



آثار مصری و سبک مصری در ایران دوره هخامنشی: بازنگری آثار موجود در موزه‌های ایران سپیده قاهری

چکیده

مقاله حاضر معرف مهم‌ترین نتایج پژوهش‌های نوین بر روی اشیاء مصری و به سبک مصری به‌دست‌آمده از محوطه‌های هخامنشی ایران است. نتایج مذکور به‌ویژه بر دانسته‌های موجود در ارتباط با حضور مصریان در ایران هخامنشی می‌افزایند. بیشتر آثار مورد مطالعه متعلق به بافت شاهی بوده و نشانگر پذیرش برخی از سنت‌های مصر باستان در شکل‌گیری فرهنگ درباری هخامنشی هستند. این آثار نه تنها گواهی روشن بر مشارکت متخصصین و هنرمندان مصری در زندگی دربار و شکوه سازه‌های شاهی این دوره در ایران هستند، بلکه فعالیت و استقرار طولانی مدت گروه‌هایی از مصریان در مراکز امپراتوری هخامنشی را به اثبات می‌رسانند.

واژگان کلیدی: امپراتوری هخامنشی، مصر دوران هخامنشی، مصر دوران متأخر، فرهنگ دربار، سکونتگاه‌های شاهی.

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Aegyptiaca of Achaemenid Persia: re-examination of the documentation from Iran

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Abstract

This following paper presents the important results from a recent publication on the Egyptian style objects found in Achaemenid sites in Iran (in Persika 20, 2020). The new data provided by the recent publication has brought new insight on our knowledge of the Egyptian presence in Achaemenid Persia. The archaeological material that has been studied belongs mainly to a royal context, and demonstrates the appropriation of certain Egyptian traditions in the conception of Persian palatial culture. The documentation discussed confirms the participation of various Egyptian specialists in the court life of Persian kings, but also in the architectural development of their royal buildings. Ultimately, this research reveals the activities and long-lasting settlements of some Egyptian communities in the centre of the Persian Empire.

Keywords: Achaemenid Empire, Egypto-Persian contacts, Late Period Egypt, Palatial culture, Royal residences.

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Introduction

The annexation of Egypt in 525 BC as one of the richest satrapies of the Achaemenid Empire marks an important phase in Egyptian-Persian relations and the gradual introduction of Egyptian traditions into the cultural and administrative organizations of ancient Persia. Influences in this context come not only from the indirect phenomena of acculturation following the conquest of Egypt, but more immediately from the appropriation of Egyptian experience and knowledge in the very heart of the Persian Empire.

Although the Egyptian presence within the Persian political regime is widely known through textual and historical sources, Egyptological studies have not fully studied the question. Most of the researches carried out in this field concerns the archaeology of the Saito-Persian period in Egypt as well as the history and the consequences of the Persian domination of Egypt. To better comprehend the Egyptian and Persian cultural interactions, it thus appeared necessary to carry out a systematic investigation in the archaeological sources coming from the principal Achaemenid sites in Iran. These little-known or unknown sources had not been the subject of a complete study until now. The reasons are largely due to the imprecision of ancient excavations or publications and also to the inaccessibility of part of the discoveries. These objects are currently spread throughout the Iranian museums but also in the Louvre museum and the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. The *aegyptiaca* (both Egyptian objects of the Saite period brought to Iran during the Achaemenid rule and Egyptian style pieces from Achaemenid period) preserved in Iran have been the subject of a detailed study conducted between 2008 and 2016 thanks to the joint support of the Iran National Museum (INM), the French Research Institute in Iran and the Achaemenid Program (Paris-Nanterre University). This study, the results of which are recently published by the author as a bilingual French-Persian volume (*entitled Objets égyptiens et égyptianisants d'époque achéménide conservés en Iran, Persika 20*, Leuven, Paris, Bristol: Peeters,

2020), broadens our knowledge of the forms and degrees of Egypto-Persian contacts under the Achaemenid rule.

Provenances of *Aegyptiaca* from Iran

The Egyptian documentation of Iran comes mainly from three Achaemenid royal sites located in Elam and Persia:

- The ancient Elamite city of Susa remodeled by Darius I and located in southwestern Iran between the Mesopotamian plains and the Iranian plateau.
- The Persepolis Terrace established during the reign of Darius I in the heart of Persia.
- The site of Pasargadae, the first historical center of the Achaemenids founded by Cyrus II in Persia.

Susa

Throughout its various phases of archaeological exploitation, the city of Susa delivered numerous Egyptian style pieces, discovered in different Achaemenid Period sectors of the site: the royal palace (Apadana); the administrative-defensive installations (Acropolis hill); the residential districts of the city, if any, on the hill Ville Royale and a lower city to the east of the royal installations known as the Ville des Artisans (see contributions in Perrot 2010). However, some pre-Achaemenid Egyptian style objects also feature among the discoveries from the Acropolis hill, such as the alabaster vases inscribed with the names of the Neo-Babylonian kings which must have been transported and deposited in Susa after the Achaemenid conquest (Amiet 2010: 353).

