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Keating P. J. McKeon

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Abstract: This paper argues that Cambyses' treatment of Psammenitus in Book 3 of Herodotus' *Histories* constitutes the adaptation of a punishment recorded in the Old Persian text of the Bisotun inscription. By outlining a typology for the practice, the article demonstrates the primacy of a Persian source, and proposes a series of specific, programmatically significant alterations made by Herodotus in the constructi on of the punishment. The resulting episode represents a complex engagement with questions arising from the Persian invasion of Egypt both in the *Histories* and in the wider historical record concerning Cambyses' legitimacy as Egyptian ruler.

RECENT WORK ON HERODOTUS has done much to elucidate his incorporation, and deliberate modification, of Near Eastern material.[1] Rather than obvious processes of either direct insertion or uneasy Hellenization, the appearance of such material often reflects a sophisticated attempt to tailor raw sources to fit the wider context of the *Histories* and address the author's recurrent concerns. The treatment of Psammenitus by Cambyses detailed in Book 3 has been studied more often for its lachrymose outcome than its punitive design.[2] Closer examination reveals a particularly striking example of non-Greek practice subtly refashioned to accommodate a Greek narrative pattern.

The opening chapters of Book 3 return the reader from the wonders of Egypt to its realities, as a lengthy exploration of the country's history and customs in Book 2 leads back to its impetus—imminent Persian invasion.[3] This shift in both tone and methodology is remarkable and

[1] Rollinger 2018; Wiesehöfer 2017; Dan 2013; Chiasson 2012; Dewald 2012; Thomas 2012; Munson 2009. See also Waters 2011 on a similar practice evident in Ctesias.

[2] Lateiner 2009; Pelling 2006b, 87–9; Flory 1978.

[3] Ring composition underlines the narrative's unity: "As the son of this woman and Cyrus, Cambyses regarded the Ionians and Aeolians as slaves—his patrimony—and he readied an expedition against Egypt, taking with him, along with others whom he ruled, Greeks

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unsettling, a feeling only underlined by the rapidity with which Egypt falls. The nation whose culture and customs require a book-long exposition is subjugated within the space of a few chapters. In the midst of such upheaval, certain narrative priorities remain consistent. The characters themselves may change between Books 1 and 3 but the broader narrative dynamics persist: an all-powerful Persian despot is chastened once again by his hapless, and foreign, adversary. In Book 1 these roles are occupied by Cyrus and Croesus, while Cambyses and Psammenitus enact the same dynamics at the start of Book 3. What renders the Psammenitus *logos* unique relative to its Lydian counterpart is Herodotus' apparent incorporation of an authentically Persian form of punishment, of a type recorded by Darius I in the Bisotun inscription. When Psammenitus' ordeal is studied in relation to this historical practice, important elements of Herodotus' narrative technique become evident. Beyond a recreation of the punishment for an Egyptian setting, the episode comprises a series of reversals tailored specifically to reflect the author's thematic concerns of sight and spectacle. These individual alterations culminate in a wider engagement with the legitimacy of Persian rule in Egypt as signified by rebellion and its suppression.

I. THE PUNISHMENT

Unlike the mechanically simple (if philosophically inscrutable) penalty faced by Croesus at 1.86.2 (Pelling 2006a, 155–64), Psammenitus' punishment is altogether more elaborate. For this reason, its presentation in full is warranted:

> ἡμέρῃ δὲ δεκάτῃ ἀπ᾽ ἧς παρέλαβε τὸ τεῖχος τὸ ἐν Μέμφι Καμβύσης, κατίσας ἐς τὸ προάστειον ἐπὶ λύμῃ τὸν βασιλέα τῶν Αἰγυπτίων Ψαμμήνιτον, βασιλεύσαντα μῆνας ἕξ, τοῦτον κατίσας σὺν ἄλλοισι Αἰγυπτίοισι διεπειρᾶτο αὐτοῦ τῆς ψυχῆς ποιέων τοιάδε· στείλας αὐτοῦ τὴν θυγατέρα ἐσθῆτι δουληίῃ ἐξέπεμπε ἐπ᾽ ὕδωρ ἔχουσαν ὑδρήιον, συνέπεμπε δὲ καὶ ἄλλας παρθένους ἀπολέξας ἀνδρῶν τῶν πρώτων, ὁμοίως ἐσταλμένας τῇ τοῦ βασιλέος. ὡς δὲ βοῇ τε καὶ κλαυθμῷ παρήισαν

over whom he held dominion" (ταύτης δὴ τῆς γυναικὸς ἐὼν παῖς καὶ Κύρου Καμβύσης Ἴωνας μὲν καὶ Αἰολέας ὡς δούλους πατρωίους ἐόντας ἐνόμιζε, ἐπὶ δὲ Αἴγυπτον ἐποιέετο στρατηλασίην ἄλλους τε παραλαβὼν τῶν ἦρχε καὶ δὴ καὶ Ἑλλήνων τῶν ἐπεκράτεε 2.1.2); "Against this very Amasis Cambyses waged war, leading, in addition to others whom he ruled, Ionian and Aeolian Greeks . . ." (ἐπὶ τοῦτον δὴ τὸν Ἄμασιν Καμβύσης ὁ Κύρου ἐστρατεύετο, ἄγων καὶ ἄλλους τῶν ἦρχε καὶ Ἑλλήνων Ἴωνάς τε καὶ Αἰολέας . . . 3.1.1). Dillery 2005, 387, sees an additional connection with the end of Cyrus' reign.

αἱ παρθένοι παρὰ τοὺς πατέρας, οἱ μὲν ἄλλοι πάντες ἀντεβόων τε καὶ ἀντέκλαιον ὁρῶντες τὰ τέκνα κεκακωμένα, ὁ δὲ Ψαμμήνιτος προϊδὼν καὶ μαθὼν ἔκυψε ἐς τὴν γῆν. παρελθουσέων δὲ τῶν ὑδροφόρων, δεύτερά οἱ τὸν παῖδα ἔπεμπε μετ᾽ ἄλλων Αἰγυπτίων δισχιλίων τὴν αὐτὴν ἡλικίην ἐχόντων, τούς τε αὐχένας κάλῳ δεδεμένους καὶ τὰ στόματα ἐγκεχαλινωμένους· ἤγοντο δὲ ποινὴν τίσοντες Μυτιληναίων τοῖσι ἐν Μέμφι ἀπολομένοισι σὺν τῇ νηί. ταῦτα γὰρ ἐδίκασαν οἱ βασιλήιοι δικασταί, ὑπὲρ ἀνδρὸς ἑκάστου δέκα Αἰγυπτίων τῶν πρώτων ἀνταπόλλυσθαι. ὃ δὲ ἰδὼν παρεξιόντας καὶ μαθὼν τὸν παῖδα ἡγεόμενον ἐπὶ θάνατον, τῶν ἄλλων Αἰγυπτίων τῶν περικατημένων αὐτὸν κλαιόντων καὶ δεινὰ ποιεύντων, τὠυτὸ ἐποίησε τὸ καὶ ἐπὶ τῇ θυγατρί. παρελθόντων δὲ καὶ τούτων, συνήνεικε ὥστε τῶν συμποτέων οἱ ἄνδρα ἀπηλικέστερον, ἐκπεπτωκότα ἐκ τῶν ἐόντων ἔχοντά τε οὐδὲν εἰ μὴ ὅσα πτωχὸς καὶ προσαιτέοντα τὴν στρατιήν, παριέναι Ψαμμήνιτόν τε τὸν Ἀμάσιος καὶ τοὺς ἐν τῷ προαστείῳ κατημένους Αἰγυπτίων. ὁ δὲ Ψαμμήνιτος ὡς εἶδε, ἀνακλαύσας μέγα καὶ καλέσας ὀνομαστὶ τὸν ἑταῖρον ἐπλήξατο τὴν κεφαλήν. ἦσαν δ᾽ ἄρα αὐτοῦ φύλακοι, οἳ τὸ ποιεύμενον πᾶν ἐξ ἐκείνου ἐπ᾽ ἑκάστῃ ἐξόδῳ Καμβύσῃ ἐσήμαινον. θωμάσας δὲ ὁ Καμβύσης τὰ ποιεύμενα, πέμψας ἄγγελον εἰρώτα αὐτὸν λέγων τάδε. “Δεσπότης σε Καμβύσης, Ψαμμήνιτε, εἰρωτᾷ δι᾽ ὅ τι δὴ τὴν μὲν θυγατέρα ὁρέων κεκακωμένην καὶ τὸν παῖδα ἐπὶ θάνατον στείχοντα οὔτε ἀνέβωσας οὔτε ἀπέκλαυσας, τὸν δὲ πτωχὸν οὐδὲν σοὶ προσήκοντα, ὡς ἄλλων πυνθάνεται, ἐτίμησας.” ὃ μὲν δὴ ταῦτα ἐπειρώτα, ὃ δ᾽ ἀμείβετο τοῖσιδε. “Ὦ παῖ Κύρου, τὰ μὲν οἰκήια ἦν μέζω κακὰ ἢ ὥστε ἀνακλαίειν, τὸ δὲ τοῦ ἑταίρου πένθος ἄξιον ἦν δακρύων, ὃς ἐκ πολλῶν τε καὶ εὐδαιμόνων ἐκπεσὼν ἐς πτωχηίην ἀπῖκται ἐπὶ γήραος οὐδῷ.” καὶ ταῦτα ὡς ἀπενειχθέντα ὑπὸ τούτου εὖ δοκέειν σφι εἰρῆσθαι, ὡς [δὲ] λέγεται ὑπ᾽ Αἰγυπτίων, δακρύειν μὲν Κροῖσον (ἐτετεύχεε γὰρ καὶ οὗτος ἐπισπόμενος Καμβύσῃ ἐπ᾽ Αἴγυπτον), δακρύειν δὲ Περσέων τοὺς παρεόντας· αὐτῷ τε Καμβύσῃ ἐσελθεῖν οἶκτον τινά, καὶ αὐτίκα κελεύειν τόν τέ οἱ παῖδα ἐκ τῶν ἀπολλυμένων σώζειν καὶ αὐτὸν ἐκ τοῦ προαστείου ἀναστήσαντας ἄγειν παρ᾽ ἑωυτόν. (Hdt. 3.14)

