

THE SAITE PERIOD:
THE EMERGENCE OF A MEDITERRANEAN POWER

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PRELIMINARY REMARKS

1. Unless otherwise specified, all dates are B.C.
2. P. Louvre 7848, a document drafted in abnormal hieratic and dating from the year 12 of the reign of Amasis, indicates both solar and lunar dates, making it possible to synchronize the Egyptian calendar with the Julian calendar. Year 12 of the reign of Amasis thus runs from 10 January 559 to 9 January 558.¹ The Saite dynastic list is thus:

Psamtik I	664–610
Nekau II	610–595
Psamtik II	595–589
Apries	589–570
Amasis	570–526
Psamtik III	526–525

3. ABBREVIATIONS:

- ar. = Aramaean
- dem. = demotic
- gr. = Greek
- ab. hierat. = abnormal hieratic
- O.P. = Old Persian

The Saite period corresponds to the 26th Manethonian Dynasty, and covers approximately the century and a half of Egyptian history between two invasions from the East: that of the Assyrians in the first half of the seventh century, and that of the Persians in 526.² The first invasion put an end to the Kushite domination of Egypt, while the second confirmed the domination of the Achaemenid Persians. In 570, a coup d'État by General Amasis interrupted the dynastic continuity and led to the overthrow of Apries. After his lengthy reign of 44 years, his son and successor Psamtik III reigned for only a few months before being overthrown by Cambyses.

¹ R.A. Parker, "The Length of Amasis and the Beginning of the 26th Dynasty," in: *Festschrift Junge = MDAIK* 15 (1957), 208–212.

² J.F. Quack, "Zum Datum der persischen Eroberung Ägyptens unter Kambyses," *JEH* 4/2, 2011, pp. 228–246.

SOURCES AND PROBLEMS

The widely used and abused term “Saite Renaissance” is so fraught with error and simplification that its meaning requires explanation. It originated in the work of the art historians, who quickly determined that the Saite monuments, statues, and votive inscriptions cut into the hard stones were characterized by a search for archaism, an unquestionable taste for what was ancient. Scribes and lapidaries used ancient titles and turns of phrase, some of which dated from the Old Kingdom, to designate the positions of their time.³ In our opinion, this practice, which creates the illusion of a millennial continuity of functions, helps to conceal the changes. Worse, it can lead the epigraphist to interpret a sixth-century position in terms of an identical title attested to more than a millennium earlier. Historians of the Saite period must therefore be wary of engaging in a kind of “nominalism of titles” consisting in confusion of words and objects. Papyrus documentation (in both abnormal hieratic and in demotic) is of great help in this regard. By putting flesh on the simple statement of titles and positions that constitutes the ordinary work of the epigraphist, papyrus texts show the agents of the king and the gods in action, and supply vital information on the duties, scope of action, and position in the hierarchy of titles that in and of themselves are sometimes not very revealing. Thus, in this short history of the Saite royal administration, we shall look chiefly at the positions explained by both the epigrapher and the papyrus. The best method for clarifying the functioning of the Saite administration is to cross-reference these two types of documentation as often as possible.

Two very penetrating studies serve as the basis for the historiography of the period. Kees has analyzed the meaning of the Saite domestic policy established as resumption of control over the Egyptian territory and the centralization of the administration.⁴ Meanwhile, Kienitz has described Saite foreign policy and positioned it in the long term by showing that it foreshadowed that of the Ptolemies.⁵ It is true that for

³ P. der Manuelian, *Living in the Past. Studies in Archaism of the Egyptian Twenty-Sixth Dynasty* (London, 1994). The archaizing trends go back to the seventh century; F. Payraudeau, “Les prémices du mouvement archaïsant à Thèbes et la statue Caire JE 37382 du quatrième prophète Djedkhonsouiouefânkh,” *BIFAO* 107 (2007), 141–156.

⁴ H. Kees, *Innenpolitik der Saitenzeit* (Göttingen, 1935).

⁵ F.K. Kienitz, *Die politische Geschichte. Ägyptens vom 7. bis zum 4. Jahrhundert vor der Zeitwende* (Berlin, 1953), 140–149 (Chapter 12).

the historian, Saite Egypt offers an example of very profound transformation of the administrative structure of a monarchy in a fairly short time, barely a century and a half. Egypt, politically fragmented and conquered, became a centralized monarchy that recovered a preponderant role in the Middle East and in the eastern Mediterranean in particular. This analysis has led us to give preference to a dynamic approach to Saite administrative history, in order to show how the choices made in domestic and foreign policy led to the perfecting of the administrative machinery. The first Saites had to gain territorial control of the country (Part 1), and then build a military tool that, in view of Egyptian strategy choices, had to become very burdensome (Part 2). Our hypothesis is that it was this cost that gradually forced the Saites to transform the financial and tax administration (Part 3) which could draw on the resources generated by the economic activities conducted particularly on the margins of that other Egyptian institutional entity, the temple (Part 4).

1. TERRITORIAL SOVEREIGNTY (PSAMTIK I—592/591)

The Saites came from the area around Sais, Buto, and Imau, known at the turning point of the eighth and seventh century as the Kingdom of the Western Provinces.⁶ A family of minor kings closely connected with the temple of Neith in Sais appeared at this time. They chose to be buried within the walls of the temple, an act that called attention to their close connection with this city. After the defeat of Nekau I by the Nubians, his son Psamtik I was chosen by the Assyrians to be his successor.⁷ Despite this somewhat inglorious origin, the reign of Psamtik I served as a benchmark for the entire Saite period and well beyond (a Psamtik V was still reigning around the year 400).⁸ It is true that the new master of Egypt was to benefit from exceptional circumstances. First, the unusual length of his reign enabled him to ensure the permanence of his policy of control of the

⁶ J. Yoyotte, "Les principautés du Delta au temps de l'anarchie libyenne (Études d'histoire politique)," in: *Mélanges Maspero. Volume 1: Orient ancien* (MIFAO 66/1, fascicule 4; Cairo, 1961), 121–181, especially 151–159, III.

⁷ O. Perdu, "De Stéphinates à Néchao ou les débuts de la XXVI^e dynastie," *CRAIBL* (2002), 1215–1244.

⁸ M. Chauveau, "Les archives d'un temple des oasis au temps des perses," *BSFE* 137 (1996), 32–47.

country, an effort that would have stood little chance of success without the simultaneous weakening of the imperial powers. In the south, the Kushite pharaohs appeared to have given up on Egypt after the reign of Tanutamun/Tantamani, while in the east, the declining Assyrian power was engaged with its Babylonian rival. The Saite thus restored the pharaonic monarchy in the shadow of these two declines. The king and his immediate entourage (1.1) obviously constituted the heart of this mechanism, which imposed its yoke first in the Delta, fragmented into a multitude of principalities, and then into a Thebaid dominated by the powerful temple of Amun (1.2). In addition, Psamtik I created an enormous “Southern Land” that extended from Syene (Aswan) to Memphis, under the management of a high-level official known as the *Leader of the Fleet* (1.3).

1.1 *The King and His Entourage*

A small kneeling statue represents General Djedptahiufankh, who was active during the reign of Psamtik I (Cairo JE 36949).⁹ The large inscription that runs along the front of his robe begins with a list of titles indicating the closeness of this important figure to the king: (1) “Prince and count, royal chancellor, sole friend, beloved” (*rp-^c ḥṣty-^c ḥtm bity smḥr w^c mr nsw m n ib*). His other court titles, including *Agent for the Residence* (*imi-r3 ḥnw.ti*), *Agent for the royal scribes of the repast* (*imi-r3 šḫ3.w nsw ^cb-r3*), *Royal Spokesperson* (*wḥm nsw*) and *Agent for the harem* (*imi-r3 ip.t nsw*), indicate missions largely extrapolated from events that antedate the Saite period.¹⁰ We shall therefore concentrate instead on the handful of functions connected with the direct service of the king for which we have contextual elements. Among the palace titles, we shall examine *chief physician* of the king (1.1.2) and *Manager of the Antechamber* (1.1.3), beginning, however, with an examination of the two functions combined around the king, the purpose of which was to second the king in the administration of Egypt.

⁹ H. de Meulenaere, “La statue du général Djed-ptah-iouf-ankh, Caire JE 36949,” *BIFAO* 63 (1965), 19–32 [with 4 plates]; J.A. Josephson & M. el-Dalmaty, *Catalogue Général of Egyptian Antiquities in the Cairo Museum. Statues of the XXVth and XXVIth dynasties* (Cairo, 1999), 87–90, pl. 37.

¹⁰ D. Pressl, *Beamte und Soldaten. Die Verwaltung in der 26. Dynastie in Ägypten (664–525 v. Chr.)* (Tübingen, 1998), 15–16 (*imi-r3 ḥnw.ti*), pp. 16–17 (*imi-r3 šḫ3.w nsw ^cb-r3*), pp. 19–21 (*wḥm nsw*), pp. 21–22 (*imi-r3 ip.t nsw*).

1.1.1 *The Advisers to the King*

The statuette of General Djedptahiufankh is an almost complete work, very carefully executed. It includes an eight-line inscription that is essential for an understanding of the organization of the advisers to the king. In this text, Djedptahiufankh says that the king spoke of him in these terms: “(3) relies on his words on the day of the High Council (*sh ʕ*), distinguished by the king because of his excellent ideas (4), pronouncing wise judgements in the Council of Nobles (*sh n srw*) and speaking to them next to the king so that they were satisfied by his remarks.” The text thus differentiates between two meetings. The first is called the *High Council*. According to the description given to us by Djedptahiufankh, the king listened to his closest advisers and was possibly able to “rely” (*h^c hr*) on the opinions that he felt were the best-advised. This was thus a council of government convened to assist the sovereign in taking decisions. We do not know the nature of Djedptahiufankh’s role in such meetings. The narrative passage of the literary text known as the *Instructions of Chasheshonqy* (P. BM 10508) can perhaps provide some clarification.¹¹ The chief physician of the king, Harsiesis son of Ramose, was reported to have been involved in a plot aimed at assassination of a Saite sovereign. The pharaoh summoned him and publicly accused him during a council meeting (demotic *qnb.t*) that was attended by the principal officials of the court: “(3. x + 7) On the following morning, Pharaoh took his place in the hall of the palace at Memphis. The guards were at their posts and the generals were in their seats. The king looked toward (3. x + 10) the place of Harsiesis son of Ramose.” The presence of generals (dem. *mr-mš^c*) is immediately reminiscent of the *High Council* mentioned in the inscription of Djedptahiufankh. Thus it was perhaps in this capacity that this general had to be present at this event. The fact is that the lengthy proscymene that runs along the edge of the base of his statue is preceded by the title of general (*imi-rš mš^c* II. 4). We should point out, however, that while Djedptahiufankh held high-ranking positions in the Egyptian army, we must not automatically attribute a military meaning to the

¹¹ S.R.K. Glanville, *The Instructions of ‘Onchsheshonqy* (British Museum Papyrus 10508) (London, 1955), 9; F. Hoffmann & J.F. Quack, *Anthologie der demotischen Literatur* (Berlin, 2007), 277; D. Agut-Labordère & M. Chauveau, *Héros, magiciens et sages oubliés de l’Égypte ancienne* (Paris, 2011), 277.

title *imi-r3 mšc*. The *imi-r3 mšc* is, strictly speaking, a “chief,” the leader of a group of individuals, regardless of the nature of the task that he is required to perform.¹² In this regard, the ambiguous use of the Egyptian *imi-r3 mšc* is completely comparable to that of the title *rābu sabū* in recent Babylonian documentation.¹³ More broadly, the language of the narratives shows that the term can also be used to designate any person of importance. For example, in the tale of Meryre and the pharaoh Sisebek (*Narrative in P. Vandier*), the obscure magician Meryre assumes the title of *mr-mšc* throughout the second part of the narrative without assuming the position of command.¹⁴ He seems to deserve it, since his abilities have been recognized by the king. Meryre, who until then had been ignored by the court of scheming magicians, then becomes “general,” i.e., a person who counts.

An assembly of “nobles,” like the one evoked in the inscription of Djedptahiufankh, is mentioned in another biographical text engraved on a fragmentary stelophorous statue from the Theban region (Phil. Univ. Mus. E 16025).¹⁵ This monument belonged to a vizier named Harsiese, a probable contemporary of Psamtik I, who also participated in a meeting with the sovereign. Harsiese was able to boast of being the person “in whose word the king trusts during the convocation of nobles” ($x + 6$). We find here the same formula that Djedptahiufankyh applied to the High Council, employed this time to a meeting of nobles. Are we to deduce from this that the meetings were of the same type? We do not think so. If we consider the inscription of Djedptahiufankh, compared with the High Council, which probably included persons who had been distinguished by the king, the Council of Nobles seems to be of a different type. General Djedptahiufankh describes himself as being more active there since he “persuades them (= the nobles) to take the side of the king” (*wp sw r-gs nsw*). In other words, he succeeds in persuading the members of the council to adopt the opinion

¹² F. de Cenival, “Remarques sur l'imprécision des titres dans l'armée et l'administration en démotique,” in: *Atti del XVII Congresso Internazionale di Papirologia. Volume Secondo* (Pisa, 1984), 723–726.

¹³ CAD R p. 31b.

¹⁴ G. Posener, *Le Papyrus Vandier* (Cairo, 1985), 59.

¹⁵ H. de Meulenaere, “La statue d'un vizir thébain, Philadelphia, University Museum E. 16025,” *JEA* 68 (1982), 139–144, 4. Pl.

of Psamtik I. Thus, far from being a consulting council called to assist the sovereign in his task, the Council of Nobles appears to have been a deliberative meeting in which the king had to defend his point of view and obtain adherence. Psamtik I does not dominate, or at least does not visibly dominate, the members of this meeting. It is strange that Djedptahiufankh was a member of this council without ever claiming the status of noble (*srw*). Are we to suppose that membership in this group is contained in a different title present in the inscription? The title of *count governor* (*rpꜥ ḥꜣty-ꜥ*) at the beginning of the text could then justify his place among the *sr.w*. We would then have to presume the existence of a double hierarchy, that of “nobles” and that of the “generals,” the first entitling the holder to sit in a council to which the king must convoke the leaders of Egypt, the second, to sit in a meeting controlled by the sovereign. Let us conclude this survey of the royal councils by saying that the Saite period saw the reactivation of a literary theme that had appeared in the Middle Empire, showing the king in his palace convoking the dignitaries for a presentation of his views.¹⁶ At least two *Koenigsnovellen* known by inscriptions on stone show the king surrounded by his advisors. The Bentehhor stele (Louvre A 83), dated from the year 1 of the reign of Nekau II, offers a list of the embellishments decided upon for Karnak at the very beginning of the reign of this king.¹⁷ Installed in his residence, the king informs his courtiers of his desire to renovate the sanctuaries of Thebes, and then confirms the lamentable condition into which they have fallen.¹⁸ Another stele dated from the year 1, the famous Elephantine stele, describes combats in the Delta at the very beginning of the reign of Amasis. The “opening scene” shows the king in council being informed of the attack of the Greeks.¹⁹

¹⁶ G. Posener, *Littérature et politique dans l'Égypte de la XII^e dynastie* (Paris, 1969), 30.

¹⁷ G. Vittmann, *Priester und Beamte im Theben der Spätzeit. Genealogische und prosopographische Untersuchungen zum thebanischen Priester- und Beamtentum der 25. und der 26. Dynastie* (Vienna, 1978), 74–75.

¹⁸ O. Perdu, “Prologue à un corpus des stèles royales de la XXVI^e dynastie,” *BSFE* 105 (1986), 23–38, esp. 24–25.

¹⁹ Y. Ladynin, “The Elephantine Stela of Amasis: Some Problems and Prospects of Study,” *GM* 211 (2006), 31–57.

1.1.2 *The Chief Physician*

The narrative that precedes the *Instructions of Chasheshonqy*, already mentioned above, introduces a person who is very close to the Saite king: the *chief physician* (demotic *wr swnw*).²⁰ In reality, this man, Harsiese son of Ramose, was the source of the plot that led to the imprisonment of the unfortunate Onchsheshonqy (P. BM. 10508 col. 1 to 3). The titles preserved on the very beautiful statue left by the chief physician Udjahorresnet (Vatican inv.196)²¹ and in the tomb built for him at Saqqara²² show that this high Saite dignitary, active from the reign of Amasis to that of Darius I, was much more than the personal physician to the kings. The title most often associated with him during his lengthy career was that of *chief physician of Upper and Lower Egypt* (*wr swnw Šm^c Mḥw*), but he also occupied major military positions: *leader of Aegean foreign (troops)* (*imi-r3 ḥ3s.wt ḥ^cw nbw*) (a title that appears second on the list) and admiral of the royal fleet, (*imi-r3 kbn.wt nsw*).²³ Udjahorresnet thus directed the military fleet and the Aegean contingents, duties that involved two types of abilities very different from those of medicine. His medical knowledge was thus part of a much broader body of knowledge. In the case of a person of this importance, we deduce that the title of *chief physician* served above all to signify an extremely close relationship with the king, a role of special adviser in whom the sovereign had complete trust, to the point of entrusting his health to this person. The profile of *chief physician* and *chief dentist* (*wr ibḥ*) of Psamtik Seneb is very close to that of Udjahorresnet, since he too was an admiral.²⁴ The naophorous statue of the *chief physician* Peftuaneith (Louvre A 93) bears what is unquestionably among the richest of the Saite biographical

²⁰ On this point, and in general, the reader will consult D. Pressl, *Beamte und Soldaten*, 22–24.

²¹ G. Posener, *La première domination perse en Égypte. Recueil d'inscriptions hiéroglyphiques* (Cairo, 1936), 1–26. An indicative bibliography on this text can be found in G. Vittmann, “Ägypten zur Zeit der Perserherrschaft,” in: *Herodot und das Persische Weltreich*, R. Rollinger, B. Truschneegg, & R. Bichler, eds. (Wiesbaden, 2011), 373–429, esp. 377 n. 17.

²² L. Bareš, *Abusir IV. The Shaft Tomb of Udjahorresnet at Abusir* (Prague, 1999).

²³ L. Bareš, *The Shaft Tomb of Udjahorresnet at Abusir*, fig. 35, col. 11.

²⁴ P. Ghalioungui, *The Physicians of Pharaonic Egypt* (Mainz am Rhein, 1983), 32 n° 122; P.M., Chevereau, *Prosopographie des cadres militaires égyptiens de la Basse époque* (Antony, 1985), 134–135.

inscriptions that have come down to us.²⁵ The text describes the renovation work done at Abydos and its environs by Peftuaneith during the reign of Amasis. The duties listed at the beginning of the inscription show that his abilities (which we shall discuss later) are economic and financial by nature.

1.1.3 *The Manager of the Antechamber*

The *Manager of the Antechamber* (*imi-r3 rwt*) is one of the most prominent members of the Saite court.²⁶ This title is attested to from the reign of Psamtik I to that of Amasis, and disappears with the arrival of the Persians. Ahmosesaneith is the last person known to have held it. Let us note in passing that the existence of this person is also attested to by documents going back to the reign of Nektanebo I. His memory was thus venerated more than a century and a half after his death.²⁷ The term *rwt*, translated as “propylaea” in the case of a temple,²⁸ very definitely designates here the anteroom that served as a waiting room for people who had requested a meeting with the king. If we accept this theory, the *Manager of the Antechamber* was thus in charge of organizing the royal audiences. The identification of the equivalent title in demotic (*mr rwt*) enables us to shed new light on the powers connected with this position.²⁹ In the *Petition of Peteise* (P. Rylands 9), the *Manager of the Antechamber* appears as one of the leading officials of the royal administration in Memphis; he has *accountant scribes* (*sh iw=f ip*) to perform investigations throughout the country (P. Rylands 9 19.1–3). Following the advice of his father, Peteise III visits a scribe of the *Manager of the Antechamber* to report on the wrong done to him by the priests of Teudjoi. The scribe agrees to

²⁵ Lastly, D. Klotz, “Two Studies on Late Period Temples at Abydos,” *BIFAO* 110 (2010), 127–163, esp. 128–129.

