπὸ τῶν Περσῶν ἱερὰ ἐξ Αἰγύπτου ἐξήχθη καὶ ἀνακομίσας μετὰ τῆς ἄλλης γάζης τῆς ἀπὸ τόπων εἰς Αἴγυπτον, δυνάμεις ἀπέστειλε διὰ τῶν ὀρυχθέντων ποταμῶν.

<sup>111</sup> OGIS I 56. Most recent publication of the Greek text: A. Bernand, *op. cit.* (n. 63), 989-1036. For the hieroglyphic text cf. K. SETHE, *Urk.* II no. 30 (pp.124-154); G. ROEDER, *Kulte, Orakel und Naturverehrung im alten Ägypten*, Zürich 1960, 142-166 (transl.). Demotic text published W. SPIEGELBERG, *Der demotische Text der Priesterdekrete von Kanopus und Memphis*, Heidelberg 1922, 3-37. In content the texts are the same.

<sup>112</sup> Transl. R.S. BAGNALL – P. DEROW, *op. cit.*, no. 136 (p. 123): ... καὶ τὰ ἐξεγεννηθέντα ἐκ τῆς χώρας ἱερὰ ἀγάλματα ὑπὸ (12) τῶν Περσῶν ἐξστρατεύσας ὁ βασιλεὺς ἀνέσωισεν εἰς Αἴγυπτον καὶ ἀπέδωκεν εἰς τὰ ἱερά, ὅθεν ἕκαστον ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐξήχθη.

<sup>113</sup> Porphyry, *FGH* II 260 F 43: ... venit cum exercitu magno et ingressus est provinciam regis aquilonis, id est Seleuci cognomento Callinici, (...) et obtinuit, intantum

These records deal with the Laodicean war. Ptolemy III set off to Syria in the fall of 246 B.C., but in 245 in summer he was already back in Egypt. The subjugation of so great a territory was undoubtedly a great success of Ptolemy though he organized the expedition in order to help his sister Berenice and her son to maintain power after the death of Antiochus II. It is striking that the two oldest records present the retrieval of the statues as one of the main benefits of the expedition. This is undoubtedly the result of the priests being the authors of the text; for them this aspect was of the greatest importance. Scholars agree that in this case the statues were indeed brought back.<sup>114</sup> As a matter of fact, there is no further information on the subject except the fact that similar reports are to be found in Greek sources which mention many territories, including Persia, where the Persians took their booty. The territories which the text mentions as subjugated by Ptolemy hardly mean he managed to be everywhere in person. It would seem that he only reached Babylon and that rulers of the more distant lands simply acknowledged his authority, knowing they could never hope to oppose him successfully.<sup>115</sup>

The last words of the Adulis text deserve some attention. They refer specifically to dug canals (*διὰ τῶν ὀρυχθέντων ποταμῶν*) and appear to be an obvious analogy to the route taken by the armies and the statues Ptolemy II had retrieved. Presumably, we are dealing with the same route in both cases.

The next Ptolemaic expedition to Syria continued the practice of bringing back statues of Egyptian gods. The priestly decree from Memphis

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*ut Syriam caperet et Ciliciam superioresque partes trans Euphraten et prope modo universam Asiam; cumque audisset in Aegyptum seditionem moveri, diripiens regnum Seleuci quadraginta millia talentorum argenti tulit et vasa pretiosa simulacraque deorum duo millia quingenta in quibus erant et illa quae Cambyses capta Aegypto in Persas portaverat.* (transl. E. BEVAN, *History of Egypt under the Ptolemaic Dynasty*, London 1927, 194).

It is noteworthy to recall here the text of Daniel (11, 8) the quoted commentary refers to: "and (he) shall enter into the fortress of the king of the north, and shall deal against them, and shall prevail: and shall also carry captive into Egypt, their gods, with their princes and their precious vessels of silver and of gold".

<sup>114</sup> E.g. W. OTTO, *Beiträge zur Seleukidengeschichte des 3. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.*, Munich 1938 (= *ABAW* 34. 1), 68-70; H. VOLKMANN, *RE* 23, 1959, 1670; A. PASSONI DELL'ACQUA, *Aegyptus* 56, 1976, 178; R.S. BIANCHI, *LÄ* 4, 1982, 943; E. WILL, *Histoire politique du monde hellénistique*, I, Nancy 1979, 253-254.

<sup>115</sup> H. HAUBEN, *AfP* 36, 1990, 29-37, discusses the territorial extent and time horizon of this expedition.

was compiled immediately after the battle of Raphia in 217 B.C. It deals mainly with this particular victory of Ptolemy IV Philopator.<sup>116</sup> It reads (in selection):

“(17) Es geschah, dass der König auf dem Wege eines Gottesmannes war. Die Bilder der Götter, die in den Tempeln waren, die Antiochos beschädigt hatte, (18) er befahl, sie durch andere zu ersetzen und sie (wieder) an ihren (alten) Platz zu setzen. Er verwandte viel Gold, Silber, und Edelsteine für sie und ebenso für die Geräte, welche in den Tempeln waren, welche jene Leute weggenommen hatten. Er trug jede Sorge, sie zu ersetzen. Die Dinge (das Vermögen), (19) welche man den Tempeln gegeben hatte, die vermindert worden waren, die befahl er wieder in ihren früheren Zustand zu setzen, damit nichts von dem fehlte, was man für die Götter zu tun pflegt.