The earliest remains derive from the activities of European travelers, among them the British W.K. Loftus, whose excavations between 1850 and 1852 revealed a considerable number of fragments of Egyptian style stone vases, mainly alabasters with quadrilingual inscriptions in the northern sector of the Acropolis hill (Loftus 1857: 409-411). From 1884 to 1967, the systematic excavation of the site by the French missions led to the discovery of various other types of Egyptian pieces, both royal and private (Chevalier 2010: 74-115). In addition to vessel fragments (alabasters and

other vases), the most characteristic Egyptian objects include amulets, jewelry, furniture decorations, architectural elements, fragments of sculpture, scarabs (Fig. 1) and inscribed seal impressions (Mecquenem 1947: 1-119). To this list must be added a set of Egyptian artifacts from a domestic installation known as the “Achaemenid Persian Village” located west of Ville des Artisans (Ghirshman 1954: 18-20). Finally, the last archaeological works in Susa carried out as part of a joint Iranian-French program between 1969 and 1979 brought to light the famous Egyptian statue of Darius I (Perrot 2010a: 120-145).



Fig. 1. Egyptian scarab seal from Susa. Photo after M. Dieulafoy (1893: fig. 357/1).

Persepolis

At Persepolis, the Egyptian influences can be observed in the architectural and decorative programs of royal buildings (Wasmuth 2017: 58; Root 1979: 125-128, 138-147). Beyond the architectural achievements, this vast palatial complex delivered the second set of Egyptian objects from Iran. The archaeological excavations of this site, notably those of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago between 1931 and 1939, have revealed a large number of vessels inscribed in hieroglyphs, as well as a few examples of amulets and seal impressions from the Saite and Persian periods (Schmidt 1957 and 1939). In contrast to Susa, the Egyptian finds at Persepolis primarily come from the one building of “Treasury”, with the exception of rare other objects that were moved or found in other areas of the site (on Terrace or surrounding plain) (Fig. 2).

Pasargadae

The site of Pasargadae, which predates the foundation of previous royal cities, provides the first traces of the indirect appropriation of Egyptian culture, as evidenced by the relief of the syncretic genius of the “Gate R” represented with the Egyptian *hnmh* crown (Stronach



Fig. 2. Assembly piece of a furniture representing the Apis bull's head found in Persepolis, Tehran INM 338/2338 (© INM. Photo Neda Tehrani).

1978: 47-50, fig. 25). The only other known Egyptian objects from Pasargadae are fragments of uninscribed alabaster found on the terrace of “Tall-e Takht” during the 1961-1963 campaigns carried out with the support of the British Institute of Persian Studies (Stronach 1978: 182, 228-229). A group of gold jewels found in a cache near “Pavilion B” constitute another set of pieces with an Egyptian character from Pasargadae (Stronach 1978: 168-177). The recent excavations of the “Tang-e Bolaghi”, a valley near Pasargadae, also uncovered a fragmentary alabaster in a domestic installation from the Achaemenid period (Askari-Chaverdi and Callieri 2006: 67).

Other sites

Apart from the three sites mentioned above, the Egyptian finds of the Achaemenid period discovered from archaeological excavations in Iran are exceptional. The few known sites correspond to various geographical localities (Masjed-e Soleiman, Zanjan, Guilan) and have yielded only rare examples of a scarab seal and amulet from Achaemenid or post-Achaemenid contexts (see successively Ghirshman 1976: 67, pl. 68; Rahbar 1997: 24, fig. 2 & 3.18; Haerincq 1989: 460, fig. 2.7). Other important objects include a Bes vase found in a post-Achaemenid context at Haft Tappeh (Rafiei-Alavi 2014), or fragments of an alabaster jar recently (re)detected among the finds of the QN 2 building from the Achaemenid city of Dahaneh-e Gholaman in the far east of Iran (Zehbari 2016).

Classification of the *Aegyptiaca* Preserved in Iran
The inventory of Egyptian and Egyptianizing objects of Iran required a long work of location, analysis and museographic studies in situ at the Tehran Museum, but also in Susa and Persepolis. It also relied on a detailed documentary analysis of both previously published sources, excavation reports and numerous archival documents. The established corpus, recently published in volume *Persika 20*, leads us to propose a more precise dating and/or function for most of the pieces and to distinguish four major typological groups:



Fig. 3. Hieroglyphic craftsmen's marks on the base of an animal horn from Persepolis, Tehran INM 151/2515 (© INM. Photo Neda Tehrani).