On the tenth day after Cambyses took the walls of Memphis, he set Psammenitus, king of Egypt, who had ruled for six months, in the outer part of the city (ἐς τὸ προάστειον) to humiliate him; and having set him there with other Egyptians, Cambyses tested his spirit, doing the following: having outfitted the king's daughter in slave's attire, he sent her forth to fetch water carrying a pitcher, and with her he sent other young women selected from the leading families and similarly attired. When the young women went past their fathers weeping and wailing, all the others wept and wailed in turn seeing (ὁρῶντες) their children so distressed, but Psammenitus, seeing (προϊδών) and understanding (μαθών), bent his head to the ground. When those carrying water had passed by, Cambyses next sent forth Psammenitus' son along with two thousand Egyptians of the same age, all bound by a rope about their necks and with bits in their mouths. They were led forth to pay the penalty for the Mytilenians destroyed with their ship at Memphis, for the royal judges had decreed this, that ten Egyptians of the first rank be destroyed in return for each man's death. And when Psammenitus saw

> (ἰδών) these men pass by and recognized (μαθών) his son to be led to his death—and as all the other Egyptians around him cried out and showed their sufferings—he did as he had done with his daughter. And when these men had also passed by, it happened that an elderly drinking-companion of Psammenitus'—deprived of his possessions, having nothing save what a poor man might, and begging from the army—processed past Psammenitus, son of Amasis, and the Egyptians who were seated at the outer part of the city (ἐν τῷ προαστείῳ). When Psammenitus saw (εἶδε) him, he burst into tears, called his friend by name, and beat himself about the head. Now there were guards there who conveyed to Cambyses everything that Psammenitus did at each procession. Amazed at what he had done, Cambyses sent a messenger to interrogate him as follows: "Psammenitus: my master Cambyses asks you why, seeing your daughter in distress and your son going to his death, you neither wept nor wailed, but did thus honor a beggar who is not (as has been ascertained from others) a relation of yours?" This is what the messenger asked, and Psammenitus offered the following answer: "Son of Cyrus: my private sufferings were too great for weeping, but crying befit my companion's grief—he who, having fallen from wealth and good fortune into indigence, has arrived on the threshold of old age." It is said that when these words, relayed by the messenger, were found to have been spoken well, then, as the Egyptians have it, Croesus wept (for it so happened that he had followed Cambyses to Egypt) and the Persians who were present wept as well; and that a certain measure of pity came over Cambyses, and he ordered straightaway that they deliver the son of Psammenitus from among those who were to be killed and that, having moved Psammenitus from the outer part of the city (ἐκ τοῦ προαστείου), they bring Psammenitus before him.[4]

The episode is tightly constructed.[5] Several features merit special attention. As a captive of the Persian monarch, Psammenitus is set in the "outer part of the city" (προάστειον) both for the purposes of humiliation and spiritual ordeal. Psammenitus occupies a central position in the narrative as witness of the large-scale spectacle that has been prepared for his viewing. Cambyses in turn awaits the report of Psammenitus' expected display of emotions. When he does at last express sorrow, Cambyses demands

[4] All translations of Greek and Persian texts are my own.

[5] Lloyd 1988a asserts the narrative's inherently pathetic quality, while id. 1988b offers a typical interpretive framework for the episode in Aristotelian terms of "*anagnôrisis* and *peripeteia*." Cf. Dewald and Kitzinger 2015; Lateiner 2009, 112–13; Renehan 2001, 183–4; Ben-Zeev 1990 on Psammenitus' particular manifestations of sorrow. Griffin 2006 locates Psammenitus broadly within a series of "tragic" figures spanning the *Histories*, and names this account, specifically, as the "climax" in the Persian invasion of Egypt. Desmond 2004, 35, situates it within the series of father-son punishments over the course of the work.

an explanation, prompting Psammenitus to offer a gnomic reflection on the mutability of human fortune. This response saves the Egyptian's life and reduces the Persians to tears, including a prominent member of their retinue—Croesus, the now-deposed king of Lydia.

The presence of Croesus in Egypt is only the most obvious index of the episode's close thematic relationship with the Lydian *logos* of Book 1.[6] Indeed the similarities are suggestive enough to hint at possible replication of the Croesus account for an Egyptian setting: the Persians defeat a foreign kingdom; the Persians devise an unusual punishment for the deposed king; the punishment provokes an emotional outburst by the foreigner; the foreigner is interrogated as to the outburst's significance; the foreigner responds in a gnomic vein and is saved.[7]

Sourcing the Lydian narrative itself is relatively straightforward. With the story of Croesus in wide circulation before and during the period in which the *Histories* were written, Herodotus evinces a particular affinity for the epinician treatment of Bacchylides 3 (Burkert 1985; Segal 1971).[8] At the same time, his divergence from the ode's account reveals the historian's interest in restructuring material to fit his programmatic aims. While the underlying structure of protagonist and pyre remains, the details of the narrative have been altered quite significantly to suppress epinician elements. Herodotus renders Croesus as a character from the tragic stage,[9] the better to reflect the *Histories*' abiding interest in the transient nature of human fortune. Nevertheless, generic differences

[6]The near impossibility of Croesus' historical presence in Egypt is one signal of the episode's rhetorical tailoring for full programmatic effect. See Fehling 1989, 105, who alleges the author's spurious citation of Egyptian sources for the scene. Cf. West 2003, 418–28.

[7]Flory 1978 suggests that an additional "tears—question—gnome" sequence links the two episodes.

[8]West 2003, 419–20, notes Herodotus' "[removal of] the really miraculous element" (viz., Croesus' divinely assisted escape) familiar from Bacchylides' account. Such a step is not unusual: regarding Herodotus' Plataea narrative in Book 9, Thomas 2018, 283, observes the fact that "Herodotean narrative might silently correct or silently rationalise from competing and more fantastical traditions." Cf. Nesselrath 2013, 87–8; West 2004; Crane 1996; Lloyd 1988a, 50–2; Evans 1978; Snell 1973.

[9]The Croesus of Bacchylides 3 builds his own pyre in a determined effort to avoid Persian slavery for himself and his family; having mounted himself atop it, the king invokes divine reciprocity for past service and the gods convey him and his family to safety. Such agency is clearly a feature of the non-Herodotean tradition, as evidenced by a red-figure amphora attributed to Myson (Paris, Louvre G197), on which see Hölscher 1973, 30–1. By contrast, Herodotus' king is no longer empowered either to ascend his own pyre or choose the manner of his death (1.86.2); doing so would presumably suggest an insufficiently humbled monarch, and thus a character too little attuned to the extreme vicissitudes of human life.

aside, the tale of Croesus on the pyre is essentially a poetic narrative, whether epinician or tragic; the matter of historicity is consequently muted (West 2003).[10]

The episodes of Books 1 and 3 align on the level of broad narrative patterns, which in turn are amplified by Croesus' physical presence in Egypt, but their particulars—especially in regard to the type of punishment employed—differentiate them, militating against mere replication.[11] But if we have recourse to a Greek poetic tradition in the account of Croesus on the pyre, the story of Psammenitus lacks a comparable precedent in spite of its similarly tragic denouement. Instead the unusual punishment devised for the Egyptian invites consultation of Near Eastern precedents for a more specific point of reference.

Given the significance of location in the design of the punishment, the semantic import of προάστιον must first be considered more closely.[12] The word exhibits a fairly broad semantic field: as a simple nominal compound denoting "that which is in front of the city," the form constructs a space not necessarily bound by strict borders. Its essence lies in an opposition both to that which is within the city walls and to the rural landscape that surrounds the urban center. It is a quintessentially liminal space. English translations most frequently prefer a rendering of "suburb" (Hansen 2006, 45–7), rightly described by Audring (1981, 220) as itself "mehrdeutig."