Da er ferner gehört hatte, dass man den Bildern der ägyptischen Götter viel Schaden getan hatte, (20) so erliess er einen schönen Befehl an die Gebiete, die er ausserhalb Ägyptens beherrschte, dass man sie nicht weiter beschädigte, indem er wünschte, dass alle Völker die Grösse der Sorge erführen, die in seinem Herzen für die Götter Ägyptens bestand. Diejenigen, deren Leichen gefunden wurden, die liess er (21) nach Ägypten überführen, liess ihnen eine reiche, ehrenvolle Bestattung machen und liess sie in ihrem Grab beisetzen. Ebenso die, welche verletzt gefunden wurden, die liess er in ehrenvoller Weise nach Ägypten (zurück)bringen und liess sie in ihre Tempel geleiten.

Er trug jede Sorge (22) für die Götterbilder, die aus Ägypten fortgenommen worden waren in das Gebiet des Assyrsers (Syrien) und das Gebiet der Chorriter (Phönizien) in der Zeit, da die Meder die Tempel Ägyptens beschädigten. Er befahl, sorgfältig nach ihnen zu suchen. Diejenigen, welche man fand ausser denen, welche (schon) sein Vater (wieder) nach Ägypten gebracht hatte, die liess er nach Ägypten zurückbringen, indem er ein Fest feierte und ein Brandopfer vor ihnen darbrachte. Er liess sie (wieder) in ihre Tempel holen, aus denen man sie vordem herausgeholt hatte”.

What follows is a fragment concerning the military actions of Ptolemy in Syria and then a description of his return to Egypt:

“Er gelangte wieder nach Ägypten (26) an dem Lampenfest der Geburt des Horos nach vier Monaten. Die Bewohner Ägyptens empfingen ihn, indem sie sich freuten, weil er die Tempel bewahrt und auch alle Menschen in

<sup>116</sup> H. SOTTAS – H. GAUTHIER, *Un décret trilingue en l'honneur de Ptolémée IV*, Cairo 1925. Transl. and comm. in H.-J. THISSEN, *op. cit.* (n. 29). Of the Greek text only small fragments unconnected with the discussed problem have been preserved.

Ägypten gerettet hatte. Sie taten alle Dinge, die zu seinem Empfang nötig waren, reichlich und ehrenvoll, (27) indem sie seinen Heldentaten entsprachen. Er fuhr zu Schiff durch Ägypten. Die Tempelinsassen kamen heraus ihm entgegen an die Landungsplätze mit der Zurüstung und den übrigen Dingen, die man (zu) einer solchen Fahrt zu bringen pflegt, indem sie bekränzt waren und ein Fest feierten und Brandopfer machten (28) und Trankopfer und viele Opfer machten. Er ging in den Tempel und machte ein Brandopfer. Er gab viele Einkünfte ausser denen, die er früher gegeben hatte. Die Götterbilder, die seit langer Zeit fehlten unter denen, die im Allerheiligsten waren und ebenso die an denen etwas Hässliches war, liess er wieder an ihrem Platz erscheinen, wie sie früher waren. Er gab viel Geld und Edelsteine für sie aus und (für) alle übrigen Dinge, die man brauchte. Er liess sehr viel Tempelgerät aus Gold und Silber verfertigen, nachdem er bereits eine grosse Aufwendung für jenen Feldzug gemacht hatte, nachdem er 300.000 Goldstücke als Kranz(geld) (30) an sein Heer gegeben hatte".<sup>117</sup>

The fragment of the decree quoted here places the matter of retrieved statues in the broader context of Ptolemy's actions during the 4th Syrian war. Most of the actions described here concern Egyptian religion, an understandable fact considering the authors were priests. A description of the king's military actions follows the part devoted to the bringing back of statues and after that there is a report of the triumphal return to Egypt. It deserves note that scholars have questioned only those points of the record which touched upon Egyptian religion, such as the restoration of Egyptian temples, their statues and equipment in Syria and the retrieval of statues.<sup>118</sup> This hardly appears to be justified. There is information from the Pharaonic period on the restoration of temples and statues. It was one of the main duties of a ruler and is reflected in various texts. Horemheb, for example, is known for the following:

"Er hat dieses Land gegründet. Er hat es geordnet wie zur Zeit des Re. Er hat die Gotteshäuser von den Delta-Sümpfen bis zum Bogenland erneuert. Er hat alle Gottesbilder neu hergestellt, verschieden von den Originalen durch mehr Schönheit in dem, was er dafür tat. Re ist voller Jubel, wenn er sie (jetzt) sieht; (denn) in früherer Zeit hatte man sie im Verfall gefunden".<sup>119</sup>

<sup>117</sup> Transl. H.-J. THISEN.

<sup>118</sup> E.g. P. ROUSSEL, *REA* 43, 1941, 153-157; H. VOLKMANN, *RE* 23, 1959, 1684.

<sup>119</sup> Inscription on the back of a statue in the Turin Museum, ll. 22-23 (A. GARDINER, *JEA* 39, 1953, 13-32; U. KAPLONY-HECKEL, *op. cit.* [n. 46], 534-539 [transl.], Cf.