(1) Architectural elements and sculpture *Architectural decorations*

Within this group, the surviving evidence refers mainly to two distinct types of decoration worked in the so-called “Egyptian Blue” paste. The first is a set of base fragments from animal horns (e.g., INM 151; Persepolis Museum 938) found in “Palace D” at Persepolis dated not earlier than the reign of Xerxes I (Schmidt 1953: 269). Considering their physical characteristics, the fragments should belong to monumental statues or composite animal capitals, also compared to with numerous stone examples from the hypostyle halls of Susa and Persepolis. As with other elements of Achaemenid architectural decoration, these bases bear on the plane one or more “craftsmen's marks” (Fig. 3) probably relating to the modes of production and the installation of joining pieces or to the organization of the specialized craftsmen's work (Daucé 2010: 332-334; Nylander 1974: 216-222). Traces of Egyptian art in architectural ornamentation are probably also visible in a second type of blue paste decoration in Persepolis, in particular a square plaque (INM 436), most likely a wall plaque, which would have been attached to a stable flat support by means of two large fixing holes inside the frame. The surface

of the object is incised with an Egyptianizing motif of the Horus falcon with spread wings (Curtis and Razmjou 2005: 95, no. 77). From the same site, other similar plaques are known, but without decorative details (Qaheri 2020b: 43).

Relief and inscription

The image of the Egyptian god Bes appears on fragments of a monumental relief (INM 233) found in the immediate vicinity of the Persepolis Terrace (Romano 1989: 781-783). This large frontal figuration of Bes (Fig. 4) would be similar to the decoration of chapels dedicated to fertility cults or to that of *Mammisis* buildings (i.e., birth houses) in Late period Egypt (Manniche 2015; Daumas 1958: 137-144). In accordance with the usual iconography of Bes in these contexts, the relief of Persepolis should originally have exposed the god in his

naked aspect, standing and well encamped on his legs. He was probably resting his hands on his thighs, grasping harmful animals or raising an arm above his head. The stylistic features of the god's figure on this relief reveal similarities with the mask of Bes on the Horus stela of the Tehran Museum (INM 103) and also with other representations of this god from the Ptolemaic period in Egypt (Gasse 2004: 74-76, no. 13; Daumas 1950: 134-144, pl. I and VII). A small stone fragment (INM s.n.), probably of Susian origin and carved with rather crude hieroglyphic signs, can also be considered an architectural element. The piece bears on its face the remains of an Egyptian inscription which seems to evoke a geographical delimitation notion, suggesting that the fragment might belong to a block or stela (Qaheri 2020b: 63, no. A 2.2).



Fig. 4. Fragment of a relief or a monumental stela with the figure of the god Bes found from Persepolis, Tehran, INM 233/2233 (© INM. Photo Neda Tehrani).

Royal Statuary

The statuary art is represented mainly by the statue of Darius I (INM 4112) executed in Egypt in the *bekhen* “greywacke” stone of Wadi Hammamat (Trichet and Vallat 1990), most likely in the last third of his reign (Yoyotte 1973: 258; 2010: 272). This royal monument was originally dedicated to the Temple of Atum at Pithom/Tell el-Makhuta as part of the commemoration for the construction of the Darius Canal (Bresciani 1998). The transfer of this statue to Elam and its location against the right jamb of the gate of Darius' palace in Susa can be attributed to the reign of his successor Xerxes I according to his Susian inscriptions (XSd) (Vallat 1974: 167-168). The reasons for this transfer are probably related to the Egyptian troubles at the end of Darius' reign (Yoyotte 2010: 276). The discovery, by R. de Mecquenem, in the same sector of the site (i.e., the Apadana), of two fragments of robe folds belonging to a colossal statue in grey limestone, suggests that a local rock replica of the Egyptian statue of Darius must have been placed in front of the other door jamb of his palace (Perrot 2010b: 239; Mecquenem 1947: 47, pl. V.4-5). This hypothesis is also corroborated by the identification, in the reserves of the Iran National Museum, of a small stone exercise-piece statuette from Susa with close stylistic similarities to the statue of Darius (Qaheri and Razmjou 2020).

(2) Amulets and magic objects

Wadjet-eyes

Wadjet amulets, the protective talismans of the ancient Egyptians, were found in great numbers at Susa, especially as foundation deposits of the palace of Darius (royal palace on Apadana hill) (Mecquenem 1974: 47; Mecquenem and Pézard 1911: 55-56). In contrast to the pre-Achaemenid models in Egypt, the Persian greenish faience *Wdjet-eyes* are of important size (H. 4.5; W. 6.7 cm max.), with dimensions attested in Egypt from the Achaemenid period and particularly common during the Ptolemaic period (Müller-Winkler 1987: 160-161, 164-168). These amulets show an apparent homogeneity in their forms and decorations under two main styles: with or without a separation space between the eye and the eyebrow (Fig. 5).