The form features several times in Herodotus,[13] and suggests a relatively flexible range of meaning. At 1.78.1 the term is used to encompass a broad geographical ambit: the προάστιον of Sardis has been occupied by snakes, and Herodotus implies that they have massed just beyond the boundary of the city proper, and that their presence extends to the start of the countryside. The difference between country and προάστιον is underlined by the departure of horses from their grazing places (νομαί) towards the city to devour them. Alongside such potentially expansive

[10] Asheri et al. 2007 *ad* 1.86–7, detail several possible fates for the historical Croesus, settling on the question's irrelevance: "Herodotus chose the version that best served his didactic purposes, allowing a tragic figure and benevolent monarch to converse on human happiness and destiny. . . ." Fehling 1989 sees less the subordination of historical accuracy in the Croesus *logos* than its outright abnegation.

[11] This despite what Asheri et al. 2007 *ad* 3.14.1, call "evident and doubtless intentional" parallels between the scenes, as well as a general critical tendency to obviate the specifics of Psammenitus' treatment by uniting the two episodes.

[12] Audring 1981 provides the definitive study. Cf. id. 1989; Husson 1967.

[13] See *inter alia* 2.41.4; 3.18; 3.54.1; 3.84.3; 3.85.3; 3.86.1; 3.142.2; 5.1.2.

parameters,[14] the προάστιον is also fixed more closely to the city proper, which is demarcated by its physical boundaries. Indeed the space is often tied to the city gates, as well as entrance and exit through them—to and from the προάστιον—as at 4.78.3:

> εὖτε ἀγάγοι τὴν στρατιὴν τὴν Σκυθέων ἐς τὸ Βορυσθενεϊτέων ἄστυ (οἱ δὲ Βορυσθενεῖται οὗτοι λέγουσι σφέας αὐτοὺς εἶναι Μιλησίους), ἐς τούτους ὅκως ἔλθοι ὁ Σκύλης, τὴν μὲν στρατιὴν καταλίπεσκε ἐν τῷ προαστείῳ, αὐτὸς δὲ ὅκως ἔλθοι ἐς τὸ τεῖχος καὶ τὰς πύλας ἐγκλήισειε, τὴν στολὴν ἀποθέμενος τὴν Σκυθικὴν λάβεσκε ἂν Ἑλληνίδα ἐσθῆτα . . .
>
> Whenever he led the Scythian army to the city of the Borysthenites (who themselves say that they are Milesians), yes, whenever Scyles came to them, he would always leave his army outside of the city (ἐν τῷ προαστείῳ) while he himself would come within the walls, bar the gates, take off his Scythian dress and don Greek garb . . .

The emphasis here is on the προάστιον as the spatial inverse of the city (ἄστυ)—a boundary line imposed by the city wall (τὸ τεῖχος) and the city gates (τὰς πύλας). The army is held *at* the gates, but *in* the προάστιον, such that Scyles can prevent them from seeing his wardrobe change.[15]

Notably the προάστιον exists elsewhere in Herodotus as a site of spectacle. In Book 5, an ambitious pair of Paeonian brothers mount a one-woman parade for Darius as the king is encamped in the προάστιον of Sardis (5.12). They have their sister perform a number of activities simultaneously in an alluring show of Paeonian industry, which has the desired effect: Darius invades Paeonia. While the reasons for the king's presence in the προάστιον are not made explicit, the setting seems important for sharpening the focus on the spectacle itself. At a distance from the potential distractions of the city, we (and Darius) are better equipped to pay attention to the display at hand.

[14] References to the geography of this episode are few, but note that Griffiths 2001, 162, describes the προάστιον in this case as "the approaches to the city gates."

[15] For a later, but particularly vivid, instance of the προάστιον starting immediately beyond the city's gate, see the bloody result of Sulla's sack of Athens: "For apart from those killed in the rest of the city, the blood in the marketplace covered all of Cerameicus lying within the Dipylon Gate; but many say that it even flowed through the gates to flood the suburb" (ἄνευ γὰρ τῶν κατὰ τὴν ἄλλην πόλιν ἀναιρεθέντων ὁ περὶ τὴν ἀγορὰν φόνος ἐπέσχε πάντα τὸν ἐντὸς τοῦ Διπύλου Κεραμεικόν· πολλοῖς δὲ λέγεται καὶ διὰ πυλῶν κατακλύσαι τὸ προάστειον Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 14.5.1). See additionally Thuc. 2.34.5; 4.69.2; 5.2.4; Xen. *Hell.* 5.3.1; Pl. *Leg.* 759a1; Lucian *Hermot.* 24.

The προάστιον also appears prominently in a context of kingmaking (3.84–6). Having killed the false Smerdis and opted for a monarchy, the Persian conspirators determine that the king will be selected from among them according to whose horse neighs at sunrise—when they are to convene in the προάστιον. Darius has his groom, Oebares, devise a plan to elicit the winning whinny; at the critical moment, once the group has ridden "through the προάστιον" (3.86.1), the king's horse produces the requisite noise. Rollinger (2018, 137) describes the area in which all of this occurs as "immediately in front of the city walls," a marked locale that he establishes as critical for the ritual structures in the Near Eastern sources that Herodotus appears to integrate. By combining in this episode the particular setting of the προάστιον with other elements (here, the role of horses and the sun's rising), Herodotus has composed an original narrative of ruling legitimacy and regime change.

The matter of legitimacy as it relates specifically to the προάστιον will have important implications later in the paper. For the moment, we may say that the punishment of Psammenitus incorporates the προάστιον in an analogous, if inverted, fashion to the episodes above, touching on familiar dynamics of sight, motion, and monarchy. While Scyles darts into the city, the emphasis in Book 3 lies on a mass movement of Egyptians out from within, to be viewed by their former king positioned specifically for the purpose. By leaving the προάστιον and passing through a portal into the city space, Scyles marks his transition from one national identity to another. In the case of the Egyptians, their journey out from the city reifies their change in station, from rule to captivity, itself an inversion of Darius' successful trip out to the προάστιον.

The aim of Cambyses' test is to assess Psammenitus' reaction at the moment of his fellow Egyptians' degradation. Indeed Herodotus presents Psammenitus as the very first Egyptian upon whom this physical manifestation of defeat, eviction from the city, has been visited: the taking of the city walls (τὸ τεῖχος τὸ ἐν Μέμφι) by Cambyses is seen simultaneously with the placement of Psammenitus beyond them—in the προάστιον (3.14.1). The point is not that Psammenitus be removed to the hinterland, or set deep within some warren of suburban dwellings, but that he be placed just outside of his recent seat of power (the city proper), and in prime position to witness the unhappy procession. By setting Psammenitus at the city's outlet, its gate, Cambyses creates the ideal reviewing stand.

Notably the idea of "punishment at a gate" is resonant within an Egyptian cultural context, ranging from Middle Kingdom through New Kingdom periods, up to Ptolemaic times (Manning 2012; Van den Boorn 1985; Brunner 1982; Sauneron 1954). The site is tied specifically to the administration of justice and, as such, is conceived of as a critically

dynamic space for displays of power.[16] The idea that Herodotus should have Psammenitus face punishment at the very site of the local judiciary is intriguing, since Herodotus' incorporation of such an element for local color, or as an especially pathetic detail, seems notionally plausible.[17] At the same time, the general practice of conducting legal proceedings at a gate seems to have been fairly widespread in the Near East.[18] Beyond its location at the city's outlet, the particular punishment of Psammenitus outlined by Herodotus has no apparent analogue in any Egyptian source.[19] The special emphasis on the role of spectacle in the king's punishment is distinct, and suggests a different Near Eastern source altogether.[20]

II. A PERSIAN *COMPARANDUM*

The mountainside record of Achaemenid history at Bisotun offers a description of two punishments whose details suggest close affinity with those presented by Herodotus. As the first-person narrative account of Darius I, the trilingual inscription serves as his *res gestae*, that is, a "story of his rise and his military exploits," a remarkable feat of propaganda, and a record of historical note (Briant 2002, 124).[21] For these reasons Bisotun has long been recognized as an attractive source for the recovery of genuine Persian practice—for contemporary scholars as well as for the ancient historian, who may have gleaned such information from

[16] Van den Boorn 1985, 14–15, writes: "Dispensing 'justice at the gate' meant representing this overall authority, i.e., the god(s) or the pharaoh, since one acted in front of their dwellings, before the 'gate' through which their authority could be experienced."

[17] Lloyd 1988a addresses Herodotus' widespread manipulation of (possibly Egyptian) source material, including in this episode. Dillery 2005 argues for the historian's reliance on a local *Chaosbeschreibung* tradition of foreign domination throughout the Cambyses narrative. Cf. Lloyd 1998b; Balcer 1987, 91–100.