Temples were restored especially after periods of strife when a new ruler reintroduced order in the land. It remains an open question, of course, to what extent these facts reflect reality. It would seem that most rulers opened their reign with certain concessions to the temples. If no new buildings were erected, then at least the name of the new ruler was inscribed on the walls of existing temples. Alexander the Great took up this traditions ordering the temples in Karnak and Luxor to be restored.<sup>120</sup> Ptolemy II Philadelphus restored the temple at Pithom and another one in a neighbouring locality for the same reason.<sup>121</sup> It would appear that the stela refers to this tradition, but it is impossible to be certain what actually Ptolemy IV undertook. It is known that he stayed in Syria only four months.<sup>122</sup>

On the dead and wounded animals brought back to Egypt, there is additional information in Herodotus (II 41. 67) who describes special teams of people existing in Egypt occupied with gathering such animals to bury them in appropriate places in agreement with the requirements of religion. Diodorus also relates a similar procedure during a military campaign:

“And if they (Egyptians) happen to be making a military expedition in another country, they ransom cats and hawks back to Egypt, and this they do sometimes even when their supply of money for the journey is running short” (I 84, 3; *Loeb*).

Egyptian sources confirm the existence of special groups engaged in looking for sacred animals in Egypt and burying them. Letters from Hermopolis of 507 B.C. report priests of Thoth sending out people to Fayum and Heracleopolis in order to bring back the dead ibises to bury them in Hermopolis.<sup>123</sup> Similar information occurs on sarcophagi and vessels containing mummies of ibises found at Tuna el-Gebel. The texts dated on

*e.g.* similar texts of Thuthmosis I [*Urk.* IV, 99], Tutankhamon Restoration stela [*Urk.* IV 2027; J. Bennett, *JEA* 25, 1939, 8-15], Ramesses III in Medinet Habu (*KRI* V 37-39; A.R. SCHULMAN, *JARCE* 24, 1987, 28).

<sup>120</sup> K. SETHE, *Urk.* II, 6-7; M. ABD EL-RAZIQ, *ASAE* 69, 1983, 211-218; IDEM, *Die Darstellungen und Texte des Sanktuars Alexanders des Grossen im Tempel von Luxor*, Mainz 1984.

<sup>121</sup> K. SETHE, *Urk.* II 88-90.

<sup>122</sup> Ptolemy V promises to restore temples, chapels and altars in 196 during a revolt in the Thebaid. Cf. *Rosetta decree*, 20-21 (demot.).

<sup>123</sup> H.O.M. ZAGHLUL, *Frühdemotische Urkunden aus Hermupolis*, Cairo 1985 (= *Bull. of the Center of Papyrological Studies* 2), Doc. 1-3. It should be noted that these letters were never sent.

palaeographic grounds to the reign of the first two Ptolemies mention several locations in Upper and Lower Egypt as sites from which the ibises in the cemetery came from.<sup>124</sup>

Polybius (V 65; 79, 2) maintained that the Egyptians took part in the battle of Raphia. They probably participated also in the later stages of the expedition and were occupied with looking for the statues mentioned in the Memphis decree. The decree notes the dates marking each stage of the campaign which correspond to those of the festivals of Egyptian gods. In the opinion of many scholars, the only reasonable explanation of this convergence is that the king planned his activities in consultation with the priests. Therefore, it may be presumed that they took an active part in the campaign, actually supervising the search for the statues.

A little later the Ptolemies lost Syria to the Seleucids and for almost 50 years they refrained from organizing military expeditions to Syrian territory. An occasion provided itself in 150 B.C. when Ptolemy VI Philometor accompanied his daughter Cleopatra on her way to Syria to wed Alexander Balas.<sup>125</sup> One of the texts from Soknopaiou Nesos dated to August 22, 149, refers to this event in the dating:

“Regierungsjahr 32 des Fernseins des Königs, welches er machte (?), indem er (ein) frommes Werk für die Götter (*md nfr.t n n3 nṯr.w*) vollbrachte”.<sup>126</sup>

In attempting to understand this phrase, one immediately recalls the Memphis decree which mentions a number of actions in respect to Egyptian religion undertaken by Ptolemy IV Philopator, including the recovery of divine images. Since at the time the letter was written, the king had not yet returned to Egypt, it should be surmised that either the expedition had been preceded by an appropriate propaganda campaign or that the priests them-

<sup>124</sup> H.-J. THISSEN, *Enchoria* 18, 1991, 107-113. Cf. also F. PREISIGKE – W. SPIEGELBERG, *Die Prinz-Joachim-Ostraka*, Strassburg 1914. This material has been evaluated by D. KESSLER, *Die heiligen Tiere und der König. I. Beiträge zu Organisation, Kult und Theologie der spätzeitlichen Tierfriedhöfe*, Wiesbaden 1989 (= *ÄAT* 16), 216-217. On the attitude of the Ptolemies toward sacred animals cf. *ibidem*, 236-244. Cf. also remarks by H.-J. THISSEN, *op. cit.* (n. 29), 59-60.

<sup>125</sup> W. OTTO, *Zur Geschichte der Zeit des 6. Ptolemäers*, Munich 1934 (= *ABAW* N.F. 11), 123; E. WILL, *op. cit.* (n. 115), 377.

