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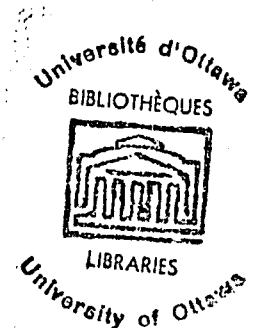
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The Reign of Kambyases:
Some Areas of Controversy

Thesis submitted by
Cindy L. Nimchuk
for the requirements of the degree 'Master of Arts'
University of Ottawa
Ottawa, Canada

Supervisor: Professor R. Develin



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Preface

The topic of Kambyes piqued my interest a few years ago, and I am glad of the opportunity to begin exploring it further; the exploration will be a life-long project.

I particularly want to thank the following people: Barbara, for always being ready to listen (only another candidate can really understand the aggravations and triumphs of writing a thesis); Catherine, for her continual support and invaluable help on the computer; Claudiane and Dr. Yardley, for allowing me night and day access to the department Macintosh; Celeste Peters, for getting me access to the best collection of Near Eastern books in Canada; and Bob, for stimulating my mind with his arguments and for enduring (with a smile) my constant interruptions, questions, and split infinitives.

This thesis is dedicated
to all those who helped me get this far

Thank you

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Primary Sources: I have listed the Near Eastern and Egyptian sources used (in translation) under the surname of the translator/editor. The various editions of the Greek and Latin texts used are as follows:

OCT:

Herodotos, Diogenes Laertius, Aischylos

Teubner:

Justin's epitome of Trogus

LCL:

Plutarch, *Moralia*, Plutarch, various *Lives*, Strabo, Josephus, Q. Curtius Rufus, Euripides, Diodorus

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Müller, C., 1975, *Fragmenta Historicum Graecorum*, vol. 1, [reprint, 1841¹] Frankfurt (Xanthos fr. 28)

Budé:

Cornelius Nepos

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Journal abbreviations follow *L'Année Philologique*, with the following exceptions, which use the abbreviations from the Achaemenid History Workshops, for which see vol. III, *Achaemenid History: Method and Theory*

AAntHung	Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae
AJSL	American Journal of Semitic Languages
IRAN	Iran. Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies in Teheran
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JCS	Journal of Cuneiform Studies
JEA	Journal of Egyptian Archaeology
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JRAS	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society
TPhS	Transactions of the Philological Society

ANET: see Pritchard

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Introduction

Kambyzes, the son of Kyros the Great, was king of the Persian empire from 530-522 BC. He had a relatively short reign when compared with his predecessor and successor—Kyros had ruled for approximately 30 years, and Dareios I reigned for 36 years, compared with Kambyzes' eight-year kingship. Yet Kambyzes was important: he succeeded his father as king of a wide-flung empire, he maintained that empire, and in addition he annexed Egypt to it.

Unfortunately there is not a large body of evidence for Kambyzes' activities. Herodotos is the main classical source; he included a treatment of the reigns of Kyros, Kambyzes, and Dareios in his history of the Persian Wars. He had travelled widely, and may have spoken a bit of the Persian language. Much of the information he presents on Persia probably came from Greek sources, although he may have had Persian sources for episodes such as the conspiracy of the Seven. He provides a wealth of details, not all of which are accurate, but he is generally considered reliable in that one can find a historical basis underneath the exaggerations of oral tradition and legend which he passed on from his sources. Still, there are pieces of information about Kambyzes which Herodotos is missing, and details which are contradicted by other sources. Herodotos 'immortalized' Kambyzes, devoting a substantial portion of his Book Three to his reign, but the portrayal shows him as a tyrant and madman, a characterization which we will see to be highly questionable¹.

The other major classical source, Ktesias, is, aside from a few fragments, available only in the form of an epitome done by the Byzantine scholar Photios in the ninth century. Ktesias was a doctor by profession, who practised at the court of Artaxerxes II for at least 17 years. His *Persika* was

¹ See Cook 1983: 15-20; Cook 1985: 201-205; Young 1988: 5-6. Young's statement that Herodotos should be used with different "levels of confidence" [p. 5] is particularly relevant when using Herodotos as a source for Persian history, since a good portion of his information would have been in the form of stories from old 'eyewitnesses' or passed down through an oral or written tradition. Thus, one must be cautious in giving Herodotos the benefit of the doubt at all times and in all cases.

quite popular, and was used by both Diodoros and Plutarch. Despite Ktesias' claim that his information came from eyewitnesses, from his own observations, or from Persian documents, the details in the epitome tend to be inaccurate or downright wrong (such as his belief that the Behistun Inscription was actually a monument of the legendary Semiramis). But we must not lose sight of the fact that what we possess is an epitome which reveals as much or more about the epitomator's tastes in reading material as it does about Ktesias' information².