[18] Cf. Frese 2012 for the significance of the gate in the Hebrew Bible, as well as a survey of the wider Near Eastern picture. See also, in the *RlA*, Cancik-Kirschbaum 2011, s.v. "Stadttor. A.," and Miller 2011, s.v. "Stadttor, (city-gate) B.," on the judicial importance of city gates in Mesopotamian and Hittite contexts, respectively.

[19] Cf. Brown 1984 and Lorton 1977 for a fuller exploration of Egyptian forms of punishment in this period and earlier.

[20] Asheri et al. 2007 *ad* 3.14.1, note only that the collective character of the punishment (that is, the mass procession of notables witnessed by Psammenitus) may be of eastern origin.

[21] Cf. Tuplin 2005; Cook 1985 *passim*. The inscription appears in Old Persian, Babylonian, and Elamite; these texts have been supplemented by the discovery of additional fragmentary copies in Babylonian and Aramaic. See Schmitt 1991 for the Old Persian text; Voigtlander 1978 for the Babylonian version; Grillot-Susini, Herrenschmidt, and Malbran-Labat 1993 on the Elamite; and Greenfield and Porten for the Aramaic fragments. The surviving multilingual versions of the punishments examined here are essentially compatible with each other.

oral traditions surrounding the original text.[22] Most significant for this paper is the punishment that Darius describes as having been inflicted on Phraortes (OP *Fravaṛtiš*) and Tritantaechmes (OP *Ciçantaxma*), two of the so-called "liar-kings"—rebels with regal aspirations:

> *Fravaṛtiš agaṛbiya ānayatā abiy mām, adamšaiy utā nāham utā gaušā utā haẓā nam frājanam utāšaiy I cašma avajam, duvarayāmaiy basta adāriya, haruvašim kāra avaina* (DB 2.74–7)[23]
>
> Phraortes was seized and led before me; I cut off his nose, ears and tongue, and I gouged out one of his eyes; he was held bound at my gate; all the people saw him.

> *utā Ciçataxmam agaṛbāya ānaya abiy mām, pasāvašaiy adam utā nāham utā gaušā frājanam utvšaiy I cašma avajam, duvarayvmaiy basta adāriya, haruvašim kāra avaina* (DB 2.86–9)
>
> . . . and Tritantaechmes was seized and led before me; then I cut off his nose, his ears, and I gouged out one of his eyes; he was held bound at my gate;[24] all the people saw him.

Within the context of other punishments documented by the Bisotun inscription, the treatment of Phraortes and Tritantaechmes is unique (Nylander 1980, 331–2).[25] Consisting in elaborate mutilation, culminating in public display and execution, the punishment is engineered with a distinctly visual emphasis as an intended deterrent against future insurrection.

[22] Luraghi 2009; Murray 2001a, 2001b, 1987; Stadter 1992, 82–4; Evans 1991, 89–146; Balcer 1987; Murray 1987; Lewis 1985.

[23] References to the Bisotun inscription reflect the citation practice of Schmitt 1991 in using the abbreviation "DB" followed by the column and paragraph number.

[24] Skjærvø 1985, 62–3, identifies several Iranian cognates for the spatial import of Old Persian *duvara-* "(palace) gate." Cf. Schmitt 2014, 173–4, s.v. "*duvara-*," as well as Wehr 1964, 249–50, on the potential ambiguities of the term. I render the form with its full locative sense "at my [palace] gate," a translation that also affords the visual aspect of the punishment its full importance, as opposed to, say, "in my courtyard." The latter reading is semantically untenable, and furthermore suggests a far more selective pool of spectators than *haruva kāra* would entail; on *kāra* see Missiou 1993, 383, and the relevant note. What is clear from the Babylonian text of the Bisotun inscription, however, is that a palace context is designated, and not city gates; cf. Voigtlander 1978, 28–9 on lines 60 and 63.

[25] Dandamaev 1976, 208, ties the seriousness of Phraortes' rebellion to the consequent severity of his punishment: "Über den Ernst des medischen Aufstandes spricht die detaillierte Beschreibung der Bestrafung des Fravartiš in der Behistūn-Inschrift, und auch die große Anzahl der gefangengenommenen Meder (mehr als 18 000)." On the link between the threat that such rebels pose to Darius' rule and the types of punishment that they receive, see Schwinghammer 2011a and 2011b, as well as Rollinger 2005.

This interest in display is joined to the partial destruction of the rebels' sight, an act consonant with the wider Near Eastern practice of blinding enemy prisoners.[26] In turn, Darius' inscriptional rendering of the spectacle of punishment constitutes its own form of spectacle, inviting its audience to consider the king's role in authorizing viewership on a grand scale.

What relevance does this hold for Herodotus' account of Psammenitus? Although we read here the words of Darius I, and not of his predecessors, the account of specific punishments might conceivably have afforded the ancient writer an encyclopedia of easily transferrable models of behavior. Given the number of recognized parallels, Herodotus' reliance on material drawn from Bisotun (or the oral traditions surrounding it) would be far from unique in this instance.[27] That Herodotus does not simply mirror a Persian source is typical, owing to the mediated nature of much of the historian's information, and the fact of his consistently multifarious sourcing; Herodotus need not have stood at the foot of Mount Bisotun (Rollinger 2018).[28] This approach to sourcing must, of course, be seen alongside his persistent interest in restructuring material to fit the character of his narrative.[29] In light of this, the author's familiarity with the essential outlines of a Persian practice such as the one employed against Phraortes and Tritantaechmes seems plausible, a supposition only bolstered by Herodotus' explicit familiarity with the Median rebellion against Darius (1.130.2), in apparent contrast to almost all other rebellions detailed at Bisotun.[30] If he knew of the rebellion itself, he was surely acquainted with its suppression and the punishment entailed.

[26] Llewellyn-Jones 2013, 173–7, provides a brief but helpful discussion. Cf. Rollinger 2010.

[27] Concerning Book 3, Asheri et al. 2007, 393–4, write of the "extraordinary correspondence . . . between Herodotus' account and the evidence deducible from Persian and Babylonian epigraphic sources." The Smerdis episode is a famous point of comparison from its outlines all the way to specific instances of wording. See for example τὸν ἀδελφεὸν Σμέρδιν ἐόντα πατρὸς καὶ μητρὸς τῆς αὐτῆς alongside the cognate phrasing from Bisotun: "That Cambyses had a brother by the name of Bardiya, being of the same mother and of the same father as Cambyses" (*avahạyā Kabūjiyahạyā brātā Bạrdiya nāma āha hamātā hamapitā Kabūjiyahạyā* DB 1.26–32). Martorelli 1977 details a number of important correspondences between the text of the *Histories* and the Bisotun inscription. Cf. Rollinger 2015; Brosius 2013; Balcer 1987.

[28] It is clear that Herodotus did not need to know the inscription firsthand for its influence to be felt in his work. Cf. Brosius 2013; Miller 1997, 105–8.

[29] For examples, see n. 1 *supra*, as well as the discussion of the Croesus *logos*.

[30] Regarding Phraortes, Dandamaev 1976, 208, writes: "Die Gefährlichkeit dieses Aufstandes für Darius zeigt der Umstand, daß Herodot, außer dem babylonischen, nur dieser medische Aufstand bekannt wurde." See n. 25 *supra*.

One basic similarity with the Psammenitus *logos* is immediately obvious, namely the fact of a captive held at the periphery of a palatial or urban center, and more specifically at an outlet where viewing might be maximized. Further examination yields a still more sophisticated interplay between source and historian. In Herodotus' use of a tradition stemming from Bisotun, it is possible to detect a series of alterations similar to those employed by the author in his Croesus *logos*, whereby he restructures existing material to advance his own programmatic aims. Like the tale of Croesus, the punishment of Psammenitus provides a reflection on human (mis)fortune. Uniquely, it accommodates a specifically Egyptian context in the wake of Persian invasion, responding both to local conditions—which Book 2 has just demonstrated as singularly conducive to inquiry—and to the questions of political legitimacy that the invasion prompts. The ensuing adaptation of the Bisotun material comes in the form of purposeful reversals, both of the Persian source material and, in certain respects, of the precedent offered by the Croesus *logos*.[31]

III. HERODOTEAN ADAPTATION

Firstly, what are we to make of the προάστιον versus the *duvara*-? As noted above, both forms generate a certain degree of ambiguity, but may be read broadly to suggest "city gates" and "palace gates," respectively. Why, then, the change of gate by Herodotus? We might say simply that the most operative detail in the location ("gate") has persisted in the author's reception of Persian punishment. Additionally, there is still, perhaps, some element of the palace here in the τεῖχος of Memphis: its capture is the decisive event that begins the Psammenitus story, and it may indicate the city's famous "White Castle." By supposing Herodotus' allusion to this fortified structure, commonly identified with the Palace of Apries, we might imagine that the προάστιον is the relatively contained space between palace and river.[32] Psammenitus' placement would thus be at least proximate to the palatial complex.