Bes heads

Also of protective character, the objects with the mask of Bes enjoyed an important development during the Achaemenid rule (Herrmann 2003: 97-99). During this period, the image of the god was used in various iconographic supports related to the palatial culture (Abdi 2002b; 1999). Different from the ancient prototypes in their general stylistic appearance, the Bes amulets of the Persian period are characterized by the smoothness of the divine face (Fig. 6). This feature can nevertheless be observed already during the 26th dynasty, when the representations of the god displayed a less



Fig. 5. Two main styles of large *Wadjet* amulets from Susa, (a) Tehran INM 58/2058; (b) Tehran INM 1097 (© INM. Photo Neda Tehrani).



Fig. 6. A well-preserved example of a Bes head amulet found in Susa, Tehran INM 1206 (© INM. Photo Dariush Mohamadkhani).

fearsome aspect (Romano 1989: 174sq, 795-796). As for the Wadjet-eyes, these amulets are also all made of greenish faience and are, for the most part, of large dimensions, about 7 cm high. They can be classified under different stylistic subgroups, even if there are identical forms obviously produced after a single model (e.g., INM 46 and INM 1206). These large Bes heads are also associated with the objects placed in the foundations of the palace of Darius in Susa. Apart from these groups, a limited number of small Bes amulets, most probably of private use, are also attested for this site.

Leonine heads

Probably originating from the same archaeological context as the great *Wadjet* and Bes amulets, the faience leonine heads (Fig. 7) also seem to be part of the protective talismans in Susa (Andrews 1994: 65-66; Ziegler 1979). They appear less frequently and their known



Fig. 7. Leonine head amulet probably from Susa, Tehran INM 255/2255 (© INM. Photo Dariush Mohamadkhani).

stylistic parallels in Egypt date mainly from the Late Period (e.g., unpublished set New York, MMA 23.6.122a-f; Schulz and Seidel 2009: 144). Two stylistic types can be identified for Susian models: head with a large elongated muzzel (INM 255) or with a well-proportioned muzzel in the face (INM 1468).

Divine figures

Beyond the three main categories mentioned above, other Egyptian amulets are also known in the Egyptian corpus of Iran. The head of a faience statuette of Ptah-Patek (Fig. 8) is also associated with objects of protective virtues widespread in Egypt from the Third Intermediate Period onwards (Connor and Facchetti 2016: 30-33; Andrews 1994: 39). This piece, of unknown provenance (perhaps Persepolis according to the records of the museum), shows however both stylistic and chronological parallels with another similar stoneware head from Susa (Louvre Sb 7280. Qaheri 2020b: 74, n. 71). Other small divine figurines probably for private use are also attested among the Egyptian finds from this site (Qaheri 2020b: 92, 94-95).

Magical stela

The magical stela (or cippus of Horus or Horus-šd stela) of the Tehran Museum (Fig. 9)



Fig. 8. Head of a Ptah-Patek faience statuette from Susa or Persepolis, Tehran INM 1695 (© INM. Photo Neda Tehrani).

is the most important Egyptian object with prophylactic properties discovered in Susa (as part of the discoveries of 1931, see Archives of Mecquenem, excavation report 1931, pl. XXXIV,2; also Abdi 2021; 2002a; Qaheri 2020b: 96-99). The late-period Horus stela are of various sizes and types. They range from large votive monuments to portable pieces and small pendant amulets (Gasse 2004: 13). As with the Egyptian healing statues, the curative power of these stela is due to the magical formulas inscribed on them, especially against animal bites (Kákozy 1999). Due to their main function, the Horus stela of transportable size constitute the real accessories manipulated by the specialists of magical knowledge. The medium-sized stela may exceed 20 cm in height and in these cases, they date mainly from the end of the Pharaonic period to the Ptolemaic rule (Gasse 2004: 16). As on the INM 103 stela, in examples from this period, the head of the child god Horus under the mask of Bes is generally frontal and the dec-



Fig. 9. Horus-šd magical stela of the Tehran Museum, INM 103/2103 (© INM. Photo Neda Tehrani).

orations on both sides of the stelae are fully occupied with divine figures and texts (Gasse 2004: 17, 19-20). Judging from its physical appearance and stylistic characteristics, the INM stela, of very fine facture, with an initial size of about 20 cm, would most probably belong to the second Persian period (Qaheri 2020b: 96-99).