²⁶ D. Pressl, *Beamte und Soldaten*, 17–19.

²⁷ B. Bothmer, *Egyptian Sculpture of the Late Period 700 B.C. to A.D. 100* (New York, 1960), 92–94, n° 74. The *Manager of the Antechamber* Nesisut may more probably be connected with the Thirtieth Dynasty; G. Vittmann, “Rupture and Continuity. On priests and officials in Egypt during the Persian Period,” in: *Organisations des pouvoirs et contacts culturels dans l’Empire achéménide*, P. Briant & M. Chauveau, eds. (Persika 14; Paris, 2009), 89–121. On the dating of the sarcophagus of Nesisut (BM 30), see p. 100.

²⁸ S. Sauneron, “La justice à la porte des temples (à propos du nom égyptien des propylées),” *BIFAO* 54 (1954), 117–127.

²⁹ G. Vittmann, *Der demotische Papyrus Rylands 9* (ÄAT, 38; Wiesbaden, 1998), 654–660.

intervene in his favor, and upon his return to Memphis reports to the *Manager of the Antechamber* the extortion activities of which his protégé has been the victim. The *Manager of the Antechamber* writes directly to the *governor of Heracleopolis* and the *general* in charge of the Heracleopolite nome, asking them to seize the attackers of Peteise and bring them to Memphis (P. Rylands 9 19.8–13). This shows that the *Manager of the Antechamber* had genuine powers of investigation and command that allowed him to resolve personally some of the matters brought to the attention of the sovereign. For this purpose he had his own investigation service; thus he was not a mere “chamberlain” in charge of maintaining the list of hearings and introducing petitioners. Next to (parallel with?) the *Manager of the Antechamber*, viziers (*t3ty.w*) also seem to have played a role of “supreme judge” during this period.³⁰ This would seem to prove the sequence of the titles “judge and vizier” (for example on the Theban statue Phil. Univ. Mus. E 16025, l. x + 10)³¹ as well as the close association of *judges* (demotic *wpw.t.w*) and *viziers* in the royal residence that we observe in P. Rylands 9 (15.9).³² In any event, the *Manager of the Antechamber* could be only a person who enjoyed the full trust of the sovereign. This closeness is evident in the case of the *Manager of the Antechamber* Neferibrener, who was also the tutor of the children of Nekau II. In honor of their good teacher, the four pupils (one of whom was the future Psamtik II) dedicated to him a statue placed in the temple of Neith in Sais (CG 658).³³

1.2 *Resistance and Submission: The Delta, the Thebaid, and the Southern Land*

The Saite monarchy controlled the Egyptian territory thanks to the submission of two aristocracies. The first of them was the Libyan aristocracy, in which the Saites originated and whose representatives held the major cities of the Delta. The second was organized around the temple of Amun of Thebes and the major local priestly families that supported the Kushite dynasty.

³⁰ J. Yoyotte, “Le nom égyptien du ministre de l’économie,” *CRAIBL* (1989), 73–90, esp. 81 n. 35.

³¹ H. de Meulenaere, *JEA* 68 (1982), 139–144, 4 pl.

³² G. Vittmann, *Der demotische Papyrus Rylands 9*, 166–167.

³³ R. El-Sayed, “Quelques éclaircissements sur l’histoire de la XXVI^e dynastie, d’après la statue du Caire CG. 658,” *BIFAO* 74 (1974), 29–44, 2 pl.

1.2.1 *The Reduction of the Chieftainships of the Delta*

The Delta is seen to have enjoyed a strategic position in the economic geography of the time. To the east were the incense routes that ended in Palestine; to the north was the Mediterranean. Saite power was born in a flourishing region very well situated from the point of view of the geography of trade. It is here that Psamtik I first had to impose his power, in an area in which political unity had collapsed, to the benefit of principalities held by “warlords” of Libyan origin, the “Great Chiefs of the Ma” (in the singular *wr ʿ n M3*). The policy of unification of the Delta under Psamtik I was one of pragmatism. Different methods appear to have been used for the treatment of the competing lines. For example, at Mendes the local *High Chief of the Ma* suddenly disappears from the documentation starting in the 660s.³⁴ Similarly, the Libyan family that had been established at least since the campaign of Piye at the head of Busiris seems to have been replaced, under unknown conditions, by a leading Saite administrator, a certain Shesmunakht, *count and governor at Bus[iris] in An[djet]* (*rpʿ ḥ3ty-ʿ m ʿnh[dt] Ddw*). His statue, which depicts him in kneeling position, presents plastic features that are characteristic of works of the transitional period between the Kushite and Saite periods (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Mus. ÄS 8507).³⁵ However, the methods used do not appear to have been always this harsh. At Sebennytos, the transition seems to have been more moderate. The city was controlled by a Libyan family established there since at least the reign of Piye. Akanosh A, the eldest of the members known, appears on the famous *Triumphal Stele*, and this line can be followed throughout the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty.³⁶ The power of these Libyan chiefs over their region was extremely broad, and even encroached upon the royal prerogatives. The picture that occupies the top of an unpublished donation stele (private collection)³⁷ dating from the year 2 of the reign of Nekau I (671–670)³⁸ shows Akanosh B, very probably the grandson of

³⁴ P. MacKay, H. de Meulenaere et alii, *Mendes II* (Warminster, 1976), 173.

³⁵ O. Perdu, “Documents relatifs aux gouverneurs du Delta au début de la XXVI^e dynastie,” *RdÉ* 57 (2006), 151–197, esp. 176–177.

³⁶ O. Perdu, “La chefferie de Sébennytos de Piankhi à Psammétique I^{er},” *RdÉ* 55 (2004), 102.

³⁷ In course of publication by O. Perdu. See the bibliography provided by D. Meeks, “Une stèle de donation de la Deuxième Période Intermédiaire” *ENIM* 2 (2009), 129–154, esp. 139–140 (document 24.6.2) available at <http://www.enim-egyptologie.fr>.

³⁸ Here we follow O. Perdu, *CRAIBL* (2002), 1241.

Akanosh A, “offering the countryside” to the triad of Behbeit el-Hagar. The inscription states that a “major donation of fields”³⁹ was made by this dynasty to Osiris-Andjty, Horus, and Isis of Behbeit. In the caption that accompanies this image, Akanosh B is presented as “the prophet of Isis Lady Hebet, high chief and commander, Akanosh son of Iuput” ([*hm*]-*ntr n 3st nb.t Hbt wr* [ʿ] *h3wty 'Ik[n]wš s3 'Iw[pw.t]*). Thus, while recognizing Nekau I as king, Akanosh B usurps the right to dispose fully of the lands within his area of influence, and seizes upon the royal iconography of the “gift of the countryside.” This document is essential in order to understand the political atmosphere of the birth of the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty. The Saite king initially appears as a *primus inter pares*, one among other High Chiefs who hold the Delta cities. While these chiefs acknowledge his pre-eminence on a purely honorific level (his name serves to establish the *computus*, the ecclesiastical calendar), on the other hand they retain royal prerogatives. In subsequent decades, however, the situation evolved in favor of the crown. For example, Akanosh C, the last known representative of the line of the *High Chiefs* of Sebennytos, left a statue of Osiris (Cairo CG 567) bearing the cartouche of Psamtik I.⁴⁰ Moreover, in the inscription that accompanies this monument, he is never called *high chief* (*wr ʿ*); he bears the same title as the administrator Shesmunakht at Busiris, *count and governor* (*rp^c h3ty-ʿ*), followed by the priestly title of *prophet of Onuris-Shu son of Re lord of Sebennytos*. It seems, then, that the highest representative of the principality of Sebennytos ultimately recognized the authority of Psamtik I. In this case, the new power and the former Libyan chiefs had thus found a compromise that allowed the members of the old-line families of the *High Chiefs* of the Delta who had so decided to rally to and join the local Saite administration. Perhaps this refers to the members of the *Council of Nobles* mentioned above; a man like Akanosh C could not be treated like an ordinary *governor*. The presumed interest of Psamtik I in bringing the declining Delta elites into union with his power in order to facilitate their joining forces with him, while at the same time soothing their feelings, is thus understandable. Only the *High Chiefs* who rejected this type of compromise would have been ultimately defeated. Once integrated into the administration, the descendants of the *High*

³⁹ O. Perdu, *RdÉ* 55 (2004), 98.

⁴⁰ O. Perdu, *RdÉ* 55 (2004), 95–111; Id., *RdÉ* 57 (2006), 178–180.

Chiefs would have been gradually “digested” by the Saite power. This “digestion” must have taken time: in 601–600, Pmui II of Busiris was still using the title of *High Chief of the Ma* as part of his titulary.⁴¹ In this perspective, the *Council of Nobles* may have characterized a very particular period, that of the transition of a royal power based on the consent of the *High Chiefs* to a more absolute form of monarchy.

1.2.2 *The Assertion of Saite Authority in Thebes*

Things were much more difficult in Upper Egypt, where the temple of Amun of Thebes was a unique political structure otherwise more dense than the Delta chieftainships. During almost three centuries, the priests of Amun had become independent of the royal power. Notwithstanding this fact, the Delta and Thebaid aristocracies did have a few points in common. During the seventy years of Kushite domination, the highest army positions had been shared between Kushites and Libyans.⁴² In both cases, then, the Saites were facing a military aristocracy. These aristocracies could be linked by marriage, as is shown by the union of Takushit, a lady very probably of Nubian origin (bronze statue preserved in the National Archaeological Museum in Athens, No. 110) with Akanosh (B?), one of the minor kings of Sebennytos whose line was discussed earlier.⁴³

The powerful temple of Amun of Thebes was headed by Montuemhat, the *fourth prophet, prince of the city* (*ḥꜣty-ꜥ n niw.t*) and *Agent for Upper Egypt* (*imi-rꜣ n Šmꜥ.t*). He had been able to retain his position despite the Assyrian invasion.⁴⁴ Psamtik I appears to have realized the power of this remarkable political figure, since he retained his position until his death around 648. It was perhaps Nesnaisut, a major Saite dignitary, who had to supervise this transitional phase. He

⁴¹ J. Yoyotte, “Des lions et des chats. Contribution à la prosopographie de l’époque libyenne,” *RdÉ* 39 (1998), 155–178, esp. 176.

⁴² G. Vittmann, “A Question of Names, Titles and Iconography. Kushites in Priestly, Administrative and other Positions from Dynasties 25 to 26,” *MittSag* 18 (2007), 139–161, esp. 159.

⁴³ Concerning the paleographic arguments that militate in favor of this attribution, cf. O. Perdu, *RdÉ* 55 (2004), 98–99, and, more recently, G. Vittmann, *MittSag* 18 (2007), 152–153.

⁴⁴ G. Vittmann, *Priester und Beamte im Theben des Spätzeit. Genealogische Untersuchungen zum thebanischen Priester- und Beamtentum der 25. und 26. Dynastie* (Beiträge zur Ägyptologie; Vienna, 1978), 172 (*ḥꜣty-ꜥ n niw.t*) and pp. 193–196 (*imi-rꜣ n Šmꜥ.t*).

has left a mortuary statue placed in the temple of Horus in Edfu (Berlin 17700).⁴⁵ The inscription that it bears is important for the understanding of the structure of Saite power on the local level at the very beginning of the period. Before being installed at Edfu, with extensive powers, Nesnaisut was invested by Psamtik I with the government of nine different cities in the Delta and in Upper Egypt. The last three cities named are Thebes, El Kab, and Edfu. It is thus very probable that after assuming management positions in northern cities, Nesnaisut was sent to the south. In eight cases, he bears the title of “governor” (*ḥꜣty-ꜥ*). But in Thebes he is *rsw*, translated as “observer.”⁴⁶ Nesnaisut was probably the eyes of Psamtik I in a region where the Saite royal power was seeking to strengthen its hold. It was very certainly in the same period that the position of *God’s Wife of Amun*, held by the Kushite royal princesses, came under the control of the Saïtes.⁴⁷ There is no need here to discuss the famous *Nitocris Stele*, which shows that Nitocris, daughter of Psamtik I, was officially adopted by the *God’s Wife* Shepenupet II, daughter of the Kushite pharaoh Piye, in 656.⁴⁸ It seems that Princess Amenirdis, daughter of Taharqa and first adopted daughter of Shepenupet II, was able to hold the title of *God’s wife*, but around 655 the position passed to the Saïte princess. Much later, in the year 1 of the reign of Psamtik II (596–595), Nitocris adopted Ankhnesneferibre, daughter of Psamtik II, who did not succeed her until year 4 of the reign of her brother Apries (586).⁴⁹ Until the Persian conquest of Cambyses, the position of *God’s Wife* was to remain in the hands of Saïte princesses, sisters or daughters of the king. At the same time we observe, but cannot conclusively interpret, the disappearance at the end of the seventh century of certain positions connected with the administration of Upper Egypt, for example that of *vizier*

⁴⁵ H. Ranke, “Statue eines hohen Beamten unter Psammetich I,” *ZÄS* 44 (1907–1908), 42–54; O. Perdu, *RdÉ* 57 (2006), 172–175.

⁴⁶ H. de Meulenaere, *BIFAO* 63 (1965), 31.

⁴⁷ H. de Meulenaere, “Thèbes et la Renaissance saïte,” *Égypte. Afrique & Orient* 28 (2003), 61–68; M.F. Ayad, *God’s Wife, God’s servant: The God’s Wife of Amun (C. 740–525 BC)* (New York, 2009), 23–26.

⁴⁸ R.A. Caminos, “The *Nitocris* Adoption Stela,” *JEA* 50 (1964), 71–101; O. Perdu, *Recueil des inscriptions royales saïtes* (Paris, 2002), 17–26, document n° 1.

⁴⁹ A. Leahy, “The Adoption of Ankhnesneferibre at Karnak,” *JEA* 82 (1996), 145–165, esp. 157–158.

(*t3ty*) of Upper Egypt, the last holder of which appears to have been Nespakachuty (TT 312).⁵⁰

When considering the development towards an increasingly strong influence of the Saites over the Theban region, the campaign conducted by Psamtik II against the kingdom of Napata in 592–591 marks a conclusion. Before that date, the Saites had recognized the Kushite sovereigns of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty as legitimate. Thereafter, however, the Nubian kings were considered—retrospectively—to be usurpers. The cartouches of Piye and his successors, and those of the *Divine Adoratrice* connected with them, were therefore systematically smashed.⁵¹ This eradication of the Kushite past directly affected the aristocracy of the Theban region, which had prospered under the Twenty-fifth Dynasty. However, there is no indication that this led to disturbances in the region. In contrast, by ending the compromise situation worked out during the era of Psamtik I, this rereading of history by the Saites required the powerful families of the Theban region to choose between them and the Kushites. Nevertheless, and despite the growth of Saite power over the region, the Thebaid retained a certain originality. For example, the title of *Agent for Upper Egypt* (*imi-r3 n Šm^c.t*), held by Montuemhat, is attested to at least until the reign of Psamtik II, even if, around 610, it passed into the hands of one Padihorresnet, who was a descendant of an old-line Theban family but whose name indicates support of the Saite cause.⁵² The same movement is seen in connection with the use of cursive writing. Malinine supposed that the demotic, the writing of the north, must have “infiltrated” into Thebaid thanks to the new officials appointed by the king and coming from the capital, that is, from the northern part of the country, to the Valley of the Nile.⁵³ But in Thebes and its region, the local cursive writing, which we call abnormal hieratic, was used throughout the Saite period.

⁵⁰ G. Vittmann, “Rupture and Continuity. On Priests and Officials in Egypt during the Persian Period,” in: *Organisation des pouvoirs*, P. Briant & M. Chauveau, eds. (Persika 14; Paris, 2009), 89–121, esp. 94–97.

⁵¹ J. Yoyotte, “Le martelage des noms royaux éthiopiens par Psammétique II,” *RdÉ* 8 (1951), 215–239; S. Sauneron & J. Yoyotte, “La campagne nubienne de Psammétique II et sa signification historique,” *BIFAO* 50 (1952), 157–207, esp. 192.

⁵² G. Vittmann, *Priester und Beamte*, 196 (table of holders of this title during the Saite period) and D. Pressl, *Beamte und Soldaten*, 63–69; A. Leahy, “More light on a Saite Official of the God’s Wife of Amun,” *JEA* 74 (1988), 236–239, pl. XXXIII, see 239 nn. 2 and 3.

⁵³ M. Malinine, *Choix de textes juridiques en hiératique “anormal” et en démotique (XXV^e–XXVII^e dynasties)*, I (Paris, 1953), xvii.

The last abnormal hieratic line known to us, the signature of a witness on the reverse of P. Louvre E 7837, dates from the year 535.⁵⁴ It must therefore be deduced that the Theban scribes resisted for more than a century and a half the writing of their northern colleagues. Let us note in passing that the question of the spread of demotic is linked not only with the writing system but also the content of the documents. The scribes who used the Theban cursive writing used a different form that was less abstract than the one in use in the demotic contracts. In Middle Egypt, the use of demotic is first attested in El-Hiba during the reign of Psamtik I, but apparently it did not succeed in imposing itself farther south.⁵⁵ The situation seems to fluctuate at the beginning of the sixth century, precisely during the period in which Psamtik II was conducting his campaign in Nubia. At that time features characteristic of demotic documentation began to “pass” into documentation drafted in abnormal hieratic. For example, the demotic formula used to indicate satisfaction on the part of one of the parties—*di=k mtr h3ty=y* “you have gratified my heart”—appears in abnormal hieratic documents (Louvre E 7861 dated from 568).⁵⁶ This northern influence is also seen in the onomastic. The Theban scribe Padiamenope gave the name Padihorresnet to his son and successor, active from 568 to 522.⁵⁷ However, Theban exceptionalism continued subsequently. For example, nine months after the accession of Amasis to the throne thanks to a coup d’État, he was not yet recognized in Thebes, where the ecclesiastical calendar of his unfortunate rival Apries still continued in use.⁵⁸ However, it is difficult to interpret such inertia. Does it indicate hostility of the Thebans to the new king? Or, more simply, a demonstration of prudence in respect of an uncertain political situation? In any case, by the end of a century and a half of stubborn policy in which the demonstration of force in 592–591 had put an end to a period of compromise, the Theban region had been integrated into the

⁵⁴ K. Donker van Heel, *Djekhy & Son* (Cairo, 2012), 26–27.

⁵⁵ P. Rylands dem. 1, G. Vittmann, *Der demotische Papyrus Rylands 9*, 224–225 dated March 644, and P. Rylands dem. 2, G. Vittmann, *Der demotische Papyrus Rylands 9*, 225–226 dated April of the same year.

⁵⁶ K. Donker van Heel, *Abnormal Hieratic and Early Demotic Texts collected by the Theban Choachytes in the Reign of Amasis. Papyri from the Louvre Eisenlohr lot* (Leiden, 1996), 75–81 [n° 1].

⁵⁷ K. Donker van Heel, *Djekhy & Son*, 29–31.

⁵⁸ A. Leahy, “The earliest dated Monument of Amasis and the End of the Reign of Apries”, *JEA* 74 (1988), 183–199, esp. 188.

Saite kingdom. The campaign in year 4 of the reign of Psamtik II was thus both a military success, the first success of such scope for the Saite kings, and also a political victory that made it possible to breach the link between the Theban region and the kingdom of Napata. In this regard, it marked the completion of the policy of unification that had been in effect since Psamtik I.