<sup>126</sup> P. Ox. Griffith 50, 10-11 — E. BRESCIANI, *L'Archivio demotico del tempio di Soknopaiou Nesos nel Fayum*, Milan 1975, 14B. A revision of the reading and new interpretation: K.-Th. ZAUZICH, *Enchoria* 7, 1977, 193.

selves expected their ruler to continue the work of his predecessors on the throne.

The same subject is also mentioned in the "Oracle of the Lamb", preserved in a manuscript dated to A.D. 4.<sup>127</sup> The text is fragmentary in many places, causing the interpretation to be somewhat problematic. According to the prophecy, in the reign of Bocchoris (720-715) the lamb forecasts the disasters that would befall Egypt and the turn for the better which would follow.

Prophecies usually appear at times of severe trial and are supposed to raise the spirits of the people and generate hope for better times. All the misfortunes described in the "Oracle of the Lamb" are connected with foreign occupation. Such occupations, first the Assyrian, then the Persian one, did not take place before Bocchoris' times. Thus, putting the prophecy in the times of Bocchoris was simply an editorial trick, while the text itself should rather be ascribed to the Persian period as seemingly indicated by the contents. However, in a context made unintelligible because of lacunae there is mention of the future rule of the Persians,<sup>128</sup> after which the Greeks (*n3 Wjnn.w*) are mentioned. It cannot be excluded that the first edition of the text took place during the Assyrian invasion, and that the text was revised later in accordance with events.<sup>129</sup>

The fragment which is of interest to our discussion runs as follows:

"... and it will happen that the Mede, who has turned his face on Egypt, will retire to the foreign countries and to his external places. The lawlessness will disappear, right and order will come into being. One will give the price

<sup>127</sup> P. Wien 10000 — K.-Th. ZAUZICH, *P. Rainer Cent.* 3 (I, pp. 165-174; II, pl. 2). Cf. IDEM, *Enchoria* 6, 1976, 127-128; L. KOENEN, *ZPE* 54, 1984, 10-11; D.B. REDFORD, *Pharaonic King-Lists, Annals and Day-Books*, Mississauga (Ontario) 1986, 326-327. The oracle is mentioned by Manetho (*FGH* III 609 F 2-3c [pp. 46-48]). Cf. P.M. FRASER, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, Oxford 1972, 509. The literary context of this work is discussed by J. ASSMANN, [in:] *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World. Proceedings of Intern. Colloquium on Apocalypticism*, ed. D. HELLHOLM, Tübingen 1983, 345-377; J.D. GRIFFITHS, *ibidem*, 273-293; L. KOENEN, [in:] *Codex Manichaicus Colonien-sis. Atti del Simposio Intern.*, 1986, 314-332.

<sup>128</sup> "Aber der Meder wird kommen nach [Ägypten]" (*m-s3 hpr r p3 Mtj r ij r [Kmj]*; col. I, l. 22).

<sup>129</sup> Dating the oracle to the reign of Ptolemy III, as F. DUNAND, *L'Apocalyptique. Etudes d'histoire des religions de l'Université des Sciences hum. de Strasbourg*, Paris 1977, 51, would like, does not appear possible; Dunand connects it with the information in the Canopus decree about this ruler retrieving images of the gods. Cf. L. KOENEN, *ZPE* 54, 1984, 10-12.

of the shrines of gods for them to Ninive in the province of the Assyrian. It will (further) happen that the Egyptians will go to the land of Syria and will rule over its provinces and will find the shrines of the gods of Egypt" (Col. II, 21 – III, 1).

The mention of "shrines of the gods" (*n3 g3.w n3 ntr.w*) may raise doubts. Greek texts translate the term *g3* as *vaós*,<sup>130</sup> i.e. a sort of chest of stone or wood, which stood in the holy of holies of Egyptian temples or was a portable chapel used in procession, inside which the divine cult images were kept.<sup>131</sup> The shrines themselves were not the object of cult for Egyptians.<sup>132</sup> One may indeed be surprised they wanted to get them back at all. There are two possibilities here. Either the chapels themselves were not of interest, but what they contained, or else *g3* appears here in a different meaning than hitherto assumed. It would seem clear that cult statues are not the issue here, because were they housed in the shrines they would have been mentioned as more important than the *naoi*. An indication of sorts for the interpretation of this fragment of text is to be found in the second story of Setne. Thoth appears to Horus-son-of-Paneshe in his dream and says:

"Go into the library (*pr-md3.t*) of the temple of Khnum. You will find a chamber (*knḥ.t*) that is locked and sealed. Open it and you will find a chest (*tb.t*) in this chamber (*knḥ.t*), and in it a papyrus scroll which I wrote with my own hand" (5, 11-12).

The text appearing here is a translation by M. Lichtheim,<sup>133</sup> who discards the meaning "shrine, chapel" known from the Rosetta Stone where the term *knḥ.j* is translated as *vaós*<sup>134</sup>. In temple libraries there existed special rooms containing the scrolls "written by the gods". It would seem, however, that the more probable interpretation is the one according to which the papyrus scroll written by Thoth was contained in a chest (*tb.t*) which was in turn stored in another chest shaped like a *naos* (*knḥ.t*).<sup>135</sup> The

<sup>130</sup> *Rosetta Stone*, Demot., ll. 25. 27; Gr., ll. 41. 42. 44.