(3) Luxury vessels and containers

Alabastra

With more than mostly fragmentary 40 pieces, the *alabastra* represent the most important collection within the Egyptian corpus of Iran with more than 40 pieces, mostly fragmentary (Fig. 10). These vessels, oblong or piriform and normally equipped with two lateral tenons, are known for the three reigns of Darius I, Xerxes I, and one of the three kings named Artaxerxes (Squitieri 2017: 82sq; Posener 1936: 137-151). It is generally assumed that they were initially engraved with the Persian royal titulary only in Egyptian, and then in quadrilingual script (Old Persian, Elamite, Babylonian and Egyptian), especially from the reign of Xerxes I onwards. Despite their similar shape, the Persian period



Fig. 10. Fragment of a quadrilingual *alabastron* with the name of Xerxes I from Susa, Tehran INM 166/2166 (© INM. Photo Neda Tehrani).

alabastra vary in size and physical characteristics, and they are modeled in different rocks (Egyptian calcite alabaster CaCO₃ or more rarely other stones). Produced after Egyptian prototypes, most of the known specimens come from regions outside Egypt, particularly from Susa, and some of them are uninscribed (Qaheri 2020a). The royal labeling of the Achaemenid period *alabastra*, as well as their mass storage in the very center of the empire, suggest that the production and (re)distribution of these objects was the exclusive monopoly of the Persian royal court. Such vessels are often attributed to the shipment of Egyptian goods to Persia based on indications of capacity and regnal years of Darius I (e.g., INM 218/14) and Xerxes I (e.g., INM 218/13) on certain pieces. However, a part of these *alabastra* (in particular the small models), was an integral part of the Persian palatial life, as is also reflected in the Persepolis reliefs (Schmidt 1953: pl. 148-150 and 174). The discovery of royal *alabastra* labeled with the name of Persian kings in the peripheral regions of the Empire and in association with members of the elite, would indicate that beyond the ceremonial of the court, the donation of these objects to the imperial subjects, was, as in Pharaonic Egypt (Mazé 2014), one of the means of social retribution used by the Persian court (Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1989: 134, 142, n. 14). It seems obvious, therefore, that not only the forms and the production styles but also the use and status of these vessels as “objects of prestige” in the royal context in Persia also involved the appropriation of Egyptian customs.

Royal “tableware”: plates and bowls

Unlike the previous type, this category of vessels seems to have been exclusively intended for palace use, probably during royal banquets (Qaheri 2012: 329-330; Schmidt 1957: 87-90). Carved in different stone materials, mostly hard and dark stones (some of which can probably be identified as the Wadi Hammamat “greywacke”), these vases are also labeled with the royal titulary in quadrilingual script. All known pieces date to the reign of Xerxes I and come mainly from Persepolis (e.g., INM 201, 961 or Persepolis Museum 1455), with a few examples found

in Susa (INM 447). Apart from the inscribed vessels, many other uninscribed examples are known from Persepolis and can be considered as incomplete, at least in part. The main shapes of these vessels (plates and bowls) were inspired by Egyptian models (Fig. 11), mainly those of the Saite period deposited in the Treasury of Persepolis (INM 197 and 960). As with the *al-abashtra*, in this case also the reign of Xerxes I also seems to mark a strong trend for Egyptian patterns in the production of royal vessels.

Royal vases in “Egyptian blue”

Under this group, it is worth mentioning in particular a large ovoid jar (INM 220) which its morphological profile with two perforated tubular handles would indicate its Egyptian origin (Lilyquist 1995: 10-11; Aston 1994: 91sq). The area of discovery of this piece in the Treasury of Persepolis, grouped with other royal Egyptian vessels, suggests its Saite dating (Schmidt 1957: 83). The past excavations at Persepolis and Susa have revealed other elements of vases – decorations or support (e.g., INM 102; 135



Fig. 11. Footed alabaster plate inscribed with the name of the pharaoh Amasis found in the Treasury of Persepolis, Tehran INM 197/2197 (© INM. Photo Neda Tehrani).

and 1087) - made of the similar material and dated to the same period (Fig. 12).

Bes vase

A small fragment of a Bes vase discovered in Persepolis (INM 4185), with an uncommon style in the Egyptian pottery repertoire and closer to models found from Persian sites in the Levant (Qaheri 2020b: 177, 189, n. 91), might, like the Bes vase from Haft Tappeh (Rafiei-Alavi 2014), reveal the use of such vessels, often associated with religious or military contexts, in Persia.

(4) Miscellaneous objects

Jewelry

The figure of god Bes also characterizes the Achaemenid Egyptianizing jewelry (Abdi 2002b: 156; 1999: 134). In Iranian collections, the main elements include the gold pendants, principally those of Pasargadae, composed of 51 Bes heads (INM 3193). Other types, such as gold medallions, are also known (INM 206).

Furniture ornaments

The Egyptian influences in Achaemenid furniture art is attested by a group of ivory inlaid elements from Susa, of which only two examples are currently kept in the Tehran Museum (INM 807 and 810). These pieces feature two distinct styles of execution: the first is roughly carved in the form of an Egyptianizing cartouche surmounted by high feathers with a decorative inscription inside (Qaheri 2020b: 184, D 2.3); the second, finely worked, is decorated with an “offering bearer” motif (Fig. 13) bor-



Fig. 12. Part of a blue frit vase from the Saite period found in Susa, Tehran INM 1087 (© INM. Photo Neda Tehrani).

rowed from traditional scenes of the Egyptian tombs (Qaheri 2020b: 185, D 2.4).