1.2.3 *The “Southern Land” and the Construction of a Local Administration in Middle Egypt*

While the Delta and the Thebaid appear to be areas of resistance to Saite power, their respective situations should not conceal what was happening elsewhere, particularly in Middle Egypt. Psamtik I apparently sought initially to administer this ill-defined area as a single unit, ignoring the traditional division into nomes, by merging Middle and Upper Egypt into a single large administrative region called “the Southern Land” (*T3-Rsy*). For example, according to P. Rylands 9 5.13–15, during the reign of Psamtik I the entire area south of Memphis (“from the Southern limit of Memphis to Syene”) was entrusted to a dignitary who held the title of *Leader of the Fleet* (*3 n mry.t = dem. 3 n mr*) based in Heracleopolis.⁵⁹ The concept of “Southern District” reappears in the Persian era. Known from both Demotic and Aramaean documents (*dem. t3 šdy.t rsy = ar. tštrs*), it was then dominated by the fortress of Elephantine and was ruled by an administrator whose title is not known. In a document dating from 485, the holder of this position, a certain Parnu (in Old Persian, Farnava), is called simply, “the man of the Southern Land, to whom the fortress of Elephantine is entrusted” (P. Berlin 13582 2–3).⁶⁰ It has been presumed that this governor held the Old Persian title of **frataraka*, but nothing is certain in this regard.⁶¹ The concept of “Southern Marches,” a distant south, thus seems common to both the Saite and the Persian powers, although the northern boundary of this area moved far down the Nile between the two periods.

⁵⁹ G. Vittmann, *Der demotische Papyrus Rylands 9*, 387–388.

⁶⁰ A. Kuhrt, *The Persian Empire: A Corpus of Sources from the Achaemenid Empire* (London – New York, 2007), 706, n° 14.

⁶¹ G. Vittmann in: *Organisation des pouvoirs*, P. Briant & M. Chauveau, eds., 108 n. 88.

The two Saite holders of the position of *Leader of the Fleet* known to us were perhaps father and son,⁶² and were both contemporaries of Psamtik I: Peteise, son of Chasheshonq, and Sematawytefnakht.⁶³ The former is known from a statue preserved in the Stockholm Museum⁶⁴ where he bears the title of *ḥꜣty-ꜥ wr m Ntr* “gouverneur (and?) chief of Buto” (or a locality near that city).⁶⁵ Very probably a descendant of a line of Delta “Chiefs” who decided to support Psamtik I, he was integrated into the Saite administration initially as head of one of the most important cities of Lower Egypt, later occupying the major post of *Leader of the Fleet* in Middle Egypt. We learn from the *Petition of Peteise* (P. Rylands 9) that Peteise son of Chasheshonq is believed to have been the son of a priest of Amunresonter, and that he was appointed *Leader of the Fleet* in the early years of the reign of Psamtik I, since he appears holding this title in the year 4 (661 B.C.). According to the same source, he may have died in 647. The text of the Nitocris Stele indicates that Sematawytefnakht, whose mother came from a royal line,⁶⁶ had already succeeded him, since in 656 he already held the title of *Leader of the Fleet*.⁶⁷ This succession is echoed in the *Petition of Peteise* when Udjasomtu I son of Peteise I, seeking to replace his father as leader of the temple of Amun of Teudjoi, paid a visit to Sematawytefnakht, who gave him a gold ring (P. Rylands 9 14.11–14). The *Leader of the Fleet* thus enjoyed a certain number of priestly positions in Middle Egypt. If we are to believe the narrative of the *Petition of Peteise*, we must add to these two individuals Peteise I son of Itoru, who also may have been *Leader of the Fleet* like Peteise son of Chasheshonq, of whom he may have been a cousin, and then his own son (P. Rylands 9 6.5). The interest of Peteise III in claiming that his great-great-grandfather was *Leader of the Fleet*, thereby connecting his line with an important position, becomes thus understandable.

⁶² A. Leahy has very recently expressed doubts about the reality of this relationship. A. Leahy, “Somtutefnakht of Heracleopolis. The art and politics of self-commemoration in the seventh century BC,” in: *La XXVI^e dynastie continuité et rupture. Promenade avec Jean Yoyotte*, D. Devauchelle, ed. (Paris, 2011), 197–219, esp. 218–219.

⁶³ G. Vittmann, *Der demotische Papyrus Rylands 9*, 708–713.

⁶⁴ H. de Meulenaere, “Trois personnages saïtes,” *CdÉ* 31 (1956), 249–256, esp. 251–253.

⁶⁵ G. Vittmann, *Der demotische Papyrus Rylands 9*, 387–388; O. Perdu, *RdÉ* 57 (2006), 152–153.

⁶⁶ A. Leahy, “Somtutefnakht of Heracleopolis,” in: *La XXVI^e dynastie*, D. Devauchelle, ed., 217–218.

⁶⁷ R. Caminos, *JEA* 50 (1964), pl. VIII, 1.9.

In the absence of any epigraphic element confirming his testimony, this part of the petition of Peteise III should be read with suspicion. In any case, this text enables us to understand the way in which a man living under Darius I perceived the position of *Leader of the Fleet*, which had long since ceased to exist but which seems to have retained a high level of prestige, on which Peteise III sought to base his case in order to justify his claims in the temple of Teudjoi. According to his narrative, just before becoming *Leader of the Fleet*, Peteise son of Itoru had exercised extensive financial activities in the Southern Land, where he had been both manager and tax collector (we learn from the text that taxes were paid in silver and grain). Peteise son of Chasheshonq, the “historical” *Leader of the Fleet* put forward the qualities of his cousin before the king. Since his assignment as inspector, “the Southern Land is very prosperous: its silver and its grain have increased from one to one and a half” (P. Rylands 9. 6 1–2). During the conversation, we learn, from the own words of Psamtik I, or at least the king whom Peteise III places on the stage, what it meant to be *Leader of the Fleet*: “You inspected the Southern Land, you will (now) be responsible for its accounting” (*di=k mšd r p3 t3-rsy i.ir(=y) r di.t ip=w s irm=k*, P. Rylands 9 6.5). The *Leader of the Fleet* thus appears to have had financial duties; he was the revenue accountant for Middle and Upper Egypt, and thus was in some way concerned about the overall prosperity of this area. The renovation of the Teudjoi temple, which takes up the rest of the narrative, was part of this mission.

The position of *Leader of the Fleet* does not seem to have survived the seventh century. Another passage in P. Rylands 9 (15.3) shows that by 592–591 (Year 4 of the reign of Psamtik II), the main authority over Teudjoi had changed (P. Rylands 9. 15.4). One Horudja son of Horkheby, a Sobek priest, held the title of *governor* (demotic *hry*) of Heracleopolis. Like the *Leader of the Fleet*, he had the right to award the position of holy servant of Amun of Teudjoi (P. Rylands 9. 15.4). There seems to have been a return to a more traditional division in nomes ruled from a capital city under the authority of a *governor*. This return to a tighter administrative network is the obvious sign of a greater control of Middle Egypt by the Saites. It is thus possible that the vast *Southern Land*, too large to be managed effectively as a single unit, was then cut off from Middle Egypt. As for the nautical function suggested by the title *Leader of the Fleet* but not mentioned in the sources, it may have been transferred to the holder of the title of *Manager of the royal boats* (*hry n ḥ^c.w n nb t3wy*), likewise based in

Heracleopolis. The oldest attested holder of this title is one Paakhraef (whom we shall discuss later). Since this person lived around the end of the reign of Psamtik I, it can be assumed that the position of *Leader of the Fleet* was abolished in the second part of this period and was broken up into at least two separate positions: a *governor* of Heracleopolis and a manager of the royal fleet.

Conclusion

The first part of the Saite period, covering the reigns of Psamtik I and Nekau II, was a phase of increasing territorial control over Egypt. The Saïtes began by submitting the Libyan aristocracy of the Delta, the very area from which they sprang, and then turned toward the Theban region, which seems to have offered a greater resistance. Initially infiltrated and recruited by the conciliatory Psamtik I, later definitively subdued because of the needs imposed by the Nubian campaign of Psamtik II in 592–591, the powerful clergy of Amun of Thebes ultimately had to rally to the Saïte cause. In sum, the first Saïte period, the seventh century, was a reign of skillful politics aimed at taking over the territory. The second period, the sixth century (the years 592–591 could well mark this turning point), was an age of administrative standardization, and P. Rylands 9 reveals a country divided into nomes (*tš.w*) (those of Oxyrhynchos, Hermopolis, and Cynopolis appear for example in 12. 20–21), even if the territorial powers of intermediate level between the nome and the city, like the “district-*qḥ.t*,” continue to be problematic.⁶⁸ In a traditional manner, the nome was placed under the responsibility of a *governor* (*ḥṣty-ꜣ*),⁶⁹ whose powers are described in a very interesting passage in P. Rylands 9 (19.8–13). In the second half of the Saïte period the *governor* did not have police authority. As we have seen earlier, when the *Manager of the antechamber* asked the *governor* of the Heracleopolite nome (demotic *pa Ḥw.t-nn-nsw*, literally “the man of Heracleopolis”) to take the case of Peteise III under consideration, he had to write a second letter to the *general* of the nome (demotic *pṣ mr-mšꜣ r-wn-nṣw n pṣ tš Ḥw.t-nn-nsw*, literally “the general who was in the nome of Heracleopolis”), one Psammetikeineith,

⁶⁸ H. Kees, *Zur Innenpolitik der Saïtendynastie*, 95–106; R. Müller-Wollermann, “Demotische Termini zur Landesgliederung Ägyptens,” in: *Life in a Multi-Cultural Society: Egypt from Cambyses to Constantine and Beyond*, J.H. Johnson, ed. (Chicago, 1992), 243–247.

⁶⁹ D. Pressl, *Beamte und Soldaten*, 75–77.

asking for the arrest of the enemies of his protégé. The *governor* thus could not issue orders to the *general*; in other words, he did not have the power to command troops of soldiers or police agents stationed in the nome.⁷⁰

However, there is an area that has been neglected in this outline: the Oasis of the western desert. There too, Saite control made itself felt. The oldest traces of the movement to reoccupy the Western Oases have been found in the oases of Dakhla and Bahariya. In Dakhla, the construction of the temple of Seth in Mut el-Kharab began under the reign of Psamtik I and continued under Psamtik II.⁷¹ Construction of the sanctuary of the site close to Amheida very probably began under Nekau II. The edifice also contains the cartouches of Psamtik II and Amasis.⁷² Moreover, it is certain that the Bahariya Oasis had a residing *governor* (*h3ty-ꜥ n Dds*) from the end of the seventh century.⁷³ In contrast, the chronology of development under the Saites in the neighboring oasis of Kharga is more difficult to establish. It has been believed possible to link the foundation of the temple of Hibis to the reign of Psamtik II, but it has not been possible to provide conclusive evidence.⁷⁴ In the Valley and in the oases, Saite power sought, first, full territorial sovereignty; once this was acquired, it would be threatened by the expansion of first Babylonian and later Persian imperial power.

2. THE CONSTRUCTION OF A MILITARY TOOL: THE WARRIOR KING

Saite Egypt cannot be compared with the imperial powers built up by the Assyrians, the Babylonians, and the Persians. While it was able from time to time to launch expeditions that penetrated deep into foreign territory (as Psamtik II did in Nubia), it never succeeded in establishing a permanent hegemony in the buffer zone of Syria-Palestine. In

⁷⁰ M. Chauveau, "Administration centrale et autorités locales d'Amasis à Darius," in: *Égypte pharaonique: déconcentration, cosmopolitisme*, B. Menu, ed. (Méditerranées 24; Paris, 2000), 105–106.

⁷¹ O. Kaper, "Two decorated blocks from the Temple of Seth in Mut el-Kharab," *BACE* 12 (2001), 71–78, esp. 76.

⁷² O. Kaper, "A new temple for Thoth in the Dakhleh Oasis," *EA* 29 (2006), 12–14.

⁷³ F. Colin, "Le 'Domaine d'Amon' à Bahariya de la XVIII^e à la XXVI^e dynastie: l'apport des fouilles de Qasr 'Allam," in: *La XXVI^e dynastie continuité et rupture. Promenade avec Jean Yoyotte*, D. Devauchelle, ed. (Paris, 2011), 47–84.

⁷⁴ E. Cruz-Urbe, "Hibis Temple Project. Preliminary Report of 2nd and 3rd Field Seasons," *Varia Aegyptiaca* 3 (1987), 215–230, esp. 230.

605, after the victory of Nabuchodonosor at Karkemish, the Egyptians were thrown out of Syria and Palestine. They then played a supporting role in the various anti-Babylonian and, later, anti-Persian parties and coalitions that formed in the region.⁷⁵ This timid policy ended in failure. At the time of the invasion of Judea by Nabuchodonosor II, Apries sent troops to protect Jerusalem, which was under siege. But the Egyptians were beaten, and Jerusalem fell definitively into Babylonian hands in 586. Egypt was then directly threatened. This was the start of a new situation on the Near Eastern front. Oddly, Apries and above all Amasis successfully adopted a seemingly wait-and-see policy toward the powers of the East⁷⁶ while expanding into the Mediterranean: “During the reign of Amasis, Saite Egypt experienced one of its most surprising military successes, with the conquest of Cyprus: “He (Amasis) is the first person to have seized the island of Cyprus and to have reduced it to paying tribute” (Herodotus II. 182). The information relayed by Herodotus in a single line is of considerable historical importance. For the first time, Egypt became a naval power in the Mediterranean. However, this strategy meant that the last Saites had to build a fleet out of nothing (2.2). This effort was part of a broader policy of adaptation of the military tool to the realities of war of the seventh and sixth centuries (2.1).

2.1 *The Libyan Heritage and the Adaptation of the Military Tool: From Psamtik I to Nekaou II*

Because of the very origins of the dynasty, the Saite army of the seventh century was largely inherited from Egypto-Libyan military formations that included infantrymen and archers commanded by generals who originated in the West (2.1.1). However, military needs were to lead the Saites to strengthen their mounted units (2.1.2) and to organize “foreign legions” composed of soldiers recruited from the East but also of Aegeans (2.1.3).

⁷⁵ For a survey of the events and a bibliography, consult D. Kahn, “Some Remarks on the Foreign Policy of Psammetichus II in the Levant (595–589 B.C.),” *JEH* 1.1 (2008), 139–158.

⁷⁶ D. Kahn & O. Tammuz, “Egypt is difficult to enter: Invading Egypt—A Game Plan (seventh–fourth centuries BCE),” *JSSEA* 35 (2008), 37–66, esp. 60.

2.1.1 *Generals, Infantrymen/Calasiries and Archers:
The Egypto-Libyan Basis of the Army of Egypt*

In view of the ambiguity of the above-mentioned title of general (*mr-mš^c*), the participation of an individual in the Saite military high command will be deduced from his holding of clearly military titles and positions. The title of *chief of the troops* (*mr mnft*) very clearly indicates a military person,⁷⁷ but his activities cannot always be distinguished from the authority of the *mr-mš^c*. Many Saite generals, during at least the first part of the period, are clearly of Libyan extraction. One example is the general Keref, son of Osorkon, and known from a cube statue (Musée du Cinquanteaire E 7526).⁷⁸ The general in chief (*wr mr-mš^c*) Peteshahdedet has a name based on that of the Libyan goddess Shadedet (statue Petit Palais 307 on deposit in the Louvre).⁷⁹ Still others, for example Sematayatefnakt, son of Peteise the *Leader of the Fleet* (cf. supra) and Djedptahiufankh (cf. supra), are natives of northern Egypt. Infantry and archers constituted the basis of the Saite army. Infantry combat is evoked dramatically on a fragment of a statue of General Neshor, a contemporary of Apries and Psamtik II: “the wake of the army the day of the braveheart battle, the day of the melee appeasing hearts unleashed, holding a recompense for each one” (= booty?).⁸⁰ However, while we cannot describe the manner in which the Saite infantry was used on the battlefield, we do know that the infantrymen received specific training during maneuvers held in camps like the one delimited by six steles, the vestiges of which have been found at Dashur,⁸¹ very probably under the supervision of instructor officers like the directors of young army recruits (*hrp ḏmꜣ.w n nfr.w*) such as Ouahibre son of Padihorresnet (Statue Caire CG 672, contemporary of Amasis).⁸² However, we have no idea of the recruitment conditions, or even if a clear distinction should be made with respect to the soldiers of the famous *calasiries* (dem. *gl-šr*) corps, who

⁷⁷ D. Pressl, *Beamte und Soldaten*, 89–90.

⁷⁸ H. de Meulenaere, *CdÉ* 31 (1956), 255–256.

⁷⁹ E. Revillout, “Statue d’un royal ministre, général des troupes, Oer Tep de sa majesté,” *RÉg* 2 (1881), 62–64; on this name, F. Colin, *Les peuples libyens de la Cyrénaïque à l’Égypte d’après les sources de l’Antiquité classique* (Bruxelles, 2000), 138.

⁸⁰ O. Perdu, “Neshor à Mendès sous Apriès,” *BSFE* 118 (1990), 38–49.

⁸¹ O. Perdu, *BSFE* 105 (1986), 28–30; O. Perdu, *Recueil des inscriptions royales saïtes*, 43–53, document n° 6A–F.

⁸² R. El-Sayed, *Documents relatifs à Saïs et à ses divinités* (Cairo, 1975), 219–220.

played the role of a police force under the orders of a *general* (*mr-mšꜥ*).⁸³ We know that the *calasiries* units were related to a category of scribes that could in certain cases (to be defined) collect rents.⁸⁴ In the epigraphic documentation, the *calasiries* are designated by the archaizing title *s3-pr* which reappeared in the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty.⁸⁵

In close relation to the infantrymen, the Saite army organized groups of archers commanded by a specific officer, “commander of the corps of archers” (*hrp tm3.t*).⁸⁶ It was moreover the Egyptian archers who inflicted the mortal blow on Josiah (2Chr. 35.23).

2.1.2 *The Development of the Cavalry and the Frontier Guard*

The development of the cavalry is one of the characteristic traits of the Saite army, specially in its early phase. A study of the epigraphic documentation shows that in this period the use of the old title *chief of horses* (*imi-r3 ssm.t*) made a complete comeback at the expense of the title *chief of teams* (*imi-r3 htr*), in other words the chariots. Under Psamtik I, Iaa, known from an inscription on a cube statue preserved in the Vatican Museo Gregoriano (n° 195),⁸⁷ was the *chief of teams*, and passed over this title to his son Paun. It is interesting to note that the *chief of horses* Sematawytefnakht, active under Amasis, also held the title of *chief of Asian foreigners* (*imi-r3 h3s.wt stt.yw*) (Cairo n° 27/11/58/8).⁸⁸ Part of the Egyptian cavalry was very probably composed of fighters from the Eastern regions, where the equestrian culture was much more developed than it was in Egypt. Unfortunately, we are not able to determine the exact origin of these Asian cavalrymen. As we shall see later, Sematawytefnakht also held the position of *Agent at the gateway to the Libyan foreign countries* (*imi-r3 3 hsw.t Thnw*). In this context, it is possible that the “Asian” cavalrymen were used on patrol

⁸³ J.K. Winnicki, “Die Kalasirier der spätdynastischen und der ptolemäischen Zeit. Zu einem Problem der Ägyptischen Heeresgeschichte,” *Historia*, 26 (1977), 257–68; G. Vittmann, *Der demotische Papyrus Rylands 9*, 472.

⁸⁴ In the case of the P.Louvre E 7844, K. Donker van Heel, *Djekhy & Son*, 89.

⁸⁵ J. Yoyotte, “Un corps de police de l’Égypte pharaonique,” *RdÉ* 9 (1952), 139–151, esp. 141.