Neither Herodotos nor Ktesias provide evidence for the entire span of Kambyzes' life. The Near Eastern and Egyptian sources for Kambyzes add information not available in the classical sources, and also provide evidence which contradicts the classical authors; thus, a more complete picture can be acquired. Achaemenid scholarship of the last ten years has focused on the use of all of these sources in order to increase understanding of that important time in history³.

Little is known of the early years of Kambyzes. Herodotos and Ktesias provide a few clues as to where Kambyzes may have been before he became king; for the most part, though, we must rely on textual evidence from the Near East (e.g., the Nabonidus Chronicle) for information on the period before his kingship.

There is more information available for the years when Kambyzes was king of the empire. A number of events from this period have generated scholarly controversy and inquiry, among them the marriages of Kambyzes. The only direct reference to these marriages is in Herodotos, who claims that Kambyzes married two of his own sisters, and that he was the first Persian king to do so. Many scholars have postulated solutions as to why Kambyzes did this, but unfortunately there has not been an in-depth study on this topic. Evidence from various Mediterranean and Near Eastern cultures suggests that close-kin marriages were not unheard of, especially amongst powerful families, and it is possible that Kambyzes simply married his sisters because it was a politically expedient way of limiting access to the throne.

² Cook 1983: 21-23; Cook 1985: 205-206. Young [1988: 5] does not discuss Ktesias in detail, but merely includes him in the category of "Less important secondary and later sources".

³ For an up-to-date bibliography, see Young 1988; Dandamaev 1989 has a more up-to-date and specialized bibliography.

The event for which Kambyzes is, perhaps, most famous is his invasion of Egypt; most of the information in Herodotos concerns Kambyzes' time in Egypt, the reasons for the campaign, the sacrileges he committed while in Egypt, and his 'madness'. Ktesias is another source from the classical sphere, but there are also important Egyptian sources which shed some light on this area, and which contradict the stories in Herodotos. It seems that most of Herodotos' information on Kambyzes' sojourn in Egypt came from a hostile Egyptian tradition (possibly originating amongst the priesthood); yet the Egyptian sources indicate that the tales of sacrilege and madness were very twisted or totally false. Kambyzes may not have been the madman he is made out to be.

The classical sources, as well as the Behistun Inscription of Dareios, are unanimous in claiming that Kambyzes murdered his brother Smerdis/Bardiya. Yet a close look at the sources indicates that this is questionable; the stories of the murder contain a number of folk-tale elements which lend doubt to their veracity. And it must be kept in mind that the Behistun Inscription is the propaganda of the man who won the leadership of the empire—it is not an unbiased source.

The stories of the death of Kambyzes also raise some questions. There are certain elements which are common to the classical sources, such as a wound to the thigh, but the details vary enough to suggest that there is more to his death. And problems in the understanding of the Old Persian phrase (in the Behistun Inscription) used to describe Kambyzes' death raise more questions: Was it suicide? Murder? An accident? The sources do not offer a clear solution.

It is important, when working in an area such as Graeco-Persian history, to be aware that there are sources from other disciplines which can, if not offer clear-cut solutions, at least open up other possibilities. Herodotos and Ktesias are well-known classical sources, yet they too must be examined in the light of other sources; it cannot be taken for granted that they are faultless. The degree of their reliability is a matter inherent in the study which follows.

Chapter One: 'The Pre-Kingship Years'

Unfortunately, there is little evidence for Kambyases' activities before he conquered Egypt. The evidence which does exist tends to be fragmentary and/or tantalizingly indefinite. The sources are both literary and archaeological, both Greek and Near Eastern; an amalgamation of the sources may yield a tentative chronology, and shed some light on this otherwise dark period in Kambyases' life and reign.

Herodotos contributes bits and pieces of the puzzle. He mentions the death of Kassandane (wife of Kyros and mother of Kambyases) while Kyros is still living, and the public mourning proclaimed in her honour [2.1.1]. Presumably Kambyases would have taken part in any ceremonies relating to her death and burial, but Herodotos does not specifically state this. The date of Kassandane's death, however, is not supplied by Herodotos, and cannot be deduced from the context, which concerns the accession of Kambyases to the throne after Kyros' death [1.213-214, 2.1]; therefore, it is only of minimal help for the chronology of Kambyases (but see further below).

According to Herodotos, Kambyases was appointed as his father's successor [1.208]; Herodotos elsewhere states that the Persian kings must choose an heir before leaving on campaign [7.2.1], but he does not specify whether Kyros began this custom. Since the information about Kambyases' appointment immediately follows upon Kyros' decision to attack the Massagetai, Kyros may have appointed Kambyases as his heir shortly before he set out on his campaign, possibly on the eve of the battle against the Massagetai. This is not explicitly stated, however, and one wonders at the reason for naming a successor, when that successor also goes on the expedition—for Kambyases was with Kyros, at the Axares river, just before the fatal battle [1.208]: Kyros entrusted Kroisos to Kambyases, urged him to treat Kroisos well if anything should go wrong with the campaign, and then

he sent them both back to Persia¹. All that can definitely be extracted is that Kambyes was at some point named as Kyros' successor, that he went campaigning with Kyros against the Massagetai, and that Kyros sent him back before the final battle took place.