To this category can also be added the bronze Apis bull of Persepolis, bearing the cartouche of Psammetichus I on the front (INM 338). According to its technical characteristics, this piece should correspond to an assembly element of a bed or seat (Qaheri 2020b: 182-183, D 2.2). One can suggest that the furniture decorated with this bronze, originally deposited in one of the Treasury rooms in Persepolis, could, like the royal Saite vessels, have served as a model for Persian creations.

Seal impression

Discovered from Persepolis and Susa, many seals and seal impressions are known to be decorated with Egyptian inscriptions or motifs (Garrison and Ritner: 2010; Amiet 1972a: 287; Schmidt

1957: 38-39). The central motif is generally the figure the god Bes, a very common motif in Achaemenid glyptic art, where he is associated with the image of the royal hero (Abdi 2002b: 152-154; 1999: 126-130). The seal impression of the Tehran Museum (INM 6579), found from Persepolis (Qaheri 2020b: 186, D 3.1), also shows this god in his usual attitude with raised arms. The inscribed stamps usually mention the Egyptian names and/or professional functions (Garrison and Ritner: 2010).

Archaeological and Historical Contribution of the Documentation

In parallel with the establishment of a complete inventory of the Egyptian collections in Iran, the thorough revision of the available data was an opportunity to point out the existence of



Fig. 13. Fragment of an Egyptian style ivory decoration from Susa, Tehran INM 810/2810 (© INM. Photo Neda Tehrani).

new Pharaonic sources in Persia. The verification of data also made it possible to detect the real function of various types of objects in the context of royal Achaemenid constructions in Persia. The systematic study of the documentation provides several clarifications and additional information to the known textual or archaeological evidence:

Enrichment of the Egyptian corpus of Persia

The review of excavation reports has led to the identification of other Egyptian funerary and ritual monuments. For example, a fragment of an Egyptian sarcophagus (Louvre, E 17450) made of local sandstone, found in the area known as the “Donjon” at the southern part of the Ville Royale, has been recognized (Qaheri 2016). In spite of its historical and archaeological importance, this monument remained totally ignored in the publications relating to Susa. According to its physical appearance, close to late Egyptian trapezoidal sarcophagi, and its epigraphic characteristics, this monument could date back to the second Persian period. It probably belonged to an Egyptian elite installed in Susa, and its original provenance is thought to be south of the royal city.

At the same time, the function of some previously published objects was reconsidered, notably a group of Egyptian mirror handles from Susa (Louvre, Sb 743; Sb 2792-93) long misinterpreted as vases or architectural decorations (Qaheri and Cuny 2017-2018). These massive mirror handles are similar to known models of the Ptolemaic period in Egypt. They can therefore be attributed also to the chronological context of the second Persian period. Given their date and their more likely ritual function, perhaps related to a goddess, these objects can be associated with a fragment of a large-scale Egyptian female statue (Louvre EA 33880 - Sb 10214), also from Susa (Caubet 2010: 343-344, fig. 373). The statue was probably intended to be placed in a sanctuary, and its technique of production, in a bicolored green/blue faience, also suggests a dating close to the second Achaemenid domination (Qaheri and Cuny 2017-2018: 258, n. 37).

Better knowledge of Achaemenid palatial sites and structures

The verification of finds and the detection of their exact provenance in Achaemenid sites, particularly in Susa, rectify or broaden our perception not only of the in loco use of Egyptian objects but also of the characteristics of Persian constructions and to some extent also of the urban extension of the royal residences. In this context, particular reference should be made to the deposit of large Egyptian protective amulets in the foundations of the palace of Darius in Susa, a location that attributes to these objects a prophylactic use as part of the Achaemenid royal architecture, considering also the combination of different types of Egyptian amulets all of a protective and magical nature, so it would be difficult to assume that these talismans were just used to fill the foundation trench. These amulets of big size are to be distinguished from small private talismans discovered in Susa.

As with the Tall-e Takht platform at Pasargadae and the Treasury building at Persepolis, the discovery of almost all of the fragments of alabaster and other types of luxury tableware from the Acropolis area at Susa might confirm the hypothesis of the location of the treasury and royal storerooms on this elevated hill during the Achaemenid period (Qaheri 2020b: 20-21). Moreover, a close examination of the fragments of quadrilingual alabaster vases from the Achaemenid period reveals that, contrary to what has been believed until now, no object of this type can be attributed to Persepolis: all the alabaster vases inscribed with the names of Persian kings actually come from Susa (Qaheri 2020b: 101). Along with the absence of vessels in the name of Darius I in Persepolis, this new clarification regarding inscribed alabasters raises questions about the modes of hoarding objects in the main Persian residences.