⁸⁶ Djedptahiupankh occupied this position under Psamtik I, H. de Meulenaere, *BIFAO* 63 (1965), 22.

⁸⁷ G. Botti et P. Romanelli, *Le sculture del Museo Gregoriano Egizio* (Vatican, 1951), 44–45, pl. XXXVII.

⁸⁸ E. Bresciani, “Una statua della XXVI dinastia con il cosiddetto ‘abito persiano,’” *SCO* 16 (1967), 273–284, pl. I–V.

within a frontier zone that posed problems for the Saites. Evidence of this is found in the narrative engraved on a stele discovered in 1957 to the west of the Pepy II pyramid. In this *Königsnovelle*, in year 11 of his reign (654–653) King Psamtik I is faced with a movement of men and women from the Libyan West whom he wants to repel by force.⁸⁹ It is thus completely possible that the Saite cavalry was used particularly to guard vast frontier areas, before being used on the battlefield. (For example, their presence at Karkemish is attested to, *Jeremiah* 46, 3–4 et 9).

2.1.3 *The First Saite “Foreign Legions”*

From the very beginning the Saite pharaohs relied on foreign contingents, composed of fighters whom the Greek soldiers in Saite Egypt called *alloglossoi*.⁹⁰ The oldest *chief of foreigners* is Djepthahufank, who held the title of *leader of foreigners* (*sšm ḥ3sw.t*) according to the dorsal pillar, and in the principal inscription the title of *mouth of His Majesty among the Asians* (*r3 n ḥm=f m-q3b Tt*) implying, if our understanding of this title is correct, that he translated royal orders into the language of these “Asians.” Psamtik I also turned his attention to the Aegean world. According to Herodotus, Gyges, king of Lydia, sent military assistance to him.⁹¹ Whatever the reality of this story, thanks to a cube statue found in a grotto near Priene, we have exceptional evidence of the existence of an Aegean military force in Egypt under the first Saites. The statue bears an epigraph in Greek left by a certain Pedon son of Amphinneus whom a Psamtik king—very probably the first king of that name—rewarded for his “virtue” (gr. *arètè*) with a gold bracelet and an Egyptian village.⁹²

⁸⁹ Perdu, *BSFE* 105 (1986), 27–28; R.K. Ritner, *The Libyan Anarchy: Inscriptions from Egypt’s Third Intermediate Period* (Atlanta, 2009), 585–587.

⁹⁰ E. Bernard & O. Masson, “Les inscriptions grecques d’Abou-Simbel,” *Revue des Études Grecques* 70 (1957), 1–46, esp. 5–10; A.E. Veïsse, “L’expression de l’altérité dans l’Égypte des Ptolémées: allophulos, xénos et barbaros,” *Revue des Etudes Grecques* 120 (2007), 50–63, esp. 61.

⁹¹ F.K. Kienitz, *Die politische Geschichte*, 11–12.

⁹² M.Ç. Şahin, “Zwei Inschriften aus dem südwestlichen Kleinasien,” *Epigraphica Anatolica* 10 (1987), 1–2; O. Masson & J. Yoyotte, “Une inscription ionienne mentionnant Psammétique I^{er},” *Epigraphica Anatolica* 11 (1988), 171–180; C. Ampolo & E. Bresciani, “Psammetico re d’Egitto e il mercenario Pedon,” *EVO* 11 (1988), 237–253; G. Vittmann, *Ägypten und die Fremden im ersten vorchristlichen Jahrtausend* (Mainz, 2003), 203–205; P.W. Haider, “Epigraphische Quellen zur Integration von Griechen

2.2 *Ships and Aegeans: The Saite contribution* (from Psamtik II to Amasis)

2.2.1 *Birth of the Egyptian Military Navy*

Herodotus mentions the construction during the reign of Nekau II of triremes that cruised the Red Sea as well as the Mediterranean (II.159). In this passage, the existence of these fleets is related closely to control of Palestine and particularly the taking of Gaza. The Saite presence on both sides of the Sinai isthmus was aimed at control of the flow of trade transiting between southern Arabia and the Mediterranean.⁹³ While combatting piracy can always be considered one reason, it could only be secondary in a policy of naval outfitting that was inevitably very expensive for the Saite crown. Basically, the goal of the construction of these two fleets was the same as that of the other major construction project begun by Nekau II: the digging of a canal linking the Nile with the Red Sea (Herodotus II. 158). This waterway made it possible to divert to Egypt the flow of trade between the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean while avoiding transshipment operations, and hence to impose a tax on merchants. This desire to control the “incense routes” recalls an event reported, here again, by Herodotus (IV.42), namely, the dispatch of a Phoenician exploratory mission to circumnavigate Africa. Supposing that it did in fact take place,⁹⁴ we must then assume that this time Nekau II was planning to gain control of a route linking the Red Sea with the Western Mediterranean, without taking into account the north/south length of the African continent.

However, the oldest extant attestation of a Saite admiral dates from the reign of Psamtik II. Hor, surnamed Psamtik, is known to us from a naophorous fragment of a statue (Manchester Museum

in die ägyptische Gesellschaft der Saitenzeit,” in: *Naukratis; die Beziehungen zu Ostgriechenland, Ägypten und Zypern in archaischer Zeit. Akten der Table Ronde in Mainz, 25.-27. November 1999*, U. Höckmann, ed. (Möhnesee, 2001), 197–201.

⁹³ J.C. Moreno-García, “L’évolution des statuts de la main-d’œuvre rurale en Égypte de la fin du Nouvel Empire à l’époque saïte,” in: *Travail de la terre et statut de la main-d’œuvre en Méditerranée archaïque, VIII^e-VII^e siècles. Table-ronde Athènes 15-16 décembre 2008*, J. Zurbach, ed. (Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique; Athens, in press).

⁹⁴ This is refuted by A.B. Lloyd, “Necho and the Red Sea: Some Considerations,” *JEA* 63 (1977), 142–155.

3570).⁹⁵ Hor is *chief of royal combat vessels in the Mediterranean* (*mr ḥ^c.w nsw n ḥ3 m W3ḏ-wr*). A study of the other components of his titles shows that he was a high officer who specialized in the command of Greek and/or Carian troops. He was in fact commander of Aegean foreign (troups) (*ḥrp ḥ3sty.w Ḥ3w-nbw*), played the role of “counselor for Greek affairs” to the king, and was the “confidant of the king in (the domain) of Aegean foreign countries” (*mḥ-ib n nsw m ḥ3sw.t Ḥ3w-nbw*). These two areas of competence, the world of the sea and of the Greeks, must not have been strangers to each other. Like Udjahorresnet several decades later, who also held positions in the navy and commanded a troop of Greeks, the crews of the vessels of the fleet commanded by Hor must have been composed of Hellenes.

The military port of the Saite fleet was probably the *Prw nfr* of Memphis. This raises the difficult question of which vessels were moored there. Here the hieroglyphic inscriptions can be a source of confusion. In his admiral title, Hor mentions “royal combat vessels” (*ḥ^c.w nsw n ḥ3*), while Udjahorresnet is “chief of vessels-kebenet of the king” (*imi-r3 kbn.wt nsw*).⁹⁶ In contrast to the fairly generic term *ḥ^c* “boat” (with a mast), *kbn.t* is a specialized term designating ocean-going vessels in the New Kingdom.⁹⁷ The fact that Udjahorresnet, like Hor, held positions in the army, especially at the head of Aegean troops, would point in the direction of warships. A.B. Lloyd supposed that they were ships related to trieres.⁹⁸ The picture on an Egypto-Carian mortuary stele found in Memphis and now preserved in the Lausanne Museum (Musée historique cantonal n° 4727) is thus very certainly a depiction of one of these vessels.⁹⁹ This graffito is found on the bottom register in

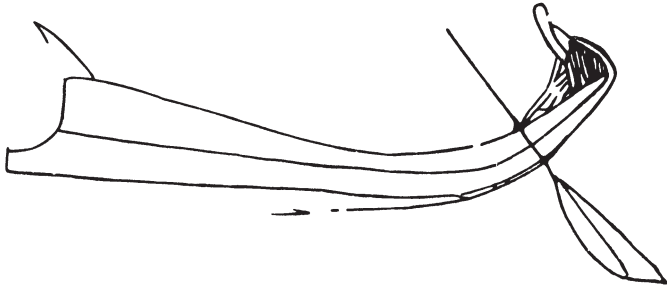
⁹⁵ W.M.F. Petrie, *Hyksos and Israelite Cities* (London, 1906), 18–19, pl. XV et XX; C. Vandersleyen, *Le delta et la vallée du Nil, le sens du mot w3ḏ wr* (Brussels, 2008), 38, 87, 106, n° 217.

⁹⁶ P.M. Chevereau, *Prosopographie des cadres militaires égyptiens*, 324–325. This title reappears during the Thirtieth Dynasty, F. von Kaenel, “Les mésaventures du conjurateur de Serket Onnophris et de son tombeau,” *BSFE* 87–88 (1980), 31–45, esp. 44.

⁹⁷ L. Bradbury, “Kpn-boats, Punt Trade, and a Lost Emporium,” *JARCE* 23 (1996), 37–60.

⁹⁸ A.B. Lloyd, “The Inscription of Udjahorresnet: a Collaborator’s Testament,” *JEA* 68 (1982), 166–80, esp. 168–169, countered by J.C. Darnell, “The *kbn.wt* Vessels of the Late Period,” in: *Life in a Multi-Cultural Society*, J.H. Johnson, ed., 67–89. There is an assessment of these questions in A. B. Lloyd, “Saite Navy,” in: *The Sea in Antiquity*, G.J. Oliver, R. Brock, T.J. Cornell & S. Hodkinson, eds. (Oxford, 2000), 81–91.

⁹⁹ O. Masson & J. Yoyotte, *Objets pharaoniques à inscriptions cariennes* (Cairo, 1956), 20–27, fig. 13, pl. II; I.J. Adiego-Lajara, *The Carian Language* (Leiden – Boston, 2006), 38–39.



O. Masson et J. Yoyotte, *Objets pharaoniques à inscriptions cariennes* (Cairo, 1956), 20–27, fig. 13, pl. II
 From the facsimile reproduced in this work.
 (Retouching done by S. Larabi, Collège de France)

a frame in which one would expect to find a funerary text. The prow of the vessel is equipped with an *embolos* (truncated rostrum), while the curved poop has the shape of an *aphlaston* holding a cabin in which the *pedalion* (rudder) is installed.

We must therefore find H. Hauben correct when he analyzes the Saite building of the Egyptian military navy as a prefiguration of that of the Lagides.¹⁰⁰

2.2.2 *Recourse to Aegean Combatants*

The Mediterranean strategy involved recourse to Aegean sailors on a massive scale (the Persians were to do the same with the Phoenicians) placed under the supervision of a *chief of Aegean foreign (troops)* (*imi-r3 ḥ3s.wt Ḥ3w-nbw*) or perhaps, on a lower hierarchical level, a *commander of Aegean foreign (troops)* (*ḥrp ḥ3sty.w Ḥ3w-nbw*). According to Herodotus (II.154) and Diodorus (I.66), Carians and Ionians supposedly came to assist him in establishing his power over Egypt. He then supposedly installed these men in an indeterminate area called the “Camps” (*Stratopeda*). Except for the statue of Pedon son of Amphinneus, no archaeological or epigraphical element confirms the existence of Aegean combattants engaged in Egypt during this reign.

¹⁰⁰ H. Hauben, “L’apport égyptien à l’armée navale lagide,” in: *Das Ptolemäische Ägypten, Akten des internationalen Symposions, 27–29 September 1976*, H. Maehler, ed. (Berlin, 1978), 59–94.

The first epigraphic attestations of the presence of Greek and Carian soldiers in Egypt date from the reign of Psamtik II.¹⁰¹ We have seen earlier the case of the *commander of the Aegean foreign (troops)*, Hor, who served under this king. The inscriptions in Greek engraved on the legs of the Abu-Simbel colossi by one Potasimto (= Padisematawy), commander of the contingents of mercenaries during the expedition launched by Psamtik II in 592–591, also date from his reign. In addition to this epigraph, several other documents shed light on the life of this Egyptian leader of an Aegean contingent. We learn from a statue preserved in the Louvre Museum (E 13109) that he was a native of the city of Pharbaitos in the eastern Delta (Tell Horbeit).¹⁰² Along with the “Aegean legion” commanded by Potasimto, there was an Egyptian unit under the orders of a certain Amasis, perhaps the *chief of troops* (*mr mnft*) known from a statue fragment (Cairo CG 895).¹⁰³

At this point in our discussion, we need to make a distinction between two very different types of combatants from other countries. The first was composed of mercenaries who crossed the Mediterranean to enter the service of an Egyptian king in connection with a specific campaign. We know practically nothing about this type of soldier, whose presence in Egypt was necessarily brief. In contrast, we know more about the Aegeans who settled permanently on the banks of the Nile, for example the famous Caromemphites, who have left an abundant epigraphic documentation.¹⁰⁴ Some Carians seem to have regarded Egypt as their new country, to the point of choosing the Egyptian onomastic for their children. According to Herodotus (II.154), it was Amasis who

¹⁰¹ For the Carian graffiti, see O. Masson “Remarques sur les graffites cariens d’Abou-Simbel,” in: *Mélanges offerts à la mémoire de Serge Sauneron*, II (Cairo, 1979), 35–48; I.J. Adiego-Lajara, *The Carian Language*, 115–119.

¹⁰² J. Yoyotte, “Potasimto de Pharbaitos et le titre de ‘Grand combattant-maitre du triomphe,’” *CdÉ* 28 (1953), 101–108 with the corrections made by H. de Meulenaere, *CdÉ* 31 (1956); supplement with S. Pernigotti, “Il general Potasimto e la sua famiglia,” *SCO* 17 (1968), 251–264 and Id. “Una nuova statuette funeraria a nome di Potasimto di Pharbaitos,” *SEAP* 9 (1991), 251–264; G. Vittmann, *Ägypten und Fremden*, 61, p. 100.

¹⁰³ G. Lefebvre, “Ποτασιμτω,” *BSAA* 21/6 (1925), 55–56.

¹⁰⁴ Most of these epigraphs are found in O. Masson & J. Yoyotte, *Objets pharaoniques à inscriptions cariennes* (Cairo, 1956) and O. Masson, *Carian Inscriptions from North Saqqâra and Buhen* (London, 1978). See, generally speaking, G. Vittmann, *Ägypten und Fremden*, 155–179 (Chapter VI. Die Karer in Ägypten). These documents have moreover been republished by I.J. Adiego-Lajara, *The Carian Language*, 30 et seq.

moved the Carians of Egypt, who until then had been living in the Bubastis region, to Memphis. We should note that the Carians were not the only Aegeans to settle in Egypt. For example, Theocles, the father of Psammetichus, the pilot who led the expedition of Potasimto and Amasis, gave his child the name of an Egyptian king, a sign that the link between his family and Egypt was anything but temporary.

The Aegeans are obviously not the only foreigners to have participated in the Saite war effort in the sixth century. Mention must also be made of the Cypriots,¹⁰⁵ the Judeans,¹⁰⁶ and the Phoenicians.¹⁰⁷ The presence of these non-Egyptian troops in the Saite armies nevertheless constituted a powerful factor of political destabilization. The text on the statue Louvre A 90 belonging to Neshor, a high-level Saite administrator who supervised customs operations in southern and northern Egypt, shows that a mutiny of foreign combatants occurred in Elephantine during the reign of Apries.¹⁰⁸ This was a case of an on the whole benign case of rebellious combatants (“barbarians-*ʿm.w*, Aegeans and Asians”) for a reason not known to us, who had decided to flee to Nubia.

Conclusion

Ultimately, it was in the south, against the Kushites, that the Saites recorded their most outstanding victories, including the most decisive event, the 592–591 campaign of Psamtik II. Perhaps it will be necessary in the future to somewhat re-evaluate our analysis of Saite strategy, and to find that before the Persian menace became more obvious, Nubia represented a priority for Saite foreign policy. In any case, the sixth century, and more particularly the reign of Amasis, witnessed the establishment of an original maritime strategy turned toward the Mediterranean, a choice that was to be crowned with success, initially on the military level, then with the taking of Cyprus by diplomatic means, and later with the alliance between Egypt and

¹⁰⁵ H. Cassimatis, “Des Chypriotes chez les pharaons,” *Les Cahiers du Centre d’Études Chypriotes* 1 (1984), 33–38; G. Vittmann, *Ägypten und Fremden*, 44–83.

¹⁰⁶ D. Kahn, “Judean Auxiliaries in Egypt’s Wars against Kush,” *JAOS* 127/4 (2007), 507–516.

¹⁰⁷ P.C. Schmitz, “The Phoenician contingent in the campaign of Psammetichus II against Kush,” *JEH* 3/2 (2010), 321–337.

¹⁰⁸ H. Schäfer, “Die Auswanderung der Krieger unter Psammetich I. und der Söldneraufstand in Elephantine unter Apries,” *Klio* IV (1904), 152–163, 4 pl.

Polycrates of Samos, along with the Ionian cities around Chios¹⁰⁹ and Lydia under Cresus (Herodotus I.77.2). For Egypt, a Mediterranean policy involved the construction of a fleet, the size of which, still less the cost, obviously cannot be determined. But we can assume that it was very high, since Egypt lacked the basic materials necessary for a pre-industrial naval power: wood for construction. The sixth-century Saite sovereigns thus had to import everything: wood, engineers, and crews. It can thus legitimately be assumed that the Mediterranean strategy must have constituted a heavy burden for the crown finances.

3. THE CROWN FINANCES

If there is one point on which all the historical literature is in agreement, it is this: The reign of Amasis was characterized by a thorough reform of the Egyptian financial administration. Without prejudging the matter (we shall return to the subject at the end of this third section), an examination of the epigraphic documentation shows that the Saite financial and fiscal administration became more substantial throughout the sixth century. An example is the return of the old titles of *Agent for the domains* (*imi-r3 pr.w*) and *Agent for the treasures* (*imi-r3 pr.w-hd*) during the reign of Apries.¹¹⁰ The most important aspect, however, concerns the modifications perceptible in two areas of economic management: the management of the assets of the king (3.1) and taxation (3.2).

3.1 *The Improvement of an Administration Dedicated to Management of the Royal Properties*

The royal domain consisted in a number of properties located throughout the country. These were, obviously, areas of land along with quarries, fisheries, flocks, ships, and other assets; in short, everything that an agricultural economy considers means of production. The supervision and management of this type of structure must have been all the more complex in a country like Egypt, extending over more than a thousand kilometers. Tax revenues were in addition to the revenues from the

¹⁰⁹ A. Bresson, "Naucratis: de l'emporion à la cité," *TOPOI* 12–13 (2005), 133–155, spécialement pp. 150–151.

¹¹⁰ Generally speaking, D. Pressl, *Beamte und Soldaten*, 29–35.

exploitation of the royal domain. Generally speaking, the sixth-century pharaohs appear to have paid attention to a better management of their assets by establishing an accounting office (3.1.1) and centralizing the command of the freight fleet that linked the various domains of the crown (3.1.2). The existence of a *senti*, appointed to manage temple affairs, is attested to at the end of the Saite period (3.1.3).