[31] Ctesias' account (*FGrH* 688 F13.10) of the invasion of Egypt provides a useful *comparandum*: here Cambyses packs the pharaoh, Amyrtaeus, off to Susa with six thousand Egyptians of his choosing. This account, in spite of its greatly condensed nature and misidentified pharaoh, records a practice more closely in line with previous Persian actions, as for instance those taken by Cyrus II against conquered monarchs in Media, Lydia, and Babylon; see Kuhrt 2007, 114 n. 3.

[32] This is how Asheri et al. 2007 *ad* 14.1, delineate the προάστιον.

At the same time, we have seen already the unique resonance of the προάστιον as a space "immediately in front of the city walls" within Herodotus' narrative. It is the site of transformative movement (4.78.3), staged spectacle (5.12), and, crucially, a context in which matters of kingship are transacted (3.84–6). By setting Psammenitus' ordeal here, Herodotus locates it with reference to these perceptible narrative dynamics. Moreover, he avoids what might otherwise be a distinct narrative liability, namely the recurring association of palaces in the *Histories* with isolation and inaccessibility.[33] Unlike the potentially restricted environment that Herodotus seems to envision for palaces (an exclusivity not reflected in *duvara-*), the προάστιον guarantees the fullest possible exposure for the planned display.

The ordeal depicted by Herodotus also differs in the stated aims of the punisher. While not clarifying at Bisotun his explicit aim in punishing the two rebels as he does, Darius makes it clear enough by the very nature of the punishment. In each case, having mutilated his victim, Darius binds him at the gate so that the "whole people" (*haruva kāra*) can see him, effecting a very painful and public humiliation. The fact of display is typical for Near Eastern punishments (and, of course, for more recent analogues such as public confinement in the stocks or hanging from gallows).[34] It has the effect of fixing negative attention on the unlucky recipient of the punishment, while simultaneously serving a deterrent function for onlookers. By punishing the two rebels in the manner that he does, Darius encodes physical suffering in conspicuous violence designed to elicit a reaction from the mass of spectators. The result is a display of brutal physicality.

The intent ascribed to Cambyses by Herodotus notably incorporates the kind of shaming (ἐπὶ λύμῃ) evident in the treatment of the Medes, but the fundamental aim of the punishment is the opposite of a physical ordeal. In setting Psammenitus at the outlet of the city, Cambyses wishes to try his enemy's spirit (τοῦτον κατίσας διεπειρᾶτο αὐτοῦ τῆς ψυχῆς). The author of the Bisotun inscription uses the bodies of his captives to

[33] Herodotus' account of Deioces' palace at Ecbatana is the most famous example (1.98–9); on it and other instances of palatial seclusion in the *Histories*, see Degen 2017.

[34] Cf. Rollinger 2010, 600–9. See Lemos 2006 regarding such punishment in the Hebrew Bible; Skjærvø 2006 cites a Middle Persian parallel. See also Kuhrt 2007, 154 n. 68. Note, too, the extraordinary scene of the two thousand Egyptians being led out of the city with ropes around their necks (3.14.4). This practice is documented in the iconography that accompanies the text of the Bisotun relief, where the liar-kings are linked together in precisely this fashion. On the visual language of such display, see Rollinger 2016.

convey a lesson in submission and obedience to his viewing public. There is no attempt to probe the motives or behaviors of the rebels, whose only further purpose upon defeat is as an exemplary human canvas of wrongdoing and its requital. Herodotus engineers an essential reversal in the character of the punishment, from corporeal violence to emotional trial, a change that also lends itself well to the eventual pronouncement of gnomic wisdom. Its plain statement of intent further differentiates the treatment of Psammenitus from the relative ambiguity of Cyrus' motives in the Croesus *logos*, where Herodotus voices uncertainty in adducing any one motive for Cyrus' decision.[35] By contrast the author asserts the evaluative nature of Psammenitus' punishment without reservation. The result is a tightened restructuring of source material suggestive of an authorial program particularly focused on the effects of psychological experimentation.

Indeed the change in motivation underlying Psammenitus' punishment, from the physical to the emotional, is significant. As others have noted, Cambyses becomes more than a mere despot bent on punishment since his primary purpose in "trying" Psammenitus is inquiry (Munson 1991).[36] He sets Psammenitus outside the city as a test of mental endurance: can a human being tolerate the sight of such a doleful procession? The Darius of Bisotun may be uninterested in the type of research conducted here, but the "punishment at the gate" affords Herodotus a frame within which his Persian king can conduct the kind of large-scale experiment that the historian himself lacks the capacity to perform in the course of his wider Egyptian inquiry. That this experiment does occur in Egypt, to an Egyptian, is critical insofar as the Egypt of Herodotus is the historian's laboratory *par excellence*, the nation in which exists the most marvelous culture, precipitating the most fantastical inquiries (2.35.1). The punishment of Psammenitus shows this to hold true for historian and king alike: the most interesting sort of research is performed in Egypt.[37]

Conditions for the experiment must, however, be just so, thus setting up the next reversal in Herodotus' "punishment at the gate," now with a change in the mechanics of its implementation. Not given to great

[35] Baragwanath 2008, 66–7, identifies the description of Cyrus' possible motivations as a turning point in the monarch's depiction. Perhaps a similar trend may be seen in the Psammenitus *logos* and its portrayal of Cambyses as the first instance of the Persian's increasingly depraved undertakings.

[36] On the figure of the inquiring king more generally, see especially Demont 2009; Christ 1994. See also Irwin 2014; Baragwanath 2008, 59–64.

[37] Moyer 2011, 42–83; Harrison 2003; Marincola 1987.

elaboration, Darius is clear in describing the construction of the rebels' punishment, with a special emphasis on its audience. The inscription makes explicit the fact that, once Phraortes and Tritantaechmes have been bound at Darius' gate, the entire people see them. The phrasing is the same in each case: "all the people saw him" (*haruvašim kāra avaina*). The intent of the punishment is for the rebels to be displayed publicly, and the effect is that the entirety of the population observes them.[38]

Herodotus reverses the agency of this sight act. In the first place, when Cambyses positions Psammenitus outside of the city, the Egyptian is removed to some extent from public view. Cambyses designs the ordeal such that, once the punished is in place, Psammenitus' penalty is not to be observed himself. Rather the greatest emphasis is given to his own observation of family and friends passing by in turn. Imperative for Cambyses' punishment is that Psammenitus see his intimates process past him in the most degraded of states and that his subsequent reaction be gauged, according to the aims of the inquiry. The resulting scene is essentially a mirror image of the punishment described at Bisotun: Psammenitus himself "sees all the people."[39]

The sense of agency afforded Psammenitus carries over into what observation *is* being made of him in the course of the punishment. In Herodotus' account, Cambyses eschews the mutilation of the sight organs recorded by Darius (in both cases: "and I gouged out one of his eyes," *utāšaiy I cašma avajam*). Instead the Persian seeks a different form of bodily presentation, here in terms related to the Egyptian's affect. Cambyses reorients the punishment in terms of its visual import such that it is focused not on the physical effect of the punishment but on the emotional response that it elicits. This affords Psammenitus a degree of agency that Phraortes and Tritantaechmes lack. Darius conveys a message of domination in the mutilated appearance of the Medes, while Psammenitus is, in some sense, tasked with transmitting his own visual message based on what he himself sees. In other words, rather than having a visual display enforced on him through violence, Psammenitus is in the position of emoting as the scene should move him to do so. He stands with aspect

[38] As Briant 2002, 123, notes: "What should be stressed . . . is the publicity that Darius accorded his executions. The entire population was invited to witness the liar-king being tortured at the palace gates."

[39] The scene also recalls the domestic spectacle that Candaules creates for Gyges in Book 1: hidden from view, Gyges is positioned to view the king's wife, with the aim of eliciting a judgment on her beauty. See Travis 2000 on the "psychology of spectation" here and elsewhere in Herodotus.

unchanged for the duration of the first two processions, but upon the sight of his former drinking companion, he cries and does violence to his own head. Psammenitus is made both "the one who sees" and the one who, to a large extent, engineers what others see.[40]

"Seeing" (ὄψις) is famously of central importance to Herodotus' methodology, and is given a particular weight within the Egyptian *logos* (2.99.1).[41] For Herodotus "the one who sees" is afforded a special authority, whether as a figure within the narrative or as historian himself. Indeed the one seeing is often the figure then empowered to ask the right questions, thereby seeing through the superficial meaning of events to discern the deeper workings of life and fate: a Solon to the purblind Croesus. By balancing the visual assessment being made of Psammenitus against the Egyptian's own status as observer, Herodotus not only recalibrates the roles of punisher and punished, but positions Psammenitus as the chief inquirer. The promotion is especially fitting given the previous characterization of his parent, Amasis, who reveals his foresight in attempting to advise Polycrates; the Egyptian ultimately knows better than to overreach in the manner of the Samian tyrant (Lloyd 1988a).[42] This form of sight facilitates exactly the kind of gnomic reflection that Herodotus is interested in extracting from his subjects. In this case, Psammenitus' spectatorship prompts a philosophical assessment of life's vicissitudes, an insight that is then conveyed to the Persians for Cambyses to hear.[43]

[40]And what others hear, since this agency extends to the pronouncement of gnomic wisdom. Unlike the loss of tongue suffered by Phraortes (and Tritantaechmes in the Babylonian text of the Bisotun inscription), Psammenitus keeps his speech organ, enabling the statement of his insight.