Finally, the presumed provenance of the “Donjon” sarcophagus in the southeast of Susa, outside the city enclosure, suggests the existence of cemetery(ies) for the foreign elite in the perimeter adjacent to the royal city; an evidence unknown hitherto in the Achaemenid period burial data in Iran (Qaheri 2016: 14-15).

More precisions on some professional activities of Egyptians in Persia

The Achaemenid textual sources (Susa Foundation Charter DSf, DSz, DSaa and Persepolis Archives) clearly indicate the activity of many Egyptian specialists and craftsmen (goldsmiths, wood workers, stone workers, painters) in Persian royal residences (Henkelman 2017a: 273-299; Wasmuth 2017: 45-49). The studied archaeological documentation may also affirm this participation in the development of the Achaemenid palatial culture but even further describe the “specialization” of certain professions. The collected data also demonstrate the involvement of some Egyptian high-ranking officials in the administrative organization of the residences.

- stone workers

Although Achaemenid texts mention Egyptians as stone masons (i.e., stone workers/carvers) working particularly at Persepolis and Susa, probably in connection with palace constructions, the concentration of considerable numbers of Egyptian-inspired tableware in these capitals may suggest the role of these craftsmen also in the production of royal vases (Qaheri 2012: 329-330). In fact, the similarity of the shapes of these vessels to the few Egyptian prototypes deposited in the center of the Empire, the variations in general style and placement of inscriptions, and also the absence of parallels in Persian Egypt, suggest that these types of tableware must have been made in Persia using imported materials. Similarly, the great number of the royal inscribed alabaster in Susa, most of them in the name of Xerxes I, poses questions about their production locations: were they all imported from Egypt, as is usually thought, or were they made locally, at least in part, during the reign of Xerxes I? In the absence of petrographic analyses and traces of workshops in Susa, however, the question remains open.

In the above-mentioned register of stoneworkers, a connection with statuary art would also be possible if one refers to the stylistic aspect of the exercise-piece statuette recently identified in the INM magazines and also to

rare textual sources from Egypt documenting the intervention of Egyptian sculptors in Susa (Kuhrt 2007: 1001, 64). This rapprochement is quite probable insofar as in Persian art, examples of human effigy creations in the round (model or statue) are mainly associated with Egypt (Qaheri and Razmjou 2020: 207, n. 10; 209, n. 16).

- specialists in vitreous materials

In the official inscriptions of Susa, Egyptians are several times assigned to the ornamentation of the walls/palaces, without further details about the nature of their activities. The specialization of this skilled workforce in the design of palatial decorations might be better understood by the distinctive craftsmen’s marks carved on animal horns made of blue frit in Persepolis. The production techniques for these pieces have a long tradition in pre-Persian Egypt. The same material of “Egyptian blue” was used in the inlay components on the ivory decorations with Egyptian motifs in Susa (Amiet 1972b: 320). Furthermore, the mastery of various vitreous techniques in Susa, and the large number of Egyptian amulets from this site, in greenish glazed faience and generally in standardized styles, suggest the involvement of Egyptian “faience makers” in local workshops.

- specialists in marquetry

Among the collection of Egyptian ivories from Susa, there are motifs of very high-quality workmanship and in accordance with Pharaonic iconography. Some of these pieces are associated with elements of Persian art, such as the borders of rosettes or the concentric circles on the plaque of the Iran National Museum (Fig. 13). This mixed style of decoration most probably refers to their local production. Thus, it is not impossible that there were marquetry workshops in Susa where Egyptian specialists participated in the creation of palatial furniture (Qaheri 2020b: 179). One might also wonder whether this type of activity in Susa could not be compared with the category of “wood workers” mentioned in the Foundation Charter of the palace of Darius (DSf, DSz).

- medical profession

It is known from historical sources that Persian kings, since Cyrus II, used to attach Egyptian physicians of various specialties to their personal service (Herodotus, *Histories* III, § 1 and 129). Contemporary Egyptian textual sources also provide information about the establishment of an Egyptian medical corps in Persian residences: they record the intervention of swnw-physicians under Darius I (Posener 1936: 22, l. 43) and the movement of practitioners skilled in magical knowledge during the second Persian period (Perdu 1985; Känel 1980). The discovery of studied accessories and monuments associated with Egyptian apotropaic and magical practices in the principal Achaemenid sites of Iran provides material evidence for the presence of such medical specialists in the center of the Empire. In this context, especially the magical stela found in Susa (Fig. 9), considering its high quality of execution and its size, cannot be attributed to simple workers coming from Egypt, but it must be regarded rather as an accessory handled by specialists.