<sup>131</sup> D. WILDUNG, *LÄ* 4, 1982, 341-342.

<sup>132</sup> They were sometimes made, at least in part, of precious metals, but it would seem that this aspect of the matter is less likely. It is true that in the 19th century a great stone *naos* prepared in Terenuthis in the Saite period was found offshore in the area of Alexandria (A. PIANKOFF, *RdE* 1, 1933, 161-179); this object could have been part of Persian booty, but other possibilities also exist.

<sup>133</sup> *Op. cit.* (note 39), III, 146.

<sup>134</sup> Demot., line 20; Gr., line 29.

<sup>135</sup> Cf. Setne I 3, 17-19. 33-35, for another book of similar content which is to be found in a number of chests placed one inside the next.

term *g3* used in the text of the oracle appears in Egyptian texts both in the meaning of “*naos*” and “chest for papyri”. The quoted fragment of Setne does not explain fully the text of the oracle, but provides a clue.

It is known that papyrus rolls were kept in chests in libraries. In the temple at Edfu there are two catalogues of the library located there, entitled: “Numerous chests (*hn.w*) containing big rolls of leather”, “Kästen (*hn.w*) mit trefflichen Jahren mit den Auserlesensten der Seelen des Re”.<sup>136</sup> It seems only natural that especially important books would have been kept from the eyes of the uninitiated, and that the contents and location of such a library would not have been made public knowledge on the temple’s walls. In one such chest from the 12th Dynasty part of the papyri from the Ramesseum were discovered. On the top of this box there was a representation of the jackal — “lord of the Secrets” (*hrj sšt3*).<sup>137</sup> Some texts were actually ascribed to the gods themselves, chiefly Thoth, thus increasing the importance of a cult with roots in tradition.<sup>138</sup> Chests containing writings referring to one god or attributed to him could have been called with his name. We know of chests of Anubis, Horus, Thoth.<sup>139</sup> In this way the abducted sacred writings could have been designated generally as the “boxes of gods”. The boxes in which the papyrus rolls were kept were called *cf.d.t, hn*,<sup>140</sup> *t3j*,<sup>141</sup> *tb.t* in demotic papyri.<sup>142</sup> The term *g3* occurs in this meaning

<sup>136</sup> According to M. WEBER, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis des Schrift- und Buchwesens der alten Ägypter*, Cologne 1969, 131-133. Further information on scrolls kept in boxes in J. ČERNÝ, *Paper and Books in Ancient Egypt*, London 1952, 30; G. POSENER, *RdE* 10, 1955, 68; M. WEBER, *op. cit.*, 148-149; D. WILDUNG, *op. cit.* (n. 19), 21. 89. 220; S. TAUFİK, *MDAIK* 25, 1969, 181.

<sup>137</sup> A. HERRMANN, *MDAIK* 15, 1957, 112-113; D. WILDUNG, *op. cit.*, 220.

<sup>138</sup> Cf. D. MÜLLER, *Ägypten und die griechischen Isis-Aretalogien*, Berlin 1961 (= *ASAW* 53.1), 22-25; S. MORENZ, *Gott und Mensch im alten Ägypten*, Leipzig 1984, 24.

<sup>139</sup> A.H. GARDINER, *JEA* 11, 1925, 2-5; D. WILDUNG, *op. cit.*, 21; G. POSENER, *Mélanges Mariette*, Cairo 1961 (= *IFAO*, *BdE* 32), 107-109; S. SCHOTT, *ZÄS* 99, 1973, 20-25. Cf. also P. Jumilhac, cols. XIII-XIV where there is mention of a chest of Horus (*tb.t Hr*) containing two eyes *w3d.t* (J. VANDIER, *Le Papyrus Jumilhac*, Paris 1961; see commentary by Ph. DERCHAIN, *RdE* 41, 1990, 17-20). Also known is the title *sš hn* “scribe of the document-chest” in the Middle Kingdom (W.A. WARD, *JEA* 67, 1981, 171). It is not clear whether it is such a document-chest that is referred to by the term *nblnb.t hn* “Lord/Mistress of a chest” occurring as epithets of Anubis in P. Jumilhac, col. V 9-10, and Bastet on the granite shrine from Bubastis, now in the British Museum (Cf. J.-C. GOYON, *Kemi* 18, 1968, 41; L. HABACHI – P. GHALIOUNGHI, *CdE* 91, 1970, 70).

only rarely.<sup>143</sup> Possibly the term *g3* in the text of the oracle does not mean a chest for papyri, but rather the outer box in the shape of a *naos*.<sup>144</sup>

There are two important statements in the cited text of the oracle. One is that after the Persians retire from Egypt, the Egyptians will send the ransom payment for the shrines (sacred books) to Niniveh, and the other that the Egyptians will go to Syria and find the shrines of their gods there. Each statement refers to a different event, known to us from other sources. The circumstances would have to be very special indeed for booty to be ransomed from the invaders. So, if Diodorus speaks of a similar fact (XVI 51), then we can be practically certain it is the same event. Although the text of the oracle indicates Niniveh as the place where the sacred writings are to be found, Bagoas surely operated in Susa.<sup>145</sup> To judge by the wording, it is not to be excluded that this is an imperfectly corrected redaction of the oracle originating from the Assyrian period.