3.1.1 *The Manager of the Scribes of the Council: The General Manager of the Royal Accounting System*

The existence of an accounting office is attested in the epigraphic documentation emanating from top-level royal administrators holding the title of *Manager of the scribes of the concil* (*imi-r3 sš(w) d3d3.t*). Olivier Perdu has traced the existence of this position in a very insightful article.¹¹¹ The oldest known holder of this title is one Pefteuawyimen, surnamed Psammetichenefer, “beautiful name” that indicates that he was a contemporary of Psamtik II.¹¹² His existence is documented in particular by a statue from the temple of Ptah in Memphis (Turin, ME cat. No. 3020).¹¹³ Since this is the only known title for him, it is not possible to trace the career that led him to assume this important technical duty. Such is not the case for Tjaennahebu, known particularly from his tomb at Saqqara.¹¹⁴ Before holding this position, he was *Manager of the royal boats*, which indicates that he must have been a specialist in logistics and management.¹¹⁵ The same profile characterizes the career followed by Wahibremeryptah, who likewise occupied the positions of *Manager of the two granaries* (*imi-r3 šnwty*) and *Manager of the scribes of the High Camp* (*imi-r3 sšw hnr.t wr.t*).¹¹⁶ Under the Persians, Udjahorresnet son of Hor, who lived during the first Persian occupation, held this position.¹¹⁷ The other positions that he

¹¹¹ O. Perdu, “Le directeur des scribes du conseil,” *RdÉ* 49 (1998), 175–194.

¹¹² O. Perdu, *RdÉ* 49 (1998), 175–194.

¹¹³ O. Perdu, *RdÉ* 49 (1998), 177–178.

¹¹⁴ E. Bresciani, in E. Bresciani, S. Pernigotti, and M.P. Giangeri Silvis, *La tomba di Ciennehebu, capo della flotta del re (Tombe d'età saïtica a Saqqara 1)*, Pisa, 1977, pp. 30–40 and pl. VII–XII.

¹¹⁵ O. Perdu, *RdÉ* 49 (1998), 178.

¹¹⁶ O. Perdu, *RdÉ* 49 (1998), 179.

¹¹⁷ O. Perdu, *RdÉ* 49 (1998), 187; G. Vittmann, in: *Organisation des pouvoirs*, P. Briant & M. Chauveau, eds., 101–102.

held clearly correspond to a manager. He too was in particular a *scribe (attached) to the royal boats* (*sš nsw n ḥ^c.w*).

The *Manager of the scribes of the Council* headed a kind of audit office composed of *scribes of the Council* (*sšw d3d3.t*), who have been identified with the *scribes recording all matters in the Council* (*sšw ḥsb ḥ.t nb.t m d3d3.t*).¹¹⁸ It is therefore possible that this office centralized, for purposes of verification, the transactions recorded by the *royal accounting scribes* (*sh n Pr-ḥ iw-f ip*) dispersed throughout the various royal domains.¹¹⁹ At the head of this structure, the *Manager of the scribes of the Council* may have been in charge of evaluating the Crown wealth; however, nothing suggests that he played a role in its management.

3.1.2 *The Manager of the Royal Boats*

The second half of the Saïte period, and more particularly the reign of Amasis, witnessed the proliferation of another title in relation to the management of the royal domain. This was the title of *Manager of the royal boats* (*imi-r3 ḥ^c.w nsw*), to which J.C. Goyon has devoted an important study.¹²⁰ The oldest attestation (under the form *imi-r3 ḥ^c.w nsw*) is that of a certain Paakhraef, known from two statues bearing the cartouche of Psamtik I.¹²¹ The title reappears in the same form on the ushabtis statues of one Yulehen during the reign of Psamtik II.¹²² Not until the reign of Amasis is there a reappearance of this title, held by one Hekemsaf, the title-holder whose career is by far the best documented.¹²³ The position of *Manager of the royal boats* appears to have been one of the highest positions that he occupied; in any case, it is the one that appears on his very beautiful ushebtis.¹²⁴ The other titles known from the inscriptions on his tomb in Saqqara

¹¹⁸ O. Perdu, *RdÉ* 49 (1998), 189.

¹¹⁹ O. Perdu, *RdÉ* 49 (1998), 190–192.

¹²⁰ J.Cl. Goyon, “La statuette funéraire I.E. 84 de Lyon et le titre saïte [...]”, *BIFAO* 67 (1969), pp. 159–171.

¹²¹ S. Pernigotti, “Una statua du Pakhraf (Cairo JE. 37171)”, *RSO* 44 (1969), 259–271, pl. 1–5; O. Perdu, “Une autre trace de la déesse Àayt dans l’onomastique hérakléopolitaine et l’origine du chef de la flotte Pakhrof”, *RdÉ* 40 (1989), 195–197; G. Vittmann, *Der demotische Papyrus Rylands* 9, 711–713.

¹²² J.Cl. Goyon, *BIFAO* 67 (1969), 167.

¹²³ J.Cl. Goyon, *BIFAO* 67 (1969), 159–165.

¹²⁴ J.Cl. Goyon, *BIFAO* 67 (1969), 159–161.

and on his sarcophagus show, here again, managerial capabilities: in particular, he was, like Udjahorresnet son of Hor, *Manager of the scribes of the High Camp* (*imi-r3 ššw hnr.t wr.t*). The same profile characterizes Tjennahebu, mentioned somewhat earlier. Lastly, there is Psammetichimeriptah, whose Serapeum stele (Louvre 4019) reveals that his activity as *Manager of the royal boats* took place after the year 15 in the reign of Amasis (556–555).¹²⁵

Even if three of the five holders identified served under Amasis, we cannot ascribe the establishment of the position of *Manager of the royal boats* to this sovereign. Its existence dates from at least the second half of the reign of Psamtik I and his reform of the administration in Middle Egypt. This title thus appears at a very early period, and very definitely postdates the elimination of the position of *Leader of the Fleet*, probably after the management of the Heracleopolite nome and, more generally, the “Southern Land,” was separated from that of the royal fleet (see pp. 983–989). Based on his title, the *Manager of the royal boats* must have been in charge of organizing freight movements between the various parts of the royal domain, and perhaps of supervising exports of their products to the Mediterranean world via the Delta. Unfortunately, on this point the Saite documentation is non-existent; the only customs record that has come down to us dates from the Persian period.¹²⁶ The same comment can be made with respect to the management of the royal boats. A petition written in Aramaean and concerning the management of the royal boats dates from the Achaemenid period. This document is addressed to the Satrape Arsama—the title of *Manager of the royal boats* is no longer attested at this point—by a group of administrators present in Elephantine, and concerns a royal boat that is in need of major repairs. A study of the text shows that the vessel was part of a semi-private system in which the sailors to whom the vessel had been entrusted could use it for their own business but had to submit to the orders of the central administration when they were ordered to do so.¹²⁷ However, this document enables us to determine the scope of the work of the *Manager of royal boats*. In

¹²⁵ J.Cl. Goyon, *BIFAO* 67 (1969), 164–165.

¹²⁶ B. Porten & A. Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents of Ancient Egypt*, III (Jerusalem, 1993), C1.1–2; P. Briant & R. Descat, “Un registre douanier de la satrapie d’Égypte à l’époque achéménide (TAD C3,7),” in: *Le commerce en Égypte ancienne*, N. Grimal & B. Menu, eds. (Cairo, 1998), 59–104.

¹²⁷ B. Porten & A. Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents of Ancient Egypt*, I (Jerusalem, 1986), A6.2.

addition to logistics matters, he also had to ensure the good condition of the royal fleet. One of the most intriguing documents concerning nautical affairs during the Saite period comes from Elephantine. It is a fragment of a granite stele containing a list of boats detailing the composition of a fleet inventoried by type of boat and number of units of each type.¹²⁸ This document, discovered in the environs of the temple of Satis, is unfortunately very fragmentary, and its interpretation is extremely difficult, especially since line 3 mentions a “revolt” by the Nubians.

3.1.3 *Supervision of Temple Properties: The Example of the Manager of the Fields*

The history of the Egyptian administration of this period is characterized by the development of positions involving the supervision of temple properties. The position of *Agent for the division of offerings* (*imi-r3 wpw ḥtp-ntr*) dedicated to supervising the management of the sacred domains¹²⁹ is attested, in the Saite era, by at least two contemporaries of Psamtik I. Both of them are Thebans, and they hold the primary title of *vizier* (*t3ty*). Nespakachuty is known from his tomb (TT 312), while his colleague Harsiese has left a statue (Phil. Univ. Mus. E 16025).¹³⁰ However, it is difficult to define the role of these high-level administrators.

More generally, not until the end of the Saite period and the reign of Amasis do we see direct intervention by the royal power challenging the takeovers of land by a temple, in this case that of Amun of Teudjoi. *P. Rylands* 9 (16,1–18) shows a royal administrator holding the title of *Manager of the fields* (*mr 3ḥ*) arriving at Teudjoi and finding two property-management irregularities. At the source of the first of these offenses, one Hormakhoru son of Ptahortais, a highly-placed dignitary with interests in several nomes and protector of the priests of Amun of Teudjoi, obtained, on the pretext of providing for the operation of the royal worship cult, 120 arures (approximately 33 hectares)

¹²⁸ Chr. Müller in H. Jaritz *et alii*, “Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine. 5. Grabungsbericht,” *MDAIK* 31 (1975), 39–84, esp. 83–84, pl. 28b; F. Junge, *Elephantine XI: Funde und Bauteile* (Mainz, 1987), 66–67, § 6.2 and pl. 40c; K. Jansen-Winkel, “Zur Schiffsliste aus Elephantine,” *GM* 109 (1989), 31.

¹²⁹ M. Valloggia, *Recherche sur les “messagers” (wpwtyw) dans les sources égyptiennes profanes* (Geneva-Paris, 1976), 35.

¹³⁰ H. de Meulenaere, *JEA* 68 (1982), 139–144, 4 pl.

of land for the statue of the pharaoh Amasis installed in Teudjoi. He was, precisely, the first priest in charge, since he was its *holy servant* (*hm ntr*), a position that made him the principal beneficiary of the revenue of the small agricultural holding thereby created. The *Manager of the fields* pointed out that such a donation was illegal, citing the example of the erection of an identical statue in the temple of Heracléopolis that had not been accompanied by such a favor (16,8–9). But he did not stop there, he took advantage of the opportunity to discover a second irregularity. The priests of Teudjoi had appropriated a 255-hectare island opposite their city. To punish the offenders, the royal administrator confiscated the statue domain, the island, and 4,000 sacks of grain harvested from the lands held illegally. In his speech (P. Rylands 9.17.12–19), pronounced before the king himself, the *Manager of the fields* appears as the guardian of property integrity in charge of ensuring that land belonging to the royal domain was not improperly annexed by a temple (as in the case of the island), and that the products of such lands were not diverted by dishonest individuals.¹³¹ The agricultural tax map must have been the principal work tool of this high-level administrator.¹³²

3.1.4 *The Saite senti*

The oldest attestation of this title was recently identified by Michel Chauveau.¹³³ It appears on a Saite administrative document copied onto a Ptolemaic-era ostrakon discovered at Karnak (O. Karnak LS 462.4). It would seem to be an inventory ordered by Psamtik I in the year 28 of his reign (637–638) following the losses caused by an exceptional powerful inundation. This operation was performed under the direction of the *senti* Peftaukhons son of Pnikek. Are we to conclude from this that the *senti* already existed in the seventh century? Nothing is less certain. As we shall see later, epigraphy attests to its existence at the end of the Saite period, at the earliest. The *senti* who appears in O. Karnak LS 462.4 leads us to conclude that it is a reformulation of an old title by Ptolemaic-era scribes. Absent from the

¹³¹ M. Chauveau, “Titres et fonctions en Égypte perse d’après les sources égyptiennes,” in: *Organisations des pouvoirs et contacts culturels dans l’Empire achéménide*, P. Briant & M. Chauveau, eds. (Persika 14; Paris, 2009), 123–131, esp. 128.

¹³² J. Yoyotte, *CRAIBL* (1989), 75.

¹³³ M. Chauveau, “Le saut dans le temps d’un document historique: des Ptolémées aux Saïtes,” in: *La XXVI^e dynastie continuité et rupture. Promenade avec Jean Yoyotte*, D. Devauchelle, ed. (Paris, 2011), 39–45.

portion of P. Ryland 9 that covers the end of the Saite period, the *sentī* appears in the first portion of the petition, which covers the reign of Darius I. This is in fact the period of the existence of the oldest *sentis* attested to by epigraphy:¹³⁴ Horudja son of Tesnakht (Statue of Cleveland 1920.1978)¹³⁵ and Hor son of Udjahorresnet (known from two steles from the Serapeum, Louvre C 317 and IM 4018).¹³⁶ The genealogy indicated by the later on the Louvre C 317 stele mentions another *sentī*, his great-grandfather Horkheby, who would thus have held his position in the time of Amasis.

The scope of the task assigned to the *sentī* is difficult to establish. We could extrapolate from what we know of the Hellenistic *sentī*. However, this seems risky and could create an anachronism. At best, we can study the role played by the person holding this position in the first part of P. Rylands 9. Peteise III files a complaint with him, and the lengthy second report tracing the entire family history of Peteise I is addressed to him. In this specific case, he is assigned to arbitrate conflicts among the priests of the domain of Amun of Teudjoi.

In summary, the second part of the Saite period witnesses the development of a financial administration. The *Manager of the scribes of the council* manages the audit office of the Royal Household. The *Manager of the royal boats* handles logistics liaisons among the various parts of the royal domain. An inspection office composed of *Managers of the fields* is in charge of protecting the royal lands and their products from attempts at seizure. The *sentī*, top-level administrator in charge of the sacred domains, appears at the very end of the period. Thus, even if the position of *Manager of boats* existed from the second part of the reign of Psamtik I, the proliferation of these titles related to finance and economy begins in the reign of Psamtik II. Generally speaking, then, it was especially in the sixth century that the Saïtes become concerned with improving the close management of the crown properties and defending them against the appetites of the temples and speculation. This trend in the history of Saïte administrative history to

¹³⁴ We cannot determine with certainty if they operated under Amasis or under the Persians; G. Vittmann in: *Organisation des pouvoirs*, P. Briant & M. Chauveau, eds., 100–101.

¹³⁵ B. Bothmer, *Egyptian Sculpture of the Late Period*, 72–73, n° 61, pl. 58; L.M. Berman & K.J. Boháč, ed., *The Cleveland Museum of Art. Catalogue of Egyptian Art* (New York, 1999), 422–423, n° 316.

¹³⁶ J. Yoyotte, *CRAIBL* (1989), 79–80, this is individual B in the appendix on page 87; G. Vittmann in: *Organisation des pouvoirs*, P. Briant & M. Chauveau, eds., 101 n. 64.

move from a royal administration composed of relatively autonomous members with poorly defined powers (the most flagrant example of this type of administrator is the *Leader of the Fleet*) to specialized departments composed of financial, tax, logistics, and other specialists assigned to monitor local administrations is more closely visible in the financial area.

3.2 *Expansion of the Tax Domain*

The second part of the Saite period was also characterized by definite strengthening of the customs administration (3.2.1) and increased tax control over the assets of individuals (3.2.2).

3.2.1 *Collection of Trade Revenues: The Agents at the Gate*

“Gates,” or customs stations, had existed at the frontiers of Egypt from early times. However, the epigraphy of the Saite period testifies to an unprecedented development of customs administration, corresponding very certainly to the advance of trade activities in the Mediterranean area and the Near East.¹³⁷ This documentation has been assembled by G. Posener in an article that is fundamental for any study of the subject.¹³⁸ The top administrators who managed the Saite customs administration held the title of *Agent at the gate of foreign countries* (*imy-r3 3 h3s.wt*). One of them was Wahibre, who served under Amasis, and for whom we have a sizable epigraphic file. Of Saite origin, he appears to have been initially a soldier in charge of Nubian contingents; in effect, he was *commander of southern foreign (troops)* (*hrp h3sty.w rsy.w*, Cairo JE 34043),¹³⁹ and held (subsequently?) a top position in the Saite army (Statue BM EA 111).¹⁴⁰ In any case, he was knowledgeable in Nubian affairs, since he also held the position of *Agent at the southern gate* (*imy-r3 3 rsy.w*) (particularly on statue

¹³⁷ J.C. Moreno-García in: *Travail de la terre et statut de la main-d'œuvre en Méditerranée archaïque, VIII^e-VII^e siècles*, J. Zurbach, ed. (Bulletin de correspondance Hellénique, Supplément; Athens) (in press).

¹³⁸ G. Posener, “Les douanes de la Méditerranée dans l’Égypte saïte,” *Revue de Philologie* 21 (1947), 117–131; D. Pressl, *Beamte und Soldaten*, 70–73.

¹³⁹ H. Gauthier, “À travers la Basse Égypte (suite), X.—Un notable de Salüs: Ouahab-Re,” *ASAE* 22 (1922), 81–107, esp. 88–89.

¹⁴⁰ H. Gauthier, *ASAE* 22 (1922), 85–88.

Cairo 34044).¹⁴¹ The oldest holder of this title for the Saite period is none other than the vizier Harsiese (Statue Phil. Univ. Mus. E 16025 x + 3),¹⁴² perhaps a contemporary of Psamtik I. If this date proved to be correct, it would show that management of the southern customs administration was turned over to a Saite administrator at a very early period. Before then, it was probably in the hands of Montuemhat, and after Harsiese it passed, directly or otherwise, to one Horudja, who lived during the time of Nechao II, and who is known by a statue fragment (Petrie Museum UC 14634) and a situla (OIC 11395).¹⁴³ On the first of these documents, he holds the vague title of *Agent at the gate of foreign countries*, specified in more detail in the second document: *Agent at the gate of southern foreign countries* (*imy-r3 3.w h3s. wt rsy.w*). It can be noted that on these two documents this position is shown first, while in the case of Harsiese it was placed in second position, after the vizirate. It is thus possible that with the strengthening of Saite power in Thebes it was thought useful to have an administrator devoted exclusively to customs management. After Horudja, no other holder of this position is attested until the reign of Apries: this was the famous general Neshor. The text of statue Louvre A 90 provides a summary of the pre-eminent nature of the position of *Agent at the gate*: "His Majesty called upon him to fill a very high position, a position belonging to his eldest son, that is, *Agent at the gate of the southern foreign countries*, for the purpose of repelling weak foreigners. In this regard he aroused fear among the southern foreigners by pushing them aside" (col. 1).¹⁴⁴ This passage clearly shows that the Agent at the gate was in charge of ensuring the sealing of the frontier and preventing groups of non-Egyptians from entering Saite territory. Moreover, a document that is highly peculiar but is difficult to exploit, P. Berlin 13165,¹⁴⁵ mentions the passage of a caravan under military

¹⁴¹ H. Gauthier, *ASAE* 22 (1922), 88–89, but also statue Bologna 1820, P.-M. Chevreau, *Prosopographie des cadres militaires égyptiens*, 107–109 (doc. 142) and 387.

¹⁴² H. de Meulenaere in: *Studies in Honour of the Centenary of the Egypt Exploration Society 1882–1982*, 140.

¹⁴³ M. Lichtheim, "Situla N°11395 and Some Remarks on Egyptian Situlae," *JNES* 6 (1947), 169–179, pl. V–VI.

¹⁴⁴ H. Schäfer, *Klio* IV (1904); for another document attesting to this title of Neshor, cf. P. Vernus, "Une statue de Neshor surnommé Psamétik-Menkhib," *RdÉ* 42 (1991), 241–249.