[41]Marincola 1987 documents the especial prevalence of autopsy in the Egyptian *logos*; cf. Luraghi 2006; De Ste. Croix 1977, 137. Cf. Thomas 1997 on Herodotus' language of proof, evidence, and knowledge and its resonance within a 5th-century B.C.E. context. On various aspects of Herodotus' methodology of ἱστορίη more generally, see Thomas 2018; Dewald 2002; Luraghi 2001; Lateiner 1989; Darbo-Peschanski 1987; Corcella 1984. For a broader survey of sight in antiquity, see Squire 2016.

[42]The connection is made stronger still by the explicit parallelism established between Polycrates and Cambyses, on which see Asheri et al. 2007, 387–9. Cf. Lattimore 1939, 32.

[43]This raises questions about the resultant power dynamics of the punishment, with Psammenitus in some sense assuming the role of inquirer by autopsy, and Cambyses relegated to a subordinate position as recipient of hearsay. Demont 2009 notes that the inquiry's original aim (to test the Egyptian's spirit) is upturned by Psammenitus' insight, marking a shift in emphasis from the king's individual state of mind to the wider state of human fortunes. I would argue that the sweep of this change is underlined by the contrast between Psammenitus' "seeing" and Cambyses' "hearing."

IV. CAMBYSES AND THE QUESTION OF LEGITIMACY

Following on the reconstructed aims and mechanics of the punishment, a final and particularly significant alteration is made clear in the episode's strange conclusion (3.15):

> τὸν μὲν δὴ παῖδα εὗρον αὐτοῦ οἱ μετιόντες οὐκέτι περιεόντα ἀλλὰ πρῶτον κατακοπέντα, αὐτὸν δὲ Ψαμμήνιτον ἀναστήσαντες ἦγον παρὰ Καμβύσεα· ἔνθα τοῦ λοιποῦ διαιτᾶτο ἔχων οὐδὲν βίαιον. εἰ δὲ καὶ ἠπιστήθη μὴ πολυπρηγμονέειν, ἀπέλαβε ἂν Αἴγυπτον ὥστε ἐπιτροπεύειν αὐτῆς, ἐπεὶ τιμᾶν ἐώθασι Πέρσαι τῶν βασιλέων τοὺς παῖδας· τῶν, εἰ καὶ σφέων ἀποστέωσι, ὅμως τοῖσί γε παισὶ αὐτῶν ἀποδιδοῦσι τὴν ἀρχήν. πολλοῖσι μέν νυν καὶ ἄλλοισι ἐστὶ σταθμώσασθαι ὅτι τοῦτο οὕτω νενομίκασι ποιέειν, ἐν δὲ καὶ τῷ τε Ἰνάρῳ παιδὶ Θαννύρᾳ, ὃς ἀπέλαβε τήν οἱ ὁ πατὴρ εἶχε ἀρχήν, καὶ τῷ Ἀμυρταίου Παυσίρι· καὶ γὰρ οὗτος ἀπέλαβε τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς ἀρχήν. καίτοι Ἰνάρῳ γε καὶ Ἀμυρταίου οὐδαμοί κω Πέρσας κακὰ πλέω ἐργάσαντο. νῦν δὲ μηχανώμενος κακὰ ὁ Ψαμμήνιτος ἔλαβε τὸν μισθόν· ἀπιστὰς γὰρ Αἰγυπτίους ἥλω· ἐπείτε δὲ ἐπάιστος ἐγένετο ὑπὸ Καμβύσεω, αἷμα ταύρου πιὼν ἀπέθανε παραχρῆμα. οὕτω δὴ οὗτος ἐτελεύτησε.
>
> As for his son, those who went to fetch him found that he was no longer alive, but had been the first executed. Psammenitus himself they got up and led to Cambyses, where he passed the remainder of his life without violence. And if he had known well enough not to meddle in serious matters, he would have received Egypt back as its administrator since the Persians are accustomed to honor the sons of kings, upon whose children—even if the kings should revolt from them—they nevertheless bestow rule. It can be concluded from many other instances that they are accustomed to do this: in the case of Thannyras, son of Inaros, who received back the power held by his father, and in the case of Pausiris, son of Amyrtaeus, since he also received back his father's rule, though no one ever wrought more evil against the Persians than did Inaros and Amyrtaeus. But in this case, having plotted evil, Psammenitus paid the price. For he was caught inducing the Egyptians to revolt. And when this was detected (ἐπάιστος) by Cambyses, Psammenitus died immediately drinking bull's blood. Such was his end.

In the trajectory of Herodotus' narrative, Psammenitus' revolt is unanticipated and seemingly impetuous. No lengthy analysis is required to see its marked difference from the narrative arc of Croesus, whose near-death experience initiates a multigenerational career as court advisor. The fact that the revolt occurs as Psammenitus is to be awarded an administrative position under the Persians—itself a seeming anomaly in spite of Herodotus' assertion to the contrary—only amplifies the feeling of an authorial

volte-face.[44] Even viewed in isolation from the Croesus *logos*, the hasty finish for Psammenitus lands jarringly, while the author's explanation registers as incomplete. For the Egyptian to weather his Persian ordeal in such dramatic fashion only to be excised so swiftly from the historical narrative strikes a particularly discordant note. If Psammenitus' end is marked, the counterfactual examples offered by the author are doubly so: Thannyras and Pausiris postdate our protagonist, and thus serve little function as *exempla* for a Psammenitus plotting his rebellion.

These irregularities invite closer attention to the narrative elements in play, especially as they pertain to rebellion present and future. Two other allusions to the Egyptians' later revolt from Persia are made in addition to this one, at chapters 12 and 160, the latter of which also functions as the book's closing words. An emphasis on the subsequent revolt may have meaning for Book 3's overarching narrative design;[45] for this study, it is enough to consider the significance that a narrative milieu of revolt carries for the account of Psammenitus' punishment. The Egyptian's rebellion may seem at first an afterthought, but its arrival at the end of the Psammenitus narrative, as well as the attention that it receives in the form of Herodotus' scolding, is notable. Indeed its placement may constitute another instance of the teleological thinking so prevalent across the *Histories*, whereby the true significance of historical events is revealed in an understanding of their outcomes.[46] This in turn can constitute a unique type of ring composition (Welser 2009, 361–72).

We have seen in the example of 3.84–6 that the very setting of the προάστιον can be a critical feature in a narrative adapting Near Eastern motifs and concerned with questions of legitimacy.[47] In the case of Psammenitus, I argue that the strange ending to the account of his punishment—complete with its temporally eccentric *exempla*—render it a revolt narrative from the very start, with important implications. Returning to Bisotun, we find one further element of the "punishment at the gate" that may shed light on this narrative construction. As related

[44] Tuplin 2018, 102–3; Kuhrt 2007, 114 n. 3. Briant 1988, 149–50, 172, asserts, at the very least, a more complex dynamic at work than Herodotus acknowledges in classing it as "Persian custom," ascribing it to the Persians' inability to fully control Egypt.

[45] Irwin 2017, 122, detects "disingenuousness" in the suggestion that either Thannyras or Pausiris serves an exemplary function for Psammenitus, but situates their inclusion within a wider authorial commentary on Athenian empire and, more specifically, on the involvement of Athens in the later rebellion.

[46] Chiasson 2016, 38–43; Pelling 2006a; Dewald 1997; Shapiro 1996.

[47] See again Rollinger 2018, esp. 139–46.

by Darius, Phraortes and Tritantaechmes receive nearly identical punishments because of the nearly identical nature of their crimes: each rebelled against Darius, staked an illegitimate claim to kingship, and incited others to revolt. Of Phraortes, Darius writes:

> *θātiy Dārayavauš xšāyaθiya: I martiya Fravaṛtiš nāma Māda hauv udapatatā Mādaiy, kārahaya avaθā aθaha: adam Xšaaθrita amiy Uvaxšatarahayā taumāyā, pasāva kāra Māda haya viaθāpatiy hauv hacāma hamiçiya abava, abiy avam Fravaṛtim ašiyava, hauv xšāyaaθiya abava Mādaiy* (DB 2.13–17)
>
> Thus Darius the King says: there was one man, Phraortes by name, a Median; he rose up in Media. To the people he spoke thus: "I am Khshathrita, of the family of Cyaxares." Then the Median army that was in the palace became rebellious from me and went over to that Phraortes. He became king in Media.
>
> *I Fravaṛtiš nāma Māda, hauv adurujiya, avaaθā aθaha: adam Xšaaθrita amiy Uvaxštarahaya taumāyā, adam xšāyaaθiya amiy Mādaiy, hauv Mā dam hamiçiyam akunauš* (DB 4.18–20)
>
> There was one man, Phraortes by name, a Median; he lied. He spoke thus: "I am Khshathrita, of the family of Cyaxares. I am king in Media." He made Media rebellious.