As indicated by the mention of Niniveh, the Egyptians realized that the conquerors did not take the booty to abandon it in Syria. If then the second statement refers to the shrines (sacred books) being found in Syria, we can assume that the author knew such facts. Egyptians could have searched Syria for booty left by the invaders in passing at two separate periods — after the Assyrians had been expelled from the region and after Egypt regained independence from Persia in 404 B.C.; in both cases Egyptian

<sup>140</sup> *Wb.* II 491, 12; P. POSENER-KRIEGER, *Les archives du temple funéraire de Nefé-rirkaré-Kakai (Les Papyrus d'Abousir)*, I, Cairo 1976 (= *IFAO, BdE* 65.1), 167, 176, 185, 354, 529. Cf. J.F. BORGHOUTS, *OMRO* 51, 1970, 95.

<sup>141</sup> P. Chester Beatty I, recto XVI, 9: *t3j drf* "book case". Cf. commentary by E. IVERSEN, *JEA* 65, 1979, 78.

<sup>142</sup> Setne 3, 19, 36; Setne II 5, 12 (F. LL. GRIFFITH, *Stories of High Priests of Memphis*, Oxford 1900; reprint: Osnabrück 1985).

<sup>143</sup> Cf. e.g. *gm [tsw] m g3w[f]* "celui qui trouve la solution dans son corbillon (à papyrus)" as a title of one Sehu whose tomb from the IXth/Xth Dynasty is found in Heracleopolis Magna (J. PADRÒ, *Atti VI Congresso Intern. Egittologia*, II, Turin 1993, 378).

<sup>144</sup> The term *n3 g3.w n3 ntr.w* "the shrines of gods" with the same meaning occurs presumably in an unclear context in P. Vindob. 3873, R IV 9 (R.L.Vos, *The Apis Embalming Ritual*, Louvain 1993 [= *OLA* 50], 51).

<sup>145</sup> Niniveh was destroyed by the Babylonians and Medes in 612 B.C. and failed to play a role of any significance later, so the reference to it here is an anachronism, although it is a fact that it was under Persians rule. Cf. however, a mention of Niniveh in the romance about Djoser's expedition to Assyria (n. 19).

armies occupied Syria temporarily, but there is no information on the subject. Only the satrap stela mentions finding sacred books in Syria during the expedition of Ptolemy I in 311 B.C. The oracle presumably refers to this event.

The "Oracle of the Potter" has been preserved only in the Greek version, but the original was surely in Egyptian. The text is known from a copy made in the 3rd century A.D., but it contains references to events in 129 and 116 B.C.<sup>146</sup> The part concerning the statues has little to do with real facts. It is said that the images were taken to a seaside town of the "girdle wearers" (*ἡ τε τῶν ζωνοφόρων πόλις*), that is to Alexandria, and it is predicted they will return of themselves after the city's fall.<sup>147</sup> The oracle is directed against the Greeks and the capture of the images is considered a symbol of foreign rule. Therefore, there cannot be any mention in the text of the Ptolemies recovering the gods. Surprisingly, these generous acts were not attributed to the prophesized Egyptian king.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

The material discussed in this paper has shown that the statues of the gods were stolen throughout antiquity. We are justified in assuming that the images were carried off from Egypt by the Assyrians and the Persians. While such acts seem to have had mainly religious character in Babylonia and Assyria, they show features of common robbery in the later periods. This is perhaps the reason that the ancient sources do not usually mention the statues when they tell of repressions by foreign rulers.

The custom survived into the Hellenistic period and was upheld by the Ptolemies who abducted foreign statues as well as recovered Egyptian ones. W. Otto's reservations mentioned at the beginning of this paper, about the credibility of Egyptian records compromised by the priests' lack of knowledge and historical talents, seem hardly justified. In reality, the facts reported in the preserved sources took place only shortly before and did not require an acquaintance with history on the part of the author. It should be

<sup>146</sup> Publ. L. KOENEN, *ZPE* 2, 1968, 178-209, pl. 3-6; Cf. IDEM, *ZPE* 3, 1968, 137; 13, 1974, 313; 54, 1984, 9-13; A.B. LLOYD, *Historia* 31, 1982, 50-54. In respect to the literary context see studies quoted in note 128.

<sup>147</sup> P<sub>2</sub> 34-35; P<sub>3</sub> 57-58: τὰ ἀγάλματα ἐκεῖ μετενεχθέντα πάλιν ἐπανήξει ἐπὶ τὴν Αἴγυπτον. For the use of the word ζωνοφόρος see now the remarks of W. CLARYSSE, *Enchoria* 18, 1991, 177-178.

assumed that these facts were common knowledge to contemporaries. It is only normal that inhabitants of Egypt took an interest in the pharaoh's expeditions to Syria and the booty which he brought back with him, even though presumably their knowledge of details would have understandably been limited. The matters were certainly known to the priests who took part in these expeditions and who later wrote the texts in question.