¹⁴⁵ W. Erichsen, "Erwähnung eines Zuges nach Nubien unter Amasis in einem demotischen Text," *Klio* 34 (1941), 56–61, 1 pl.; K.-Th. Zauzich, "Ein Zug nach Nubien unter Amasis," in: *Life in a Multi-Cultural Society. Egypt from Cambyses to Constantine and Beyond*, J.H. Johnson, ed. (Chicago, 1992), 371–374.

protection in the year 41 of the reign of Amasis (530–529). It is possible that this type of escort was placed under the protection of the top administrator in charge of security in the frontier area, in other words the *Agent at the gate of the southern foreign countries*. Not until the Thirtieth Dynasty did this title reappear, on the statue of a certain Psamtik initially ascribed to the Saite period¹⁴⁶ but the dating of which has now been revised.¹⁴⁷ The biography of Neshor shows that during the reign of Apries he had to deal with a mutiny of foreign, particularly Asian, warriors. We learn from a letter in Aramaean sent to the governor of Judea in 407 by Jedemiah, the priest of the Jewish garrison present in Elephantine under the Persians, that Cambyses found Jewish garrisons already installed there. Writing to complain about the destruction of the temple of Yaho by the priests of Khnum, Jedemiah recalls the ancientness of the sanctuary founded in the time of the “kings of Egypt” and the respect shown to it by Cambyses at the time of his passage (*P. Cowley* 30 l.13–15).¹⁴⁸

To the west of the Delta, the very imprecise frontier area between Egypt and Libya was the domain of the *Agent at the gate of the Libyan foreign countries*. This title was held by the *cavalry chief* Sematawytefnakht, mentioned above. An unusual feature of this monument is that it has a date, “year 39” of a reign that can only be that of Amasis (532–531). It is very interesting to note that Sematawytefnakht also assumed the position of *chief of Asian foreigners*. We learn from a Persian-era funerary epigraph written in Aramaean (Stele Berlin ÄM 7707)¹⁴⁹ that the garrison of the site of Khastem (ar. *HSTMH ég. ḥ3s.wt Tmḥ.w* “Country of the Libyans”),¹⁵⁰ a city within the Libyan borders, welcomed a contingent of Aramaean-speaking soldiers. It is thus highly probable that the “Asian” soldiers under the command of Sematayatefnakht were stationed in this hamlet, identified as Mareia,¹⁵¹ west of Lake

¹⁴⁶ J.J. Clère, “Autobiographie d’un général gouverneur de la Haute-Égypte à l’époque saïte,” *BIFAO* 83 (1983), 85–100, 4 pl.

¹⁴⁷ H. de Meulenaere, “Un général du Delta, gouverneur de Haute Égypte,” *CdÉ* 61 (1986), 203–210.

¹⁴⁸ B. Porten & A. Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents of Ancient Egypt*, I, A4.7.

¹⁴⁹ J. Yoyotte, “Berlin 7707: un détail,” *Transeuphratène* 9 (1995), 91; G. Vittmann, *Ägypten und die Fremden*, 14, p. 107 fig. 47, p. 110.

¹⁵⁰ O. Perdu, *RdÉ* 57 (2006), 174, note c.

¹⁵¹ J. Yoyotte, “L’Amon de Naukratis,” *RdÉ* 34 (1982–83), 129–36, esp. 131 n. 20.

Mareotis. This was a strategic site from an early time, as is evidenced by the fact that a person as important as Nesnaisut was the governor there during the reign of Psamtik I.

There are few references to the eastern frontier in the documentation relative to the *Agents at the gate*. During the reign of Psamtik II, the *chief of the troops* (*mr mnft*) Amasis, known from a statue discovered at Saft el-Henneh (Cairo CG 895—previously cited, New York, MMA 66.99.78)¹⁵² and identified with the general Amasis of the inscriptions at Abu Simbel,¹⁵³ held the title of *Agent for the double gate of the northern foreign countries* (*imy-r3 ʿ3.wy m h3s.wt mht.w*), a title that appears as secondary. Are we to deduce from this that the northern customs posts were less prestigious than those of the south? And how are we to understand the reference to a “double gate”? It can be supposed that Amasis headed two institutions, the first probably oriented toward the Sinai, the second more directly connected with the Mediterranean. If this is indeed the case, these two customs posts appear not to have been permanently connected. We know of at least two *Agents at the gate of the foreign countries of the Great Green Area* (= the Mediterranean). The first was Neshor, who held this position (*im[y-r3 ʿ3 h3s.wt] W3d-wr*) during the reign of Psamtik II (Ermitage 2962)¹⁵⁴ before becoming the manager of the southern customs post under Apries. This cursus confirms what we assumed earlier: that the Nubian customs post was more prestigious in the eyes of the Saites, or at any rate that the officials assigned to manage it had to have proven their worthiness elsewhere. During the reign of Amasis the position was held by a certain Nakhthorheb (Statue Varille).¹⁵⁵ Here again, the *Agent* was a soldier. A fragment from the cover of his sarcophagus shows that Nakhthorheb held the title of *Chief of troops*

¹⁵² A. Rowe, “A New Light on Objects belonging to the General Potasimto and Amasis in the Egyptian Museum,” *ASAE* 38 (1938), 157–195.

¹⁵³ G. Lefebvre, *BSAA* 21/6 (1925), 55–56.

¹⁵⁴ B. Turajeff, “Einige unedierte Saitica in russischen Sammlungen,” *ZÄS* 48 (1910), 160–163, pl. II–III; J. Heise, *Erinnern und gedenken. Aspekte der biographischen Inschriften der ägyptischen Spätzeit* (OBO 226; Freiburg-Göttingen, 2007), 190–192.

¹⁵⁵ P. Tresson, “Sur deux monuments égyptiens inédits de l’époque d’Amasis et de Nectanébo I^{er},” *Kémi* 4 (1931), 126–150, esp. 126–144, pl. VII–IX; D. Wildung, “Nach Jahrtausenden wiedervereinigt Kopf und Körper einer ägyptischen Statue finden in Berlin zueinander,” *Antike Welt*, 27/1 (1996), 1–2. An English translation of the text appears in M. Lichtheim, *Maat in Egyptian Autobiographies and Related Studies* (Freiburg, 1992), 91–2.

(*mr-mnft*).¹⁵⁶ It is certain that the Naucratis site was within the jurisdiction of the *Agents at the gate of the foreign countries of the Great Great Area*. The “domain of the port” (*pr-mry.t*) of Naucratis may have been established in the early years of the reign of Amasis, following his coup d’État, and its management may have been assigned to the Greek cities located around Chios.¹⁵⁷ Naucratis, however, did not yet have Greek city status.¹⁵⁸ The cities that were members of the Hellenion received the right to manage the only authorised trade zone connecting Egypt with the Mediterranean world. They appointed the “provosts” of this port market, the *prostatai tou emporiou*, according to Herodotus (II.178–179). The pharaohs nevertheless maintained within this area a royal establishment in charge of collecting taxes levied in the port. Unfortunately, no Saite document mentions the taxes assessed on trade. Thus, if the *Agents at the gates* were soldiers before being managers, the management of the flows of goods that transited the frontiers, and their taxation, required them to have a certain ability in dealing with finance. Moreover, some of them held the title of *Superior for food offerings* (*hry-wtb*). This meant that they had the task of turning over a portion of the revenue that they collected to the largest temples in the area under their jurisdiction.¹⁵⁹ This allowed them to erect a statue in the sanctuaries of which they had been the benefactors.

3.2.2 Taxation of Individuals

According to Herodotus (II.177), Amasis may have been the originator of a tax innovation of considerable scope: “Moreover, it was Amasis who imposed this law on the Egyptians: that every Egyptian had to report his means of existence (*gr. bioutai*) to the nomarch each year; that anyone who did not do so and did not prove honorable resources would be put to death.” In other words, Amasis may have been the inventor of the first tax on assets and income of individuals.

¹⁵⁶ H.S.K. Bakri, “Recent Discoveries of Pharaonic Antiquities in Cairo and Neighbourhood,” *RSO* 46 (1971), 103–105, pp. V–VI.

¹⁵⁷ D. Agut-Labordère, “Le statut égyptien de Naucratis,” in: *Entités locales et pouvoir central: la cité dominée dans l’Orient hellénistique*, Nancy, les 3, 4 et 5 juin 2010 (Université Nancy 2), V. Dieudonné, C. Feyel, J. Fournier, L. Graslin, F. Kirbilher, & G. Vottéro, eds. Nancy, pp. 153–173.

¹⁵⁸ A. Bresson, “Rhodes, l’Hellénion et le statut de Naucratis,” *DHA* 6 (1980), 291–349 reproduced in A. Bresson, *La cité marchande* (Bordeaux, 2000), 13–64.

¹⁵⁹ G. Posener, *Revue de Philologie* 21 (1947), 121.

The death penalty for violators is certainly an attempt at dramatization by Herodotus. Diodorus of Sicily notes that Amasis modified the role of the “nomarchs and the entire administration of Egypt” (I.95). The image of Amasis as reformer, widespread in historiography, is rooted largely in these two short passages.¹⁶⁰ A study of the epigraphic documentation makes it possible to flesh out this portrait, or at least to place the Amasian reforms in a broader perspective. We have seen throughout this third section that administrative innovations followed one upon the other throughout the sixth century. If we now examine the contents of the reforms described by the two Greek historians, we shall note their agreement on the fact that they concern in particular the administration of the nomes. It is thus tempting to compare the texts of Herodotus and Diodorus of Sicily with a passage from the inscription on the statue of Peftuaneith (Louvre A 93).¹⁶¹ The envoy of Amasis to Abydos states: “I turned over products (*īšt*) from the Thinite desert to the temple that I found in possession of the nomarch (*ḥꜣty-ꜣ*) so that Abydenes would have burials.” However, there is nothing to prove that the transfer from the nomarch to the temple of Osiris of management and collection of revenue from “products of the desert” was done within the framework of a general reform of the nomarchy. It could have been a simple royal donation to the sanctuary, with the nomarch having had use of these “products” until then in the name of the Saite administration. G. Posener has expressed a supposition that the “products” in question could have come from the desert quarries,¹⁶² in which case this could be a reference to alum, a mineral used in the mummification process, and definitely attested to as being present in the Great Oasis. In this case, the king, through his emissary, may have decided to give the temple of Osiris in Abydos quarries located in the oases of the Libyan desert. This would then have been a donation similar to the one mentioned on the famine stele, a Ptolemaic-era pseudo-epigraph, in which the

¹⁶⁰ The analysis by F. Bilabel, “Polykrates von Samos und Amasis von Ägypten,” *Neue Heidelberger Jahrbücher (Neue Folge)* (1934), 129–159, esp. 150–151 concerning these passages is still completely pertinent.

¹⁶¹ E. Jelinkova-Reymond, “Quelques recherches sur les réformes d’Amasis,” *ASAE* 54/2 (1967), 251–287, esp. 256.

¹⁶² G. Posener, *Revue de Philologie* 21 (1947), 126 and note 2. M. Valloggia is of the opinion that: “Le trafic caravanier passa alors sous le contrôle du clergé d’Osiris [The caravan traffic then came under the control of the clergy of Osiris].” M. Valloggia, “This sur la route des Oasis,” *BIFAO* 81 (1981), 185–190, citation p. 190.

king gives the god Khnum of Elephantine the right to receive 10% of everything that is produced in the Dodecaschoenus.¹⁶³ An attempt to see in the inscriptions of the top administrators living during the reign of Amasis an echo of the passages of Herodotus and Psamtik can thus lead to over-interpretation of the epigraphic documentation, a blind alley connected with the very nature of these biographical texts. Placed inside the sanctuaries, they were supposed to remind the community of priests of the good deeds performed by the benefactor in favor of the local divinity. We cannot, and should not, draw hasty conclusions from the piling-up of commonplaces that structure these narratives: the benefactor inevitably finds the temple in ruins, his standing in the court and/or the administration enables him to allocate funds for a rehabilitation of the buildings and the reorganization of the domain of the god. Thus there is nothing to definitively connect the biographical text engraved on the statue of Peftuaneith (Louvre A 93), which indicates that he restored the temple of Abydos from top to bottom, with the tax reform that Amasis is believed to have achieved. A check of the demotic and abnormal hieratic papyri turns up no receipt for a tax of this type. Moreover, a valuation of the assets and revenues of each household would imply that each nomarch had a corps of accounting scribes devoted to this task. We have seen that at least since the reign of Psamtik II the crown had had an audit office directed by the *Manager of the scribes of the Council*. This type of body could have centralized the information coming from the various nomes. But the major part of the accounting, verification, and collection work necessarily had to be done at the local level. Thus, if it should prove true that Herodotus was right, this would mean that at the end of the Saite period Egypt had one of the most efficient local administrations of its era, because the Egyptian tax collectors would then have been able to tax each household for an amount calculated in proportion to its assets and its revenues. This tax would have been similar to the Athenian *eisphora*, a contribution based on estimate of wealth (*timèma*) and imposed by the Athenians starting in 428,¹⁶⁴ with this difference: in the

¹⁶³ M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature. Vol. III: The Late Period* (Berkeley-Los Angeles, 1980), 99, l. 25–27.

¹⁶⁴ V. Chankowski, “Les catégories du vocabulaire de la fiscalité dans les cités grecques,” in: *Vocabulaire et expression de l'économie dans le monde antique*, J. Andreau & V. Chankowski, eds. (Bordeaux, 2007), 299–33, esp. 306.

case of Egypt, it would have been applied to several million taxpayers. In addition, the establishment of this contribution would have presupposed that the administration could verify ownership deeds, leases, and documents creating rights to an income. This verification work would thus have involved the standardization of all private documents pertaining to family income. This is why the tax reform of Amasis described by Herodotus, if it actually took place, could explain the fact that it was precisely during the reign of this king that the demotic permanently supplanted the abnormal hieratic in Thebaid.

4. ECONOMIC ADMINISTRATION IN THE TEMPLES AND THEIR ENVIRONS: THE EXAMPLE OF THE DOMAIN OF AMUN IN THEBES

For the Saite period, it is obviously the Domain of Amun of Thebes¹⁶⁵ that has left us the most abundant and varied documentation concerning its economic administration by a group of top administrators whose respective powers it is difficult to determine: the *Chief manager* (*mr pr*), the *Manager of the granary* (*mr šnw.t*),¹⁶⁶ and the *Manager of the fields* (*mr ʔh*), who is not to be confused with the official of the same name in the royal administration (see pp. 999–1000).¹⁶⁷ For the Saite period, it is the abundance of “contracts” (perhaps better called declarations) entered into between the temple authorities and individuals, or between individuals, that constitutes the most original feature of the economic documentation emanating from this institution. It seems that this period of Egyptian history was characterized by the development of economic affairs conducted on the periphery of the temples, whether through the leasing of lands belonging to a sacred domain (2), or the management by individuals of funerary activities connected with the necropolis (3). But before looking at these original features, we shall study in particular the economic links between the Saite king and the temples.

¹⁶⁵ S. Vleeming, *The Gooseherds of Hou (Pap. Hou)* (Leuven, 1991), 21 note [cc].

¹⁶⁶ Concerning these two titles, S. Vleeming, *P. Reinhardt. An Egyptian Land List from the Tenth Century B.C.* (Berlin, 1993), 55–56 §. 13.

¹⁶⁷ K. Donker van Heel, *Abnormal hieratic and early demotic texts collected by the Theban Choachytes in the reign of Amasis. Papyri from the Louvre Eisenlohr lot* (Leiden, 1996), 37, note 5.

4.1 *The King and the Economic Activity of the Temples: Gifts, Peculation, Taxation, and Diplomatic Donations*

The *Petition of Peteise* (P. Rylands IX) constitutes an exceptional document for a better understanding of the organization of the relationship between the temples and the crown during the Saite period.¹⁶⁸ This lengthy text is an irreplaceable source for the social, economic, and administrative history of Late-Period Egypt. Written in demotic by one Peteise (III), priest of Teudjoi in Middle Egypt (now El-Hiba), during the reign of Darius I, it sets forth the claim of Peteise III to the position of high priest of the local temple of Amun. In support of his claim, he relates the history of his family since the beginning of the Saite period, when his great-great-grandfather, Peteise I, settled in Teudjoi during the reign of Psamtik I. Reported more than a century and a half later, the events in this text cannot be completely authentic. Nevertheless, they had to appear credible.

P. Rylands 9 provides one of the few glimpses we have for the Saite period of the royal taxes weighing on the temples. Its description of the economic situation of the temple of Amun of Teudjoi at the beginning of the reign of Psamtik I reveals an institution in a catastrophic condition. The text deserves to be quoted in its entirety. Peteise III places the words in the mouth of an elderly sacristan who meets his ancestor Peteise I on an inspection tour: “This was (formerly) an opulent sacred domain (6,15) allocated to Amun of Teudjoi, this was the edifice of which it was said that it was the first place of Amonresonter. Then came the bad times: The large temples of Egypt were made to pay a tax, and this city was then burdened with an excessive tax. They (= the priests of Teudjoi) were not able to pay the tax imposed on them. They departed, and even though the major temples of Egypt were thenceforth exempt, people continue to come to us saying: ‘Pay the tax (dem. *škr*)!’.” The narrative probably dates from the 650s (between 661, date of the promotion of Peteise I to the position of *Leader of the Fleet*, and 650, the date on which the king awarded him several prebends, particularly in Thebes). The sacristan refers to an

¹⁶⁸ The benchmark edition of this text is that of G. Vittmann, *Der demotische Papyrus Rylands 9*, *passim*. Two more recent translations, in German and in French, have been proposed: F. Hoffmann & J.F. Quack, *Anthologie der demotischen Literatur. Einführungen und Quellentexte zur Ägyptologie* (Berlin, 2007), 22–54; D. Agut-Labordère & M. Chauveau, *Héros, magiciens et sages oubliés de l’Égypte ancienne. Une anthologie de la littérature égyptienne démotique* (Paris, 2011), 145–200.

indeterminate period between the time of elimination of the tax on the temples and the time of its re-establishment, following a decision to exempt the largest sanctuaries from the tax. Obviously it is impossible to establish the date of these various changes, which bear witness to a tax policy that, to say the least, was erratic during the first half of the seventh century. The temple of Amun of Teudjoi had not benefitted from the last of these measures, the one that would have allowed it a tax exemption. We shall note, in passing, that the text distinguishes two types of taxation. The first affects the temple (*hw.t-ntr*), the second the city (*tmy*). The priests appear to have been unable to comply with this double taxation, and are believed to have deserted the site. The basic narrative of the *Instructions of Chasheshonqy* mentions another type of burdensome tax, this one on religious personnel. Positions of “priests exempt from taxes” (dem. *w^cb iwty tn 1.x + 19*) could be awarded by royal decision to the “brothers” of the *chief physician* (*wr swnw*). This seems to indicate that specific taxes were assessed on most priestly positions. Was it a sum to be paid upon the obtaining of a title like the Ptolemaic *telestikon*? A receipt for two debens in fact indicates that this type of tax was levied in Elephantine by the royal treasury during the Persian period (P. Berlin 13582).¹⁶⁹ But there is nothing to prove its existence under the Saïtes. Obviously, evidence concerning the taxes on temples and their priests is limited in quantity and is very vague.

On the other hand, by revealing the background of the process of re-establishing the temple of Amun of Teudjoi, the *Petition of Peteise* allows us to better understand the political motives of certain royal donations. We saw earlier that Peteise I was initially the assistant to a very highly placed administrator, Peteise son of Chasheshonq, the *Leader of the Fleet*. It was during an inspection tour connected with his duties that Peteise I supposedly discovered the temple of Amun of Teudjoi in lamentable condition. As we shall see later, the temple may have been ruined by iniquitous taxation. Upon his return to his superior in Herakleopolis, Peteise I asked for a consultation of the tax records. It was then realized that the temple of Teudjoi was in fact exempt from the charges that had led to its ruination. The zealous Peteise undertook to report this situation to the Leader of the Fleet,

¹⁶⁹ A. Kuhrt, *The Persian Empire: A Corpus of Sources from the Achaemenid Empire* (London – New York, 2007), 706, n° 14.

who agreed to refund the improperly collected sum to the priests. The reimbursement was paid through an intermediary, who was none other than Peteise I. The word “intermediary” is too weak, however, since according to his descendant it was Peteise I who supervised the use of the money and organized the restoration of the temple of Amun of Teudjoi. This restoration obviously was not done without a considerable compensation. Peteise I was able to move his family to Teudjoi and, above all, to provide the family with the use of the prebends connected with the temple. Peteise I thus supposedly used his relationships within the royal administration to serve his interests and those of his family, interests that he sought to establish permanently by causing an inscription commemorating his good deeds:

Then he went on an inspection tour of the Southern Land. He came to Elephantine, and caused an Elephantine stone stele to be cut, and blocks for two statues in demgui stone, and he had them (7,15) brought to Teudjoi. He departed for the north and arrived at Teudjoi, he had stonecutters, engravers, scribes of the House of Life, and draftsmen brought in. He had them inscribe on the stele the good deeds he had performed at Teudjoi, he had them make his two statues in demgui stone, both kneeling, with a statue of Amun in the lap of one and a statue of Osiris in the lap of the other. He caused on to be installed at the entrance to the chapel of Amun the other at the entrance to the chapel of Osiris.