- high-ranking officials

In addition to the two prominent figures of Udjahorresnet and Ptahhotep, who, according to their professional backgrounds, should have worked for the Persian central administration

(Colburn 2020: 174-187; Posener 1936: 21-22; 1986), the presence of mentioned seals and seal impressions with Egyptian names and function titles in Susa and Persepolis (Fig. 14) reinforces the idea of the involvement of the Egyptian elite in the administrative and economic structure of the Persian court.

Additional evidence on the settlement of Egyptian communities in Persia

The exodus of Egyptian communities to Persia reported by classical sources (Ctesias, *Persica*, § 9; Diodorus, *Historical Library* I, XLVI, 4; XV, XCII,5; and Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists* IV, 150b-c), may also be supported by the textual documentation from Susa, referring to the active role of Egyptians in private contracts during the Achaemenid period (Henkelman 2017b: 119-121; Joannès 1990). The finding of various forms of amulets for private use in Susa, as well as objects of worship and traces of Egyptian burial, are other apparent evidence of the integration of such communities into the multicultural society of Persia. This integration can also be deduced from the continuity of certain Egyptian religious and cultural traditions in post-Achaemenid Susiana: namely, the adoption of the anthropoid form for terracotta sarcophagi from the Parthian period or the later use of Egyptian protective amulets in

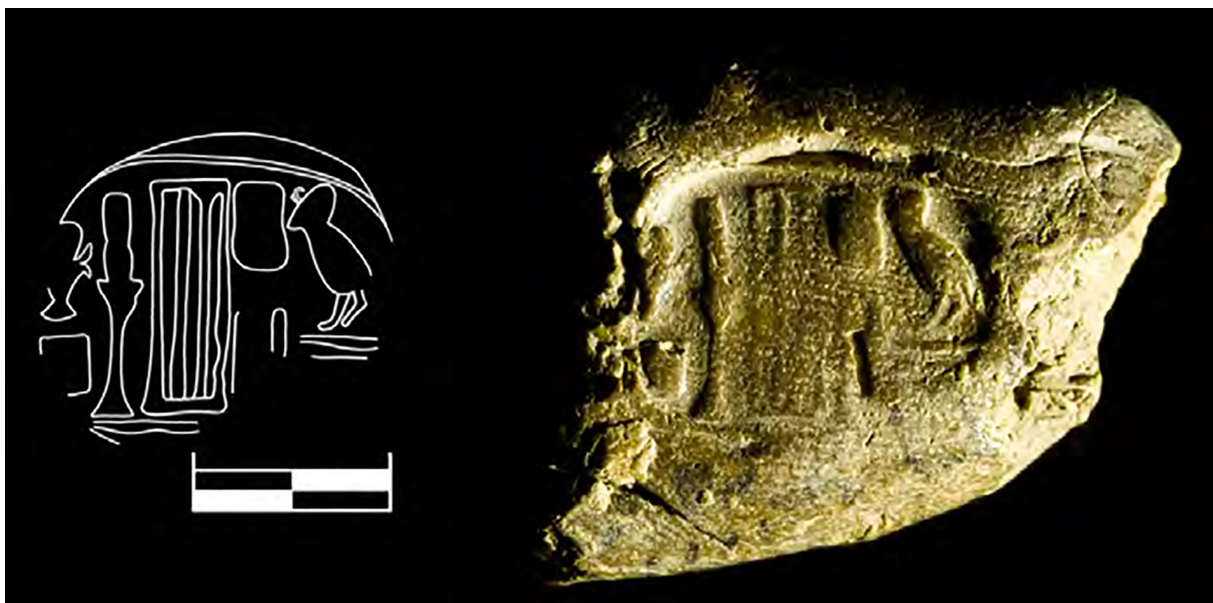


Fig. 14. Seal impression PFAT 0445 from Persepolis inscribed with Egyptian name and official titles (chief of Pe, overseer of royal mansions). Photo after Garrison and Ritner 2010: fig. 15-16.

the tombs of this period (Boucharlat and Haerinck 2011: 24, 76; Ghirshman 1954: 69).

Alongside other great civilizations of the first millennium BC, the Egyptian culture influenced not only the Achaemenid palatial art in various domains of construction and architectural ornamentation, but also the court life in particular with regard to the King's Table and the design of ceremonial objects as well as palatine medicine and the health care of the sovereign and his relatives. The Egyptian impact also marks in some extent the manifestations of royal power and the social functioning of the Persian court and some aspects of the royal rewarding practices. Other research programs have recently been planned by author to complete the inventory of *aegyptiaca* from Achaemenid Iran, taking into account the study of associated collections outside Iran, at the Louvre Museum and the Oriental Institute Museum of Chicago. The establishment of such a homogeneous collection and its comparison with the known data of the late Egyptian palatial system should consequently provide more pertinent responses to many other questions concerning, among others, the Persian aulic art, the internal organization of Achaemenid residences, or the locations of royal workshops.

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