A much more serious charge is that these sources make use of a stereotype formula of limited historical value. It is true that most sources devote only a brief note to the recovery of divine statues, tentatively raising doubts as to their credibility. On the other hand, there is the Pithom stela with details which one could not say were imagined. Similar brief mentions of the capture and return of images of deities appear in cuneiform texts and their credibility has never been questioned. In Egypt's case, the recovery of statues occurs with every expedition of the Ptolemies to Syria. It is also noteworthy that none of these sources limits itself to just a brief mention of retrieved statues, but reports on other actions undertaken by the kings on behalf of the temples. Philadelphus is said to have invited priests from all over Egypt to ceremonies organized in celebration of the return of the statues of gods to Memphis. Philopator organized similar ceremonies, although we cannot be sure they, too, took place in Memphis.<sup>148</sup> In both cases, the statues were returned to their proper temples only after these ceremonies had taken place. Presumably the ceremonies mentioned in the text of the satrap stela were of the same kind. It is possible to assume that upon returning home the Ptolemies organized some kind of triumph during which they presented their booty, including the statues they had brought back.<sup>149</sup>

It would seem that the Ptolemies simply continued an ancient Pharaonic custom. The rather modest documentary evidence from the 18th-20th Dynasties gives us some idea of how the expeditions of the Pharaohs ended. The returning ruler was greeted at the border, at Sele, by priests with flowers

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<sup>148</sup> Since the quoted fragment of the Raphia decree mentions the triumphal passage of the ruler through Egypt (presumably the Delta), it can be assumed that Philopator was following in the footsteps of Philadelphus. However, it is known from P. dem. Berlin 13565 (W. SPIEGELBERG, *SBAW* 1926, 2. Abh., 1-17) that the priests from Elephantine traveled to Alexandria for the victory celebrations following the battle of Raphia. According to the *Rosetta Stone*, Demot., l. 16, Gr., l. 28, Ptolemy V executed the rebels in Memphis combining their punishment in the city with the coronation.

<sup>149</sup> The problem is understood in the same terms by P. BRIANT, *op. cit.* (n. 40), 153. Cf. H. HEINEN, *CAH* VII (1984), 417.



and Egyptians coming from all over the land.<sup>150</sup> Following this the Pharaoh sailed triumphantly through the Delta to Memphis,<sup>151</sup> where the actual ceremonies took place with the ritual slaying of enemy captives,<sup>152</sup> the rewarding of the soldiers<sup>153</sup> and the offering of parts of the booty to Amon.<sup>154</sup>

Just as the Pharaoh, who was awaited by his subjects as well as priests and notables, could not return home without a victory, so the Ptolemies celebrated officially the end of their expeditions, this so that they could present their military successes and their attitude toward Egyptian religion.<sup>155</sup>

<sup>150</sup> It is possible to draw such a conclusion from a relief of Seti I in the Hypostyle Hall of Amon's Temple at Karnak. Cf. A.H. GARDINER, *JEA* 6, 1920, 99-116, esp. 104, 116; W. SPIEGELBERG, *SBAW* 1926, 2. Abh., 5-6; W.H. SHEA, *BASOR* 226, 1977, 36; H. KEES, *Ancient Egypt. A Cultural Topography*, Chicago - London 1977, 191.

<sup>151</sup> In the description of the expeditions of Amenhotep II in year 7 and 9 of his reign, we learn that he returned to Memphis, after which there is a list of the booty (A.M. BADAUWY, *ASAE* 42, 1943, 1-23; *ANET*<sup>2</sup>, 246, 247). Most of the stelae containing representations of the ceremonial execution refers to Memphis, relatively few to Thebes. Cf. remarks by A.R. SCHULMAN, *op. cit.* (n. 88), 57-60. The victory over the enemies celebrated at Thebes also appears in a romance relating Djeser's expedition to Assyria. Cf. note 18.

<sup>152</sup> *BAR*, III, § 113-119, 153-156; T. SÄVE-SÖDERBERGH, *Ägypten und Nubien*, Lund 1941, 229, 235; A.R. SCHULMAN, *op. cit.* (n. 88), 1-115. The Greek legend about Sesostris entering a temple with captive princes tied to his chariot in order to make his entrance a triumph refers to this. In the opinion of M. MALAISE, *CdE* 41, 1966, 269, the legend could have been based upon temple reliefs. Cf. the remarks of CL. OBSOMER, *Les campagnes de Sésostris dans Hérodote*, Brussels 1988, 39.

<sup>153</sup> H. VON DEINES, *ZÄS* 79, 1954, 83-86; R. DRENKHAN, *LÄ* 1, 1975, 581-582; E. FEUCHT, *LÄ* 2, 1977, 731-733; A.R. SCHULMAN, *op. cit.* (n. 88), 116-148.

<sup>154</sup> Cf. text above the figure of Amon in one of the reliefs in Karnak: "Presentation of the tribute by his majesty, to his father, Amon, at his return from the country of Retenu, the wretched; consisting of silver, gold, lapis lazuli, malachite, [...], and every splendid, costly stone" (reign of Sethos I; *BAR*, III, § 199).