His descendant Peteise III, eager to obtain every opportunity for his case, recopied the text of this stele:

[A:] *Copy of the Elephantine stone stele in the dromos of Amun, — detail:*

Year 1[4], third month of the season of akhet (= April 651), in the reign of Horus the Great-hearted, that of the two Mistresses Master of the arm, the victorious golden Horus, the King of Upper and Lower Egypt Wahibre, the son of Re Psamtik (i), living eternally as Ra.

While His Majesty gladdened the country by suppressing its enemies and supplying all the temples of Upper and Lower Egypt, people came and told the first holy servant of Herishef-King-of-the-two-lands, the holy servant of Osiris-of-Naref-on-his-throne, the leader of the holy servants (21,15) of Sobek of Sheded, the holy servant of Amun-Ra-Great-of-renown and his ennead, the Leader of the Fleet of the entire country, Peteise son of Cha Sheshonq: “The temple of Amun-Great-of-renown has fallen into ruins because of the tax imposed upon it.”

The dignitary attached (to this temple) and residing in this city, Peteise son of Itoru and Tadebehneith, made certain that this news was learned, and this dignitary (= Peteise son of Itoru) prostrated himself and said: “If you eliminate the tax on the temple of Amun-Great-of-renown, then (22,1) this city in its entirety, relieved of its problem, will serve you.”

This dignitary (= Peteise son of Chasheshonq) set the establishment of its influence over this city as his goal. Then this administrator sat down to discuss this tax with all the scribes of each city concerned, all the agents and their equivalent officials. (They) said: "This was not done in the beginning."

Then he grew angry because of this, then this general (= Peteise son of Chasheshonq) sent southward his subordinate who resided in this city, Peteise son of Itoru, saying: "Let there be no more tax on this temple of Amun-Great-of-renown, nevermore, for all eternity, because this was not done at the beginning. All the priests and all the slaves will be protected and forever exempt from tax by any dignitary, any envoy, any agent, any police officer. He did this to exempt this temple and the people there so that they would work for him (like) heiffers in the (22,5) fields. As for the person who complies with this decree, he shall be in the favor of the benefactor, his name shall be perpetuated, his son (installed) in his place, his house stable on its foundations. As for the person who will destroy this stele, he shall be the terror and the misfortune in the great tribunal at Heracleopolis, he shall be the knife of Heneb who resides in Naref, his son shall be set aside, his house shall no longer exist; his body being brought to the fire, he shall be the fire in the coals of the Eye of Ra who lives in the Hill-of-the-Dog-Ticks, his name shall no longer be among the living for all eternity."

In reality, the version in the text of the stele is very different from that of the petition. Here it is a different Peteise, Peteise son of Chasheshonq, the *Leader of the Fleet*, the superior of Peteise I, who plays the principal role. Informed by his assistant of the ruination of the temple of Teudjoi, it is the *Leader of the Fleet* who takes the steps necessary for its renovation in order to "re-establish its influence in this city" (*n rdi.t niw.t tn hr mw=f*).¹⁷⁰ Like the action of Peteise I in the text of the petition, that of the *Leader of the Fleet* was completely within the sphere of sponsorship. Thus the priests of Amun of Teudjoi found a protector in the *Leader of the Fleet*, who, thanks to his functions in the royal administration, obtain a tax exemption for them. Peteise I appears solely as the local relay of his powerful master. Contrary to the text of the petition, the text of the stele does not mention the gift of land, the precious vessel, or the construction of a building. It can then be supposed that this aspect of the action of Peteise I at Teudjoi is a

¹⁷⁰ Literally, "put the city on its water." This metaphor, frequent in Late-Period texts, is discussed by G. Vittmann, *Altägyptische Wegmetaphorik* (Beiträge zur Ägyptologie, 15; Veröffentlichungen der Institute für Afrikanistik und Ägyptologie der Universität Wien, 83; Wien, 1999).

pure invention forged by Peteise III to support his claims to leadership of the temple of Amun.

Peteise son (7,20) of Itoru, navigated toward Heracleopolis. He appeared before the Leader of the Fleet and reported everything that he had done at Teudjoi. (8,1) Peteise, the Leader of the Fleet, then said to him:

—May Herishef king-of-the-two-lands praise you! Amun will reward you for your good deeds! You know that the share of holy servant of Amun of Teudjoi and his ennead belongs to me. Since you loved it as residence, I shall draw up a document granting you the role of holy servant of Amun of Teudjoi and his eannead.

The Leader of the Fleet called for a scribe of (the) school, who drafted a document granting him the share of holy servant of Amon of Teudjoi and his ennead.

It is remarkable that although the king appears in the stele, the entire operation was conducted under the authority, and to the profit, of the *Leader of the Fleet*. Moreover, the patronage-relation logic is clearly stated in the very text of the stele. The *Petition of Peteise* clearly shows that at that point in the reign of Psamtik I, the authority delegated by the king to the members of his household was openly used by them to create a clientele. The highest members of the royal administration served the king and made use of him to establish their influence over the temples and increase their income.

Here Peteise I plays only the role of intermediary, and joins the Teudjoi clergy as liege-man of the *Leader of the Fleet*. His power in Teudjoi thus depended on the career of his master, and his own advancement in the administration. Here we see the role played by epigraphy on hard stone: by preserving the history of its notables and their good deeds in favor of the village community, epigraphy made it possible for their descendants to justify their positions. It is very significant that when the power of the descendants of Peteise I disappeared, the priests of Teudjoi decided to destroy the statues and steles he had left, in order to deprive Udjasomtu II (the father of Peteise III) of any reference to this prestigious past.

Then Udjasomtu with his wife and children departed by night on a boat for Hermopolis. The priests and the lesonis learned of this at dawn. They went to his house and took everything that belonged to him. They pulled down his house and his temple dwelling. Then they brought in (18,15) an engraver and had him efface the stele that Peteise son of Itoru had caused to be erected on the stone base. They went toward the other, Elephantine-stone stele in the sanctuary, saying: "We have to efface this one too!" But the engraver said:

—I can't efface it, only a stone-cutter can—my tools would lose their edge.

Then a priest said:

—Well, leave it then! Look, no one notices it! Furthermore, he caused it to be erected at a time when he was not yet a priest, a time when Peteise, the Leader of the Fleet, had not drafted a document granting him the benefit of Amun. We can contest it by using it as a basis and saying: "Your father was not a holy servant of Amun!"

They left the Elephantine stone stele (18,20), they did not efface it. Then they moved toward his two demgui statues. They threw into the river the statue that was at the entrance to the chapel of Amun, the one that had a statue of the god in his lap, and did the same with the other statue that was in the temple of Osiris, at the entrance to the chapel of Osiris, the one that had a statue of the god in his lap.

Reread in this way, the story of Peteise furnishes the background for royal and private donations. We have a very large number of steles mentioning transfers of assets from a domain of the king to that of a god. In most cases, land is involved. Sometimes, as at Teudjoi, the donation can be multiple in nature, and can lead to a re-establishment of the domain of the god, as is shown by another "biographical" text ("evergetic" might be a better word), that of Peftuaneith preserved on the statue Louvre A 93, which describes his action in favor of the temple of Khentamenti at Abydos.¹⁷¹ Some authors, for example Dimitri Meeks,¹⁷² have seen in the royal donations to temples a desire on the part of the sovereign to "maintain the economic activity of which they [the temples] were the center." The *Petition of Peteise* leads us to propose a different reading, in which the institutional and sociological aspects take precedence over the economy. It is not absolutely certain that all the "royal" donations were decided by the kings personally. As we have seen in the text of the *Petition*, they could be

¹⁷¹ Statue Louvre A 93, translation into English by M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature III*, 33–36 (available on Googlebooks).

¹⁷² D. Meeks, "Les donations aux temples dans l'Égypte du I^{ère} millénaire avant J.-C.," in: *State and Temple Economy in the Ancient Near East II. Proceedings of the International Conference organized by the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven from 10th to the 14th April 1978*, II, E. Lipiński, ed. (OLA 6; Leuven, 1979), 606–685, esp. 652. See also the very stimulating analysis proposed by N. Spencer, "Sustaining Egyptian Culture? Non-royal initiatives in Late Period Temple Building," in: *Egypt in Transition. Social and Religious Development of Egypt in the First Millennium BCE*, L. Bareš et alii, eds. (Prague, 2010), 441–490. Based on the corpus of "biographical" inscriptions, this author rightly proposes that individual initiatives be seen at the origin of certain work performed in the temples.

donation-peculation situations: a local agreement made in favor of a powerful top administrator (and his friends), ultimately to the detriment of the royal domain.

However, not all the royal donations can be reduced to this conclusion. The steles testifying to this type of transfer have been studied by D. Meeks in an important article¹⁷³ recently updated.¹⁷⁴ He notes that when the sovereign is the true donor, the donation is the subject of a decree beginning in conventional manner: “His Majesty has ordered” (*wḏ ḥm=f*) or “His Majesty makes an offering” (*ḥnk ḥm=f*).¹⁷⁵ The assets transferred to a temple could come from a domain that had previously belonged to a high-level administrator. For example, the stele Copenhagen Ny Carlsberg AEIN 1037 (Meeks 26.4.4a) testifies to a large donation made in the year 4 of the reign of Apries (586–585). The king offers to the god Banebde of Mendes a property that had been operated by a powerful individual in the time of Psamtik II, General Neshor.¹⁷⁶ This property included a village called “The-Wall-of-Pa-adjed,” with its inhabitants, livestock, fields, and all its appurtenances, covering an estimated 500 arures (approx. 125 hectares). This document can be compared with the stele BM 1427 (Meeks 26.5.8), dated from the year 8 of the reign of Amasis (563–562), which mentions the offering made by the king of “a stable for the *senut* festival”¹⁷⁷ of Horus of Resnet and Horus Mehnet.¹⁷⁸ This building belonged originally to the *governor of the Saite nome* (*ḥṣty-ꜥ m Sṣw*), one Wahibre.¹⁷⁹ More modestly, and without indicating the source of the donated land, in the year 4 of his reign (607–606) Nekau II offered 20 arures (approx. 5 hectares) to Osiris (stele BM 1655, Meeks 26.2.4).¹⁸⁰ The land donated by the king could also be planted; an example is the orchard given to

¹⁷³ D. Meeks, in: *State and Temple Economy*, II, 605–687.

¹⁷⁴ D. Meeks, “Une stèle de donation de la Deuxième Période Intermédiaire,” *ENIM* 2 (2009), 129–154.

¹⁷⁵ D. Meeks in: *State and Temple Economy*, II, 628.

¹⁷⁶ O. Perdu, “Neshor à Mendès sous Apriès,” *BSFE* 118 (1990), 38–49, esp. 37; D. Meeks, *ENIM* 2 (2009), 152.

¹⁷⁷ The translation of this term is discussed by H. de Meulenaere, “Quelques remarques sur des stèles de donation saïtes,” *RdÉ* 44 (1993), 11–18, here p. 12, note 5.

¹⁷⁸ D. Meeks, *ENIM* 2 (2009), 153.

¹⁷⁹ Concerning this governor, R. El-Sayed, *Documents relatifs à Saïs et à ses divinités* (Cairo, 1975), 92–93.

¹⁸⁰ A. Leahy, “Two Donation Stelae of Nechao II,” *RdÉ* 34 (1982–1982), 77–84; H. de Meulenaere, *RdÉ* 44 (1993), 15–16.

the bull Apis by Apries in the 17th year of his reign (573–572) (Berlin 15393, Meeks 26.4.17).¹⁸¹ It will be noted that this lot had already been offered in the 14th year of the reign of this same king (576–575) to Thot of Hermopolis (Stèle Louvre S (or SN?) 455, Meeks 26.4.14).¹⁸² These twin documents, presented in a style that imitates that of the decrees of the Old Kingdom, show that despite the formulaic phrases stipulating that they were made for all eternity, the donations were not permanent, at any rate in the case of royal donations, and they could be abolished.

The economic role of the donations can be questioned. It could be supposed that they were part of a strategy of economic support by the crown for the temples. Some of the Saite-period examples available to us, however, should lead us to relativize the scope of this hypothesis. It will have been noted that most of the examples cited above concern small donations (aside from the text of stele Copenhagen Ny Carlsberg AEIN 1037). Some donations of land are even laughable. For example, a stele in the Mandel collection, dated from year 14 of the reign of Nekau II (597–596) shows that this king offered a field to enable the Hibis of Baqlieh to play (Meeks 26.2.14).¹⁸³ This is a completely symbolic use of donation, involving a problem that may be quite close to the question concerning work done by the king in sanctuaries.¹⁸⁴ In this context, the pharaoh could have someone represent him at the time the asset was officially returned to the sacred domain. For example, a stele from year 11 of the reign of Nekau II (Meeks 26.2.11, OIC 13943)¹⁸⁵ confirms the gift by that king of a field of halva to the temple of Thot in Busiris, and delegates one of the administrators, Padineshmet son of Keremhor, to represent the king at the time of official transfer.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸¹ D. Meeks, *ENIM* 2 (2009), 152, which refers to M. Römer, “Zwei Schenkungsstelen der 26. Dynastie,” *SAK* 37 (2008), 317–326, esp. 317–321.

¹⁸² D. Meeks, *ENIM* 2 (2009), 153.

¹⁸³ D. Meeks, *ENIM* 2 (2009), 151.

¹⁸⁴ For a survey of these works, the reader will consult O. Perdu, “Saites and Persians (664–332),” in: *A Companion to Ancient Egypt*, I, A.B. Lloyd, ed. (Malden, 2010), 140–149.

¹⁸⁵ A. Leahy, *RdÉ* 34 (1982–83), 77–91; D. Meeks, *ENIM* 2 (2009), 151.

¹⁸⁶ H. de Meulenaere, *RdÉ* 44 (1993), 14.

4.2 *The Barley Scribe and Leasing of Land*

The great majority of contracts available to us concerning the leasing of lands originate in the domain of Amun of Thebes and concern transactions between individuals.¹⁸⁷ Even if the lessor may hold a religious title, possibly that of *divine father* (*it-ntr*), a servant of God (*ḥm-ntr*), or a choachyte (*w3ḥ-mw*), the terminology used in the documents shows that he is acting as owner of the temple land, not in connection with his priesthood.¹⁸⁸ At most, we can suppose that the land entrusted to a member of the clergy was part of his remuneration, and that he was to cultivate it directly or lease it to a tenant. For example, in P. Louvre E7837, dating from 535,¹⁸⁹ the lessor, the *holy father* Udjahor, tells his tenant: “I have leased my fields to you...” (*šḥn(=y) n=k n3y(=y) 3ḥ(.w)*). This text specifies that the rent is 1/3 of the output of the ground. The owner also took 1/6 of the share of the tenant as the price for the leasing of an ox for ploughing. The members of the priestly class were thus able to increase their income by leasing lands for which they had received rights by way of remuneration. The priests, and generally speaking everyone who had the means of profiting from access to temple land by means of leasing, went into business.

This is also evidenced by the privatization of certain interior temple spaces in which the priests deposited some or all of the items connected with their private business affairs. For example, in P. Rylands 9, when Peteise I, at the time Chief Priest of Amun in the temple of Teudjoi, had a house built during the reign of Psamtik I in the city in question and a “place in the temple” (*s.t n ḥw.t-ntr*), this room was explicitly located within the sacred enclosure. M. Chauveau shows that in fact the space consisted in service area “offices” owned individually by priests of a certain rank, who could dispose of them as of personal property. The ostrakon O. Man. 5486¹⁹⁰ reports the existence in the temple of Manawir of four of these *s.t n ḥw.t-ntr*, along

¹⁸⁷ For a survey of this documentation, K. Donker Van Heel, “Use of Land in the Kushite and Saite Periods (Egypt, 747–656 and 664–525 BC)”, in: *Landless and Hungry? Access to Land in Early and Traditional Societies. Proceedings of a Seminar held in Leiden, 20 and 21 June, 1996*, B. Haring & R. de Maaijer, eds. (Leiden, 1998), 90–102.

¹⁸⁸ K. Donker van Heel, *Abnormal hieratic and early demotic texts*, 41.

¹⁸⁹ K. Donker van Heel, *Abnormal hieratic and early demotic texts*, 210–215, n° 20.

¹⁹⁰ M. Chauveau & D. Agut-Labordère, *Les ostraca démotiques de Ayn Manâwir*, <http://www.achemenet.com>.

with the names of their respective owners at the end of the reign of Darius II.¹⁹¹

With respect to the leases of temple lands, even if they were held by individuals, they nevertheless were part of the domain of Amun and were therefore subject to payment of the *shemu* tax. The leases signed between two individuals therefore included a clause specifying which of the two parties had to pay the tax, which was 10% of the harvest and had to be paid to a temple official known as the *barley scribe* (*sh it*) or *scribe of the barley account* (*sh ḥsb it*).¹⁹² After receiving the tax, the scribe drafted a receipt (*iw*) on papyrus.¹⁹³ It is interesting to note that according to the wording in effect, the payment of the tax was connected with the act of ploughing the field: “his *shemu* tax for the field that he ploughed” (*p3y=f šmw p3 3ḥ r-sk3=f*). It can then be supposed that the tax was paid by the person who performed the agricultural work, in other words, by the tenant. However, a study of the few receipts available to us shows that in most cases it was the owner who had to pay it.¹⁹⁴ In reality, as K. Donker Van Heel rightly remarks, in this context the verb *sk3* must be understood to mean not simply “to plough” but “to have the responsibility of ploughing” a specific piece of land.¹⁹⁵ This detail is of great importance. By means of this formula the temple authorities indicated the reason that led them to entrust a portion of the domain of the god to individuals: the need to cultivate land that otherwise would have lain fallow. The temple of Amun thus opened its domain to individuals in response to a lack of institutional agriculture workers, particularly prisoners of war.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹¹ M. Chauveau, “Les archives démotiques du temple de Ayn-Manâwir,” ARTA 2011.002 (19 pages) available at <http://www.achemenet.com/document/2011.002-Chauveau.pdf>.

¹⁹² K. Donker van Heel, *Abnormal hieratic and early demotic texts*, 173 note VIII.

¹⁹³ K. Donker van Heel, *Abnormal hieratic and early demotic texts*, documents n° 12 à 16.

¹⁹⁴ K. Donker van Heel, *Abnormal hieratic and early demotic texts*, 43.

¹⁹⁵ K. Donker van Heel, *Abnormal hieratic and early demotic texts*, 45.