The sequence is straightforward. Phraortes rebels against Darius; he is apprehended; and he is killed. Significantly, in each description of the Mede's crime, Darius specifies the type of rebellion emphatically as predicated on illegitimate aspiration to the throne.[48] Phraortes' deception is his professed kinship with a Median ruling dynasty, signified by a tie to the family of Cyaxares (*Uvaxštarahaya taumāyā*), an earlier and prominent chieftain in the region. The pretender thus poses a (threatening) counterpoint to Darius' own genealogical exposition.[49]

Questions of legitimacy are especially pertinent to the invasion account crafted by Herodotus. A central element in the Persian invasion generally is Cambyses' wish that he be recognized as legitimate ruler of Egypt; this ambition is reflected in the external historical record as well (Atkinson 1956, 176–7). In inscriptional evidence and other local accounts, Cambyses is plainly concerned that he be viewed according to

[48] The rebellion of Tritantaechmes is presented with an identical syntax and terminology of illegitimate genealogy as the basis for a claim to kingship (DB 2.78–81; 4.20–3). I print only the mentions of Phraortes in these terms for the sake of the argument's economy.

[49] Müller 2015 offers a brief but engaging account of the "false king" phenomenon.

a traditional model of Egyptian kingship, and is therefore seen to adopt the titulature and ritual designations relevant to the role. In the famous inscription of Udjahorresnet, Cambyses and Darius are fitted squarely within the typical framework of Egyptian rule, while two epitaphs for an Apis bull interred under Cambyses employ marked terminology for the Persian: he is the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, and the "Son of Re."[50]

Critically for the present study, Herodotus engages the issue of legitimacy throughout the invasion narrative. Book 3's account opens with a local rumor alleging Cambyses' Egyptian maternity (3.2), according to which the Persian king is reputed to be the son of Cyrus and Nitetis, daughter of Apries. Herodotus offers an emphatic denial, but for the purposes of the ensuing narrative, the horse is, as it were, out of the barn: legitimate Egyptian kingship and its markers are in play and very much at stake throughout the invasion.[51] This report of Cambyses' contested parentage is made all the more significant by the fact that his would-be grandfather, Apries, had been king of Egypt until overthrown by the usurper Amasis (2.161–9 and again at 3.1.4). By incorporating this tradition, Herodotus enables a possible reading of ensuing events in Persian terms, as the restoration of legitimate (Persian) rule. Crucially, these concerns resurface in Cambyses' desecration of the corpse of Amasis.[52] In a context of competing claims to legitimacy, this act has the potential to be read as the "legitimate" Cambyses delineating himself from the "illegitimate" (though deceased) usurper.[53]

Sandwiched between these accounts of questionable and competitive legitimacy is, of course, the punishment of Psammenitus. He receives what

[50] Lloyd 1982 presents the definitive treatment of the Udjahorresnet inscription and its documentation of Cambyses' transition from outsider to legitimate king; see Lichtheim 1980, 36–41, for a transcription. On the Apis bull epitaphs, see Kuhrt 2007, 122–4; Posener 1936, 30–6. Dillery 2003 notes the significance of the royal names adopted. Cf. Chimko 2003, 28–9. On the Tell el-Maskhuteh text, which records a similar process of assimilation and legitimation for Darius I, see Lloyd 2007.

[51] Irwin 2017, 114 n. 59, argues that "[Herodotus'] narrative is more engaged with that possibility [of Egyptian parentage for Cambyses] than revealed on the surface by his ostensible denial, and uses that possibility to suggest a parallel way of reading elements in the treatment of Cambyses in Book 3." She notes the potential role of Persian propaganda in influencing this tradition of Egyptian maternity, in keeping with a wider push for legitimacy.

[52] This, too, is an attested punitive practice in the ancient Near East: see Minunno 2008; Richardson 2007.

[53] Ruzicka 2012 links this behavior with a break from the Saite dynasty, that is, as a claim to legitimacy independent from that of the pretender Amasis (and his son, Psammenitus). Irwin 2017 sees a possible reading of revenge against the murderer of Cambyses' "grandfather," Apries.

is at Bisotun the "rebel's punishment at the gate," but for the purposes of Herodotus' invasion narrative, Psammenitus cannot rebel at the outset of his *logos* since he has not yet been deposed—unlike the Median pretenders, whose first act in the Bisotun retelling is rebellion. Instead, after the punishment has been administered and a peaceful ending appears imminent, the narrative almost seems to assume the lapidary character of the Bisotun inscription itself, removing Psammenitus from the scene. The link between the motifs of "rebellious pretender to the throne" and "punishment at the gate" is maintained, albeit in reverse sequence with the rebellion, paradoxically, at the end. Phraortes lied (*hauv adurujiya*); Psammenitus contrived evils (μηχανώμενος κακά).[54] Phraortes claimed to be king (*adam xšāyaθiya amiy Mādaiy*); Psammenitus—newly deposed, with Cambyses established as "legitimate" king—is now relegated to the status of pretender. Phraortes made Media rebellious (*hauv Mādam hamiçiyam akunauš*); Psammenitus induced the Egyptians to revolt (ἀπιστὰς Αἰγυπτίους). Phraortes is seized (*agaṛbiya*), bringing an end to his rebellion; Psammenitus is caught (or seized) (ἥλω), squashing his own aspirations. Having already been administered the rebel's punishment at the city's outlet, Psammenitus is whisked from the story with a cup of bull's blood—an additional index of atypical goings-on (Gershevitch 1979).[55]

The chronological pretzel that a rebellion at the end presents may itself be of a piece with the other Persian accounts cited in the course of the invasion narrative, and the manipulations of time entailed therein.

[54] The fact that each of these descriptions of the rebel's wrongdoing evokes an earlier poetic tradition is striking (Avestan in the case of Phraortes' lying, for which see Skjærvø 1999, id. 2005; Homeric in the phrase μηχανώμενος κακά as noted by Stein 1893 *ad loc.* for its recollection of *Od.* 17.499).

[55] Hartog 1988 argues that the drink is not deadly *per se*, but achieves such a state in ancient literature when the imbiber has broken faith, suggesting that its use here has something to do with the fact that Psammenitus has forsworn his allegiance to Cambyses—a genuine rebel. Hartog also notes that its function as an ordeal seems to have been forgotten or misunderstood, with the result that authors relying on its "deadly powers" may have been as hazy on its (dubious) workings as any subsequent scholar. At the same time, there may have been uniquely Persian associations for the practice: Themistocles is the most famous victim of the beverage, supposedly consuming it in the course of his eastern exile (Ar. *Eq.* 83–4; Diod. Sic. 11.58.3; Plut. *Vit. Them.* 31.5). The ingestion of bull's blood in the context of Psammenitus' rebellion may frame his treachery in distinctly Persian terms while serving more fundamentally as a neat exit for a suddenly superfluous actor. See also Brown 1982, 393 n. 17. Perhaps surprisingly, there has been no attempt to connect a possible Persian ordeal of consuming bull's blood with the specifically Egyptian context, in particular the sacred status granted the creature in the figure of the Apis bull, whose notorious destruction is ascribed to Cambyses by Herodotus in the wake of the Persian invasion; cf. Depuydt 1995.

Elizabeth Irwin notes the "temporal inconcinnity" of the reason for invasion that Herodotus attributes to the Persians, whereby the "child" sent by Amasis in response to Cambyses' demand for a concubine would be well into adulthood (Irwin 2017, 103–4). This distortion of time is later compounded by the chronological oddity already noted: the author supports his assertion of a Persian practice extant in Psammenitus' day by offering the cases of Thannyras and Pausiris, the sons of rebels whose significantly later life stories offer Psammenitus no meaningful example at all. Herodotus indulges a kind of historical backdating, making sense of what has happened previously in terms of what follows—a narrative mode readily transferrable to the punishment as we find it.[56]

In this reading, the necessary rebellion is deferred to a "logical" moment in the narrative after Psammenitus has been deposed, and at the end of his *logos* (and life). At the same time, the account is introduced in such a way as to make clear its role in addressing what has been the predominant concern throughout the invasion narrative. More than a matter of simple conquest, the Persian campaign is a play for legitimacy. In a context of contested genealogies, special punishment, and the desecration of his predecessor's corpse, Psammenitus is subtly framed less as deposed king than as usurping threat to the rightful Egyptian monarch, Cambyses. This comports in turn with the historical record of Cambyses' royal self-presentation relative to Psammenitus, rendering Herodotus' account of the Egyptian's punishment all the more significant.[57] The rebellion positions Cambyses' claim to legitimate kingship of Egypt as analogous to what Darius records as his aim at Bisotun,[58] while at the same time offering a speedy exit for the now superfluous Psammenitus.