<sup>155</sup> That the Ptolemies took over Pharaonic traditions is known also from elsewhere. Cf. e.g. CH. ONASCH, *AfP* 24/25, 1976, 137-155; L. KOENEN, [in:] *Egypt and the Hellenistic World. Proceedings of the International Colloquium*, Louvain 1983 (= *St. Hell.* 27), 143-190. KOENEN (*ZPE* 2, 1968, 181) makes a connection between the retrieval of divine images and the royal ideal. It is not quite clear whether these acts of the Ptolemies are also a reference to the Horus myth, as R. MERKELBACH, *Isisfeste in griechisch-römischer Zeit*, Meisenheim am Glan 1963 (= *Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie* 5), 26-27, would like. Quite recently I had the opportunity to study the work of W. HUSS, *Der makedonische König und die ägyptischen Priester*, Stuttgart 1994 (= *His-*

Not all the details contained in Egyptian sources are sufficiently clear today. The information that statues and other objects of cult were found in Syria may generate doubts. These objects had been carried off to Nineveh and Susa by the Assyrians and Persians respectively, cities the Ptolemies never reached in their expeditions. The distance between these cities and Egypt is such that it can be assumed that not all the booty taken from Egypt reached its place of destination. It is highly likely that some of the loot was abandoned on the way, presumably the objects which were the most difficult to transport, the heaviest ones which were most easily damaged.<sup>156</sup> The obvious conclusion is that these were stone objects. If the inscriptions found on these objects allowed easy identification, then it is hardly probable that they were marked in some special way by the Persians. All we can admit are occasional graffiti by the soldiers. But did the Assyrians and Persians leave behind such a considerable number of statues for consecutive Ptolemaic expeditions to keep recovering? Although there are no sources on the subject, this seems highly improbable. It should be remembered that not all the statues need have had inscriptions identifying their place of origin, so that it is possible that among the recovered statues there were pieces originally made for Egyptian temples in Syria. Such temples are known from the New Kingdom, when these territories belonged to the Pharaohs.<sup>157</sup> In the Late Period when these territories were no longer under the authority of the Egyptian Pharaohs, these temples presumably fell into ruin; statues could have been preserved among the ruins to be discovered subsequently by the Ptolemies. Once found, statues became the object of special searches during

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*torica Einzelschriften* 85) in which the author has collected and discussed extensive evidence including documents illustrating the Ptolemies' attitude toward Egyptian religion (pp. 13-68). The activities of the Ptolemies presented in this article fit excellently into the body of material. Unfortunately, I was not able to take a broader advantage of Huss' work.

<sup>156</sup> According to the Bentresh stela, l. 17 (*cf.* n. 80) the transport of the god Khonsu from Thebes to Asia Minor allegedly lasted 17 months. Steps were taken presumably to assure the statue's safe arrival at its destination. Similar transports in the hands of foreign soldiers and over shorter periods of time may have ended somewhat less fortunately.

<sup>157</sup> A. ALT, *ZDPV* 67, 1944, 1-20; W. HELCK, *Beziehungen Ägyptens zu Vorderasien im 3. und 2. Jahrtausend v. Chr.*, Wiesbaden 1972 (= *Äg. Abh.* 5), 444-445; J.M. WEINSTEIN, *BASOR* 241, 1981, 19-20; R. GIVEON, *LÄ* 5, 1984, 1260-1263; 6, 1986, 357-358; CHR. UEHLINGER, *ZDPV* 104, 1988, 16-25; ST. WIMMER, *Studies in Egyptology Presented to M. Lichtheim*, II, Jerusalem 1990, 1065-1106.

subsequent campaigns. Furthermore, statues could have been damaged and consequently removed from the temples still in use and hidden in *favissae*. Although no such pits of Egyptian temples are known in Syria, their presence seems highly probable.<sup>158</sup> To recapitulate, it would seem that the statues and other objects of cult which were recovered need not have been all abducted by the Persians and only memory of a repressive occupation led to easy conclusions, readily accepted by the rulers. Thus, it would seem that it is the attribution of the abductions of divine images to the Persians which becomes a stereotype phrase. The results of the Ptolemies' activities in Syria may possibly lie in the fact that the statues found now in Syria are those of royalty or individuals carried off from Egypt and that there are no statues of gods among them, and if we find any, they are all of local Syrian production.<sup>159</sup>

The sources mentioned here shed light on one more aspect of the policy of the Ptolemies. Twice the Greek sources inform us of a detachment of Egyptian soldiers taking part in battles. In both cases there is Egyptian evidence which fails to mention this fact but informs of something the authors considered the more important — the return of abducted divine statues. It is justified to assume that there is a causal relation between the two facts. It is difficult to imagine the statues being returned without the participation of the Egyptians themselves. It appears obvious that the soldiers themselves actually carried out the search for the divine images and we can extrapolate that in other instances the case was no different. The information provided by Classical writers on the participation of Egyptians in two battles should be considered not as singular acts, but as a permanent incorporation of Egyptians into the Ptolemaic army. The widespread opinion to the contrary is apparently based not on concrete written evidence but on a lack of it.

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<sup>158</sup> For such pits at Karnak and Luxor see E. FEUCHT, *LÄ* 1, 1975, 893-894. From Syria *favissae* of non-Egyptian cults are known. Cf. E. STERN, *JJS* 33, 1982, 35-54.

<sup>159</sup> In Ascalon, for example, a bronzemaker's workshop was discovered together with a large number of statuettes of Egyptian gods (Isis, Apis, Osiris and others). Cf. J.H. ILIFFE, *Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine* 6, 1935, 61ff.