¹⁹⁶ This point confirms the analysis made by J.C. Moreno García concerning the gradual disappearance of the *jhwtj.w*, “institutional farmers” in favor of the *nmḥ.w*, “free farmers”: J.C. Moreno García, “L’évolution des statuts de la main-d’œuvre rurale en Égypte de la fin du Nouvel Empire à l’époque saïte”, in: *Travail de la terre et statut de la main-d’œuvre en Méditerranée archaïque, VIII^e–VII^e siècles. Table-ronde Athènes 15–16 décembre 2008*, J. Zurbach, ed. (in press); Id. “Les *nmḥ.w*. Société et transformation agraire en Égypte entre la fin du II^e millénaire et le début du I^{er} millénaire,” *RdÉ* 62 (2011), 105–114, which shows that a very similar phenomenon may have occurred at the end of the Ramesside period.

The temple could also play the role of lessor directly. P. Louvre E7844 is a lease drafted in demotic in 555.¹⁹⁷ Two *choachytes* (see below) lease fallow parcels for the purpose of growing flax. It is interesting to note that the lessor, the holy servant Khonsirau son of Hor, is acting not as owner but as representative of the Domain of Amun. Here again, the analysis of the formula is determinant. The lease specifies that $\frac{1}{2}$ of the harvest product is for the Sacred Offering of Amun and must be delivered (*r-dr.t*) to Khonsairau son of Hor personally. Since this preposition appears in the *shemu tax* receipts drafted by the *barley scribes*, this very probably concerns a payment made in favor of the temple.¹⁹⁸ Khonsirau son of Hor thus would have played here only the role of intermediary, assigned by the institution to monitor the management of certain lands. In this connection, the mention of the Sacred Offering of Amun (*hṯp-ntr n 'Imn*) in the lease is completely essential. This expression designates all the revenues of the Domaine of Amon,¹⁹⁹ and therefore the rent paid by the choachytes were paid directly into the coffers of the god. We must therefore consider that the real property belonging to the temple of Amon was divided into two parts,²⁰⁰ one of which was managed by the temple directly, while the other was sublet to members of the clergy in compensation for their services. The clergy could exploit these fields directly, with the help of their family, or lease them to farmers. Only this portion of the domain was subject to *shemu tax*.

4.3 *The Guilds of Choachytes*

The opening of the temple lands to individuals was a godsend for a portion of Egyptian society. The necropolis was also a place of intense activity, well documented by the papyri. Egyptian ideas on death required absolute respect for the physical integrity of the cadaver (by means of mummification and burial) and the regular performance at the tomb of the deceased of rites aimed at providing him with supplies in the Kingdom of the Dead. The Saite period saw the development

¹⁹⁷ K. Donker van Heel, *Abnormal hieratic and early demotic texts*, 101–106, n° 5.

¹⁹⁸ K. Donker van Heel, *Abnormal hieratic and early demotic texts*, 40.

¹⁹⁹ G. Hughes, *Saite Demotic Land Leases* (Chicago, 1952), 21, §j; K. Donker van Heel, *Abnormal hieratic and early demotic texts*, 105 note VI.

²⁰⁰ On this point see also D. Meeks, “Les donations...”, in: *State and Temple Economy*, II, 643 and note 167.

of mortuary enterprises to which individuals could sub-contract these tasks, against remuneration. For example, a tomb (*s.t*) and the bodies it contained could be entrusted to a group of individuals known in Greek as *choachytes*, *w3h.w-mw*—literally, “pourers of water”—in Egyptian.²⁰¹ During the reign of Amasis, the *choachytes* Djechy and his son Iturodj were in charge of the mummies in at least five tombs in the Theban necropolis.²⁰² They stored their business papers in these tombs, a fact that explains their preservation by comparison with the archives of other professional groups, and the fact that they are over-represented in our corpus.

The business prosperity of the *choachyte* enterprises thus depended very directly on the number of tombs for which they were responsible. In many cases the tombs were shared among several *choachytes* joined in partnership by a specific contract. P. Louvre E7843 seals the partnership—(*mtw=k [p3]y=y iry n pš [n] t3 s.t n p3 dw*, “you are my partner with respect to the tombs of the mountain”)—between the *choachyte* Khausenmut son of Djeho and Iturodj son of Djekhy in 536.²⁰³ The revenue composed of “food rations, field rations, and rations of non-food products” (*q 3h htp*) connected with the work done around two tombs was to be shared equally between the two *choachytes*. The way in which the *choachytes* were remunerated can be understood in more detail thanks to P. Turin 2121, a document drafted in abnormal hieratic on 8 December 618.²⁰⁴ This charity foundation deed drafted in favor of the temple of Osiris in Abydos determines the fate of a piece of land consisting of 10 arures (approximately 2.5 hectares) of “raised field—*nmh*” (*3h.t q3y.t nmh*). A small file composed of four

²⁰¹ K. Donker Van Heel, “Use and Meaning of the Egyptian Term *w3h-mw*,” in: *Village Voices. Proceedings of the Symposium “Texts from Deir el-Medina and their Interpretation,” Leiden, May 31–June 1, 1991*, R. Demarée & A. Egberts, eds. (Leiden, 1992), 19–30.

²⁰² K. Donker van Heel, *Abnormal hieratic and early demotic texts*, 21–23. Another, very limited file concerns the Memphite region; in this regard, see in particular K. Donker van Heel, “Papyrus Leiden I 379: the inheritance of the Memphite choachyte Imouthes,” *OMRO* 78 (1998), 33–57; C.A.R. Andrews, “Papyrus BM 10381: an inheritance of the Memphite choachytes,” in: *Res Severum verum gaudium. Festschrift für Karl-Theodor Zauzich zum 65. Geburtstag Am 8. Jun*, F. Hoffmann & H.J. Thissen, eds. (Leuven, 2004), 27–32, pl. 1.

²⁰³ K. Donker van Heel, *Abnormal hieratic and early demotic texts*, 197–209, n° 18.

²⁰⁴ M. Malinine, *Choix de textes juridiques en hiératique “anormal” et en démotique (XXV^e–XXVII^e dynasties)*, I (Paris, 1953), 117–124, n° XVIII.

texts allows us to follow its history.²⁰⁵ After having been transmitted for three generations within the same family, the land was acquired by a certain Peteise. His wife, Rer, subsequently decided to give it as a gift to the temple of Abydos. The contract specifies that these “donation fields” (*ʒh.w hnk*) will be made available to (*r-dr.t*) a *choachyte* and a group of “child servants” (*hm.w šry.w*) presumably in charge of the tomb of Peteise. This means that the agricultural produce of the field, or the rent paid by a future tenant, would serve as remuneration for the ceremonies performed at the tomb. We can speculate on why Rer used such a complex proceeding to remunerate those who were going to watch over the last sleep of her husband and, probably, her own. A direct donation of the land to the *choachytes* would have created a great risk that they would abandon their duties after her death. A donation to the god, with the temple as master of the land and guarantor of the performance of the funerary service, provided a solution for this possibility. It was therefore the temple that benefitted from the donation and that would perform the management and collect the rent to be paid to the *choachytes*, who thereby became *de facto* tenants of a piece of land that was part of the sacred domain of Osiris of Abydos and, as such, subject to a deduction in favor of the Sacred Offering. This document thus allows us to supplement our analysis of the donations phenomenon, this time with respect to individuals. It is clear that in the case of P.Louvre 7844, the donation made it possible, by introducing the temple as supervisor, to ensure the proper performance of the funerary service.²⁰⁶ However, this is an analysis of a gift made in a funerary context—a phenomenon also studied through epigraphic documentation²⁰⁷—which does not dispose of the question

²⁰⁵ S. Pernigotti, “Un nuovo testo giuridico in ieratico ‘anormale,’” *BIFAO* 75 (1975), 73–96, pl. XI–XII.

²⁰⁶ P. Louvre 7844 is thus the pendant on papyrus of texts on donation steles, in which the counterpart given in exchange is the establishment of offerings in favor of a beneficiary. For the Saite period, only the Stele of the Nilometre of Rodah (D. Meeks, “Les donations...”, in: *State and Temple Economy*, II, 651 n. 211 [26.0.0a] [but the date is uncertain]) is related to this type of donation. However, we call attention to a Libyan-era stele discovered in Dakhla (stele Ashmolean Mus. 1894/107b) mentioning a scribe establishing, in exchange for a donation of land to the local clergy, a regular offering of five loaves of bread in favor of his deceased father; D. Meeks, “Les donations...”, in: *State and Temple Economy*, II, 651 n. 212 (23.XV.24), to be supplemented with the bibliography provided by D. Meeks, *ENIM* 2 (2009), 148.

²⁰⁷ D. Meeks, “Les donations...”, in: *State and Temple Economy*, II, 651 concludes on the basis of this documentation that “private donations were intended essentially

of the significance of the private gifts. Generally speaking, we should reconsider this phenomenon by trying to determine the strategies for the management of private assets that they conceal.²⁰⁸

Giving access to land, or entitling the holder to an income, it is logical that the “possession” of a tomb would lead to disputes among the *choachytes*, disputes that could be resolved by the taking of an oath, as in P.Louvre 7848 in 559.²⁰⁹ Social control within these associations would have to be quite powerful in order for dishonest individuals, fearing retaliation by the group, to decide not to commit perjury. Moreover, in the Theban region the wording of these oaths underwent a very remarkable transformation. In the documents in abnormal hieratic, it was customary to swear on Amun and the Pharaoh. In the demotic wording, all reference to the Theban divinity was eliminated. It was as if—and it is impossible to say if this was the effect of political intention—Amun had, here again, lost ground.²¹⁰ It seems that the universe of the *choachytes* was characterized by great solidarity. They could thus be organized in a kind of guild (*swn.t*). P.Louvre 7380 presents the accounting report of an association of Theban *choachytes* for the years 542 to 538.²¹¹ The group is placed under the patronage of the god Amenhotep son of Hapu, and very probably meets once a month to share a festive meal in one of the “houses of the association” (*wy.w n swn.t*).²¹² The banquets, held at the start of the new year (col. IV recto) or for the feast of the divine patron (col. III recto), are also the occasion for the members to pay their dues, in silver, to the *representative of the association* (*rd n swn.t*). On the recto of column IIA there is an invocation addressed by the *choachytes* to the divine sponsor that allows us to reconstitute the hierarchy of the association.

The first reference is to a *chief* (*mr-mšc*), a term that could be translated as *general* but for the fact that the military meaning of this terms might mislead the reader. Unfortunately, this title is only very rarely

for funerary worship.” However, H. de Meulenaere rejects this conclusion, *RdÉ* 44 (1993), 15.

²⁰⁸ J.C. Moreno García in: *Travail de la terre et statut de la main-d’œuvre en Méditerranée archaïque, VIII^e–VII^e siècles*, J. Zurbach, ed. (in press).

²⁰⁹ K. Donker van Heel, *Abnormal hieratic and early demotic texts*, 93–94 [n° 4], 197–209 [n° 18].

²¹⁰ K. Donker van Heel, *Djekhy & Son*, 41.

²¹¹ K. Donker van Heel, *Abnormal hieratic and early demotic texts*, 143–168, n° 11.

²¹² K. Donker van Heel, *Abnormal hieratic and early demotic texts*, 165, note XXVII.

attested to elsewhere in the documentation. Are we to conclude from this that it was an essentially honorific position? The *chief of the association* would then be a kind of honorary president.²¹³ This chief is followed by a *lesonis* (*mr-šn*), in charge of financial management. It can be supposed that the same is true here and that this title is held by the treasurer of the association. The *lesonis* is mentioned together with a scribe (*sh*), probably an assistance in charge of entries. Strangely, the title that seems most important, that of *Agent for the necropolis* (*mr ḥꜣs.t*), appears in last position (l.8). In reality, this is because he is assigned to pronounce the invocation to the god. It is better to conclude, then, that it is this title-holder, assigned to address the divinity in the name of everyone, who manages the association. Ptolemaic-era sources show the *Agent for the necropolis* serving as intermediary between the community of the *choachytes* and the temple authorities, and supervising the collection and payment to the temple of the silver for the *Agent for the necropolis* (*ḥd n mr-ḥꜣs.t*), namely, the half a qite of silver paid by the *choachytes* for each mummy interred in the necropolis.²¹⁴ We could thus compare the fiscal role of the Ptolemaic *Agent for the necropolis* to that of the *leaders of the merchants* (*ḥry.w šwty.w*) of the port of Memphis mentioned in the text of the stèle of the Memphite foundation of Taharqa (JE 36861).²¹⁵ The merchants who worked there operated under supervisors tasked with collecting from them the oil allocated by the king to the temple of Amun. As in the necropolises, supervisors, certainly coming from the ranks of the merchants themselves, served as fiscal intermediaries between professionals who operated in the shadow of an institution (the temple or the port) and its managers (the priests or the king). However, no Saite-period document attests to the existence of this tax. On the other hand, a letter (P.

²¹³ K. Donker van Heel, *Abnormal hieratic and early demotic texts*, 24.

²¹⁴ M. Depauw, *The Archive of Teos and Thabis from Early Ptolemaic Thebes* (P.Brux. dem. inv. E. 8252–8256) (Turnhout, 2000), 64; S. Vleeming, “The Office of a Choachyte in the Theban Area”, in: *Hundred-Gated Thebes. Acts of a Colloquium on Thebes and the Theban Area in the Graeco-Roman Period*, S. Vleeming, ed. (PLBat 27; Leiden, 1995), 241–255, esp. 252–255 § 5 C–D; D. Devauchelle, “Notes sur l’organisation de l’administration funéraire égyptienne à l’époque gréco-romaine,” *BIFAO* 87 (1987), 141–160, pl. XXIII–XXV.

²¹⁵ D. Meeks, “Une fondation memphite de Taharqa (stèle du Caire JE 36861)”, in: *Hommages à la mémoire de Serge Sauneron*, I (Cairo, 1979), 221–259, esp. 249; S. Bickel, “Commerçants et bateliers au Nouvel Empire. Mode de vie et statut d’un groupe social,” in: *Le commerce en Egypte ancienne*, B. Menu & N. Grimal, eds. (Cairo, 1998), 157–172.

Louvre 7850) dated 533 and sent by the *agent for the necropolis* to a *divine father*, a certain Djekhy (who is not the Djekhy son of Iturodj mentioned above), helps us to better understand the links between the *Agent for the necropolis* and the temple authorities under the Saïtes.²¹⁶ In this text, the *Agent*, who very clearly acknowledges the *divine father* as “his superior” (*p3y=f hry*, l. 1.), acknowledges receipt of a red-haired bull (*ih tšr*) coming from the Sacred Offering of Amun. This animal replaces the “assets that are (customarily) delivered to the *Agent for the necropolis*” (*n3 nkt nty iw=w di.t s n p3 mr-h3s.t*). We must therefore suppose that the temple paid an income to the leaders of the guild of the *choachytes*.

From this rapid sketch of the economic administration of the temples during the Saïte period, we can draw an essential conclusion, even if any summary must always be viewed with caution, given the fragmentary nature of the sources available to us: in the shadow of the temples there prospered a middle class that profited from the shortage of institutional workers to take charge of land while at the same time developing small businesses, like that of the *choachytes*. The phenomenon fed itself. Small entrepreneurs like Djekhy and his son simultaneously operated a mortuary service business and leased fields for the cultivation of flax for the textile market. For this type of economic agent, the simplified cursive writing styles, like the demotic and the abnormal hieratic, constituted an indispensable tool for formalizing a multitude of minor business transactions involving both agriculture and services.²¹⁷ Thus it is not surprising that one of the oldest demotic documents known to us (March–April 657) is a copy on stone of a contract of sale of a tomb, entered into between the *Agent for the necropolis* Kayrau son of Ptahhotep and a laundry man named Padiamenope son of Pakem (Stele Louvre C 101).²¹⁸ Paradoxically, generally speaking, this ascendant social group seems to have been spared by the royal tax administration for a long time. A royal tax was not assessed against tenants of the temple lands until the Ptolemaic era.²¹⁹ Thus, while

²¹⁶ K. Donker van Heel, *Abnormal hieratic and early demotic texts*, 222–225, n° 22.

²¹⁷ D. Agut-Labordère, “‘La vache et les policiers’: pratique de l’investissement commercial dans l’Égypte tardive,” in: *Les transferts culturels et droits dans le monde grec et hellénistique*, B. Legras, ed. (Paris, 2012) pp. 269–281.

²¹⁸ M. Malinine, “Vente de tombes à l’époque saïte,” *RdÉ* 27 (1975), 164–174, [1 pl], esp. 170–171.

²¹⁹ G. Hughes, *Saïte Demotic Land Leases*, 4–5.

Herodotus is correct when he states that Amasis taxed the assets and the revenues of the Egyptians (II.177), this would mean that not until the end of the Saite period did the crown decide to tax the revenues and the assets of these individuals whose businesses flourished in the shadow of the temples.

CONCLUSION: THE DYNAMIC OF THE SAITE ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY

The reign of Psamtik I was devoted essentially to gaining control of the Egyptian territory. The warrior aristocracy of the Delta was conquered, and the bases for the integration of the Thebaid were laid down with the adoption of Nitocris by the Divine Adoratrice and with monitoring by royal agents of the activities of the temple of Amun. The Saite administration was then that of a monarchy resting on a strong aristocratic base; the notables of the kingdom played an active role in both the central decision-making bodies (*the council of nobles*) and also in the local administration (*the Leaders of the Fleet*). The positions they occupied had flexible boundaries and could be transmitted "from father to son." This was a patrimonial administration in which positions were managed as an asset within a single family or a clique. The period between the reigns of Nekau II and Apries marked the beginning of profound changes. In completing the conquest of the Thebaid, Psamtik II broke the back of the last major political entity capable of resisting the crown. Nekau II, Psamtik II, and Apries gave the monarchy a powerful military tool and began to develop a complex financial administration. The Saites thus gained in power domestically, while externally, toward the East, they failed, and the route to Palestine was closed to them by the Babylonians. Here we must be prudent and leave unanswered the question of the attitude of the Saite kings of the sixth century, and more particularly the attitude of Amasis in dealing with the Babylonians and then the Persians. Containment? Armed peace? The question is largely open. In any case, the combination of this domestic political success and this military semi-failure outside the country may explain the strange turn taken by Saite history during the reign of Amasis. As a confined power, the Saite monarchy then turned toward the Mediterranean, leaving behind the traditional routes of Egyptian imperialism. Giving up the idea of gaining a foothold in Palestine, Amasis took over Cyprus, and found allies in the Mediterranean world

in dealing with the Persian menace, which was becoming increasingly urgent. The price of this strategy was certainly very high: the cost of the construction, maintenance, and equipping of a military fleet by a country completely unprepared to play the role of a maritime power.

To finance this policy, the Saites benefitted from favorable economic conditions. The development of trade along what is usually called the incense route enabled Egypt to collect customs duties, an activity that required the development of an ad hoc administration and the availability of maritime resources in the eastern Mediterranean. On this point, the fleet made it possible to provide a portion of its financing. Domestically, better management of the crown domains is revealed by the appearance of certain titles, but it is another, more profound movement that allows us more safely to explain the prosperity of the late Saite period, mentioned by Herodotus: the development of small private businesses around the temples. The need for laborers to cultivate their lands, connected in part with the growing shortage of slave labor, forced the temples to lease their lands on a massive scale. The middle class, for which the *choachytes* were the witnesses, profited from this opportunity to gain access to income derived from land and in this way to increase their prosperity. This movement very certainly made it possible to strengthen the middle layer of Egyptian society, imparting more dynamism to the economy of the country thanks to an increase in domestic demand (whence the development of market cities like Naucratis), but also an increase in its agricultural production capacities. Apparently, however, it was not until the end of the period that the Saite kings, and specifically Amasis, understood the importance of taxing individuals. Thus, while the Saite pharaoh was a warrior king, he was also a tax-collector ruler who endeavored to capture some of the trade exchanges and to derive benefit from the flowering of the intermediary categories. To summarize all this in a few words: Basically, the general and the manager were the key figures of the Saite administration.