In Darius' presentation, Phraortes and Tritantaechmes are "liar-kings" because each claims to be someone he is not—namely the legitimate

[56] In light of this interpretation, the possible metatextual dimensions of Cambyses' vow to his mother ahead of invasion at 3.3.3 seem considerable: "Then, mother—when I am a man, I shall turn all Egypt upside down [*lit.* put what is up in Egypt down, and what is down, up]" ("τοιγάρ τοι ὦ μῆτερ, ἐπεὰν ἐγὼ γένωμαι ἀνήρ, Αἰγύπτου τὰ μὲν ἄνω κάτω θήσω, τὰ δὲ κάτω ἄνω"). The very chronology of the invasion narrative seems to bend to this dictate.

[57] Dandamaev 1989, 76–8, notes that Demotic accounts have Cambyses essentially write Psammenitus out of the historical record, to the extent that it seems ". . . Cambyses regarded himself as the pharaoh of Egypt from the time that he ascended the Persian throne in 530 B.C." The fragmentary law code document on the back of the Demotic Chronicle also elides Psammenitus by tracking pharaonic rule only to the reign of Amasis. See Briant, 2002, 472–84, for an overview of this and other Persian propaganda efforts in Egypt.

[58] Irwin 2017, 110, observes the function of genealogy in tying the invasion narrative to what will follow in Book 3: "This is a subject with relevance for the historical figure waiting in the wings of the narrative, Darius, notoriously recognized to have manufactured legitimacy through asserting the truth of false claims."

offspring of a Median dynast. The paradigm is taken up and complicated in the case of Psammenitus, who in the genealogical stew of Book 3's invasion narrative both is and is not a legitimate king as the son of the (illegitimate) king Amasis. This point is only reinforced by the odd construction of the "Persian custom" asserted by Herodotus in the examples of Thannyras and Pausiris, whose positions are allegedly owed to the fact that they are the "sons of kings." Beyond their aberrant chronology, the examples would appear to be inapplicable to Psammenitus in their particulars: what matter if the Persians honor the *sons* of kings, when Psammenitus is king himself? And what relevance the rebellion of the fathers, when Amasis has already died by the time of the Persian invasion and was, at any rate, never in revolt against a Persian administration? Tuplin (2018, 102–3) writes that the passage classifies Amasis as a "quasi-rebel," but stops short of considering its other anomalous elements as anything but "rhetorical exaggeration." I believe the analysis might be fruitfully extended to reflect a further engagement with a Persian tradition of legitimate Egyptian kingship.[59] Amasis was, in fact, in revolt against Apries, the last "legitimate" king of Egypt before Cambyses, according to the account of Cambyses' Egyptian ancestry. By sketching Amasis himself as a "quasi-rebel," Herodotus allows for a reading according to which Psammenitus was never quite king, since his very basis for rule was (like the liar-kings of Bisotun) set on a dubious genealogical footing. Once again, an "ending" in Herodotus—in this case, revolt—can tell us much about the tenor of the preceding narrative.

What remain are all of the expected elements—illegitimacy, rebellion, display, death—even if their chronological sequence has been reengineered, and their very construction designed to generate "Herodotean" outcomes.[60] Had Psammenitus rebelled at the beginning of his *logos*, there may not have existed opportunity for an inquiry such as that which Cambyses engineers. A subject explicitly in revolt is a different type than

[59] There is some precedent for the Achaemenid interest in retrofitting assertions of legitimacy. Compare what we see in Egypt with the rhetoric of the *Verse Account of Nabonidus*, an Akkadian text of Persian times that delegitimizes the kingship of its Babylonian namesake to bolster the claim of Cyrus II; see Kuhrt 2007, 75–80 n. 23, and Schaudig 2001. See also Rollinger 2014.

[60] In this way, Herodotus' design of the Psammenitus *logos* is similar in complexity and effect to the episodes examined recently by, for example, Rollinger 2018 and Wiesehöfer 2017. As the former (2018, 147) writes of 3.84–9, we have "not a simple copy of a previous Near Eastern presentation but a narrative well integrated into its Herodotean context" with "a specific message that looks much more Herodotean than Persian." As this article demonstrates for 3.14–15, Herodotus' alterations are subtle, encompassing, and decidedly programmatic.

a defeated king. A more than purely psychological punishment may, in that event, have been meted out to Psammenitus—as indeed it is once he does rebel.[61] In the meantime, however, Psammenitus' lesser fault (being defeated in battle) is punished in a manner that prompts a gnomic statement, the very response that Herodotus is consistently interested in eliciting from his characters. Psammenitus' narrative arc permits him to become, however briefly, a "wise advisor" figure in the style of Croesus. But the fact of too many wise advisors in the Persian court presents a potential liability for the coherency of Herodotus' narrative. The reversal introduced by Herodotus to the original Persian form of punishment means that Psammenitus can enter, utter his wisdom, and exit, without competing for an office already occupied by Croesus. Moreover, without the continued counsel of an *Egyptian* wise advisor, the Cambyses of Herodotus is afforded free reign to conduct his (insane) inquiries in Egypt, and thus to serve as the subject of the work's "demoniac representation" (Asheri et al. 2007 *ad* 3.1–38).[62]

V. CONCLUSION

The Persian model of "punishment at the gate" offers Herodotus a striking form in which to explore his own programmatic aims. By recognizing in the treatment of Psammenitus a mode of Persian justice tied specifically to subjects in revolt, several significant conclusions may be reached: we identify a historical practice underlining an apparently fantastical account of enforced "spiritual trial";[63] we encounter a further instance

[61] When, for instance, Cyrus demands that the rebellious Pactyes be led alive into his presence at Hdt. 1.156.2 (. . . αὐτὸν δὲ Πακτύην πάντως ζῶντα ἀγαγεῖν παρ' ἑωυτόν), there is a strong sense that the king will not use the occasion to conduct ἱστορίη. The additional irony in the account of Psammenitus may be that, by removing the deterrent factor in refashioning the "punishment at the gate," and deferring the explicit rebellion to the end of the account, Herodotus paradoxically denies the Egyptian yet another *exemplum* against revolt—his own.

[62] For Cambyses as the perverted inquirer, see Christ 1994; Munson 1991; Brown 1982.

[63] Concomitant with this reading is the idea that we find an invasion account focalized through the invading Persians. This is borne out by the origin I adduce for the punishment, as well as the obviously Persian concern for ruling legitimacy in Egypt. Since the wider Cambyses narrative has typically been classed as a mix of Greco-Egyptian tropes and traditions, the recognition of marked Persian influence would be a significant development in the understanding of Herodotus' sourcing. The bibliography is too vast to survey here, but very much in brief, the account has been treated variously as a Greek distortion of little known events (Irwin 2017); a pastiche of Egyptian propaganda and Greek misperceptions (Dillery 2005; Lloyd 1988b); and a transference to Cambyses of Cleomenes' behaviors (Griffiths 1989).

of Herodotus tailoring source material to address the narrative's recurring concern for mutability in human fortunes; and we discern the same engagement with the question of Cambyses' status as legitimate king of Egypt that we find lurking throughout the invasion narrative, as well as in the wider historical record. The swirling narratives of "true" and "false" genealogies in Egypt,[64] as well as the Persian monarch's stake in maintaining them, anticipate the doubtful accounting of Darius' own ascension later in Book 3.[65]

Crucially the episode's location only serves to generate further credibility for the author's adoption and adaptation of his source material: if any context can accommodate the spiritual and scientific reinterpretation of punishment, it is surely the haven of experimentation that is Egypt. Why, Herodotus' Cambyses seems to ask, waste a fine research opportunity in mere mutilation and crude display? In Egypt, inquiry is king.[66]

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
e-mail: keatingmckeon@fas.harvard.edu

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[64] Asheri et al. 2007, 391, identify this overarching conflict between "truth" and "falsehood" as the "leitmotif" of Book 3.

[65] On latent Herodotean skepticism of Darius' claim, see Rollinger 2018; Kipp 2001. Irwin 2017 ties Herodotus' inclusion of an Egyptian parentage for Cambyses directly to the question of Darius' legitimacy (see *supra* n. 58). On that matter more broadly, see Waters 2004; Rollinger 1998.

[66] The idea for this paper was first developed in a richly interdisciplinary course taught by Yvona Trnka-Amrhein at Harvard in the autumn of 2013. Its evolution owes much to her encouragement, as well as to the incisive commentary of Prods Oktor Skjærvø, Naomi A. Weiss, Paul J. Kosmin, and Massimo Cè. I am grateful to *AJP*'s editor, and to the anonymous reviewers for their shrewd, comprehensive, and compelling suggestions.

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