Kambyes inherited the kingship from Kyros in 530 BC² [2.1.1], but again, Herodotos has few indications of what Kambyes was doing between his ascent and the campaign against Egypt in 525 BC³. He must have been preparing for the expedition, but all Herodotos says is that he was making an expedition against Egypt, and was including Ionians and Aiolians among his troops [2.1.2]; what preparations had been made and how long they took are not mentioned. H.T. Wallinga has postulated that there was, in effect, no Persian fleet in existence when Kambyes became king; that the Egyptian navy was, in contrast, a strong and well-established institution; that Persian coastal holdings in the Mediterranean were threatened by this strong Egyptian fleet; that Kambyes built up a fleet which probably used Phoinikian rowers; and that this was the fleet he used in his campaign against Egypt⁴. Such an endeavour would certainly account for some of the undocumented years of Kambyes' reign.

At some point after he became king, Kambyes married two of his sisters⁵. Herodotos says that Kambyes asked the royal judges if there was a law allowing a man to marry his sister; they replied that there was no such law, but that there was a law allowing the king to do whatever he wanted [3.31.3-4]. Kambyes then married two of his sisters and took one of them with him to Egypt. This places the marriages in the period between his accession and the Egyptian campaign, but the specific time is not given.

Another tale concerning Kambyes and the royal judges seems to fall within this same period. These royal judges, according to Herodotos, were specially chosen, and were appointed for life; their

¹ The imperfect in the phrase τῷ περ τὴν βασιλείην ἔδιδου may indicate that Kyros was appointing Kambyes as his successor at the time indicated by Herodotos, i.e., the night before the battle. A more likely way of phrasing the event, since Kambyes may have already been the heir-apparent, is that Kyros was sending Kambyes back as his regent to run the kingdom while Kyros was on campaign (a stewardship, or 'power-of-attorney', as it were).

² Dubberstein 1938: 417; Parker/Dubberstein 1946: 11-12; Olmstead 1948: 87.

³ See Atkinson 1956: 168 nn. 12-13.

⁴ Wallinga 1987: 47-77.

⁵ See below, chapter 2.

job was to interpret the laws and judge cases [3.31.3]. The only exception to the life-long term was when a judge was convicted for some offense, as in the case of Sisamnes [5.25]. He was executed by Kambyzes because he was convicted for having been bribed; Sisamnes was flayed, and the strips of his skin were stretched over his court chair. Kambyzes then made Otanes, the son of Sisamnes, a judge in place of his father, and he warned him to keep in mind the chair he was sitting on when he made his judgements.⁶ Whether or not the details of the tale are true, the story shows that Kambyzes was concerning himself with the judicial system of the country, and stepping in when the situation seemed serious enough to warrant it.

In addition, a comment at 3.89.3, that Kyros and Kambyzes had not set any fixed rates of tribute, but had required 'gifts' from subject peoples, shows that while Kambyzes was king, administrative aspects of the government continued as under Kyros⁷; the passage is so indefinite, however, that it does not yield much specific information on Kambyzes' activities.

The other major Greek source for Kambyzes, Ktesias, is even less helpful, although he does supply some information which Herodotos lacks. According to Ktesias, Kambyzes and Tanyoxarkes⁸ accompanied Kyros on his last campaign, which Ktesias says was against the Derbekes, not the Massagetai as in Herodotos [1.201 ff.]. Kyros was mortally wounded, but lived long enough to bequeath the kingship to Kambyzes [§ 8]. Kambyzes then sent Kyros' body, in the care of Bagapates the eunuch, back to Persia for burial [§ 9]. The narrative then jumps to Kambyzes' expedition against Egypt, leaving five years unaccounted for—one wonders what gems have been lost through epitomization, and what Ktesias may have actually said about this period.

Both Herodotos and Ktesias agree that Kambyzes accompanied Kyros on his final campaign, despite the differences in details. Ktesias, however, adds the information that Kambyzes had Kyros buried, a fact which Herodotos does not mention⁹. It is interesting that Photios' epitome claims that

⁶ In this case, the term of office was still life-long, but it was a shorter life and term than expected.

⁷ See Herzfeld 1968: 283; but see Dandamaev/Lukonin 1989: 177ff., who find that there were taxes collected, but that they were not based on solid calculations of the amounts specific areas were capable of producing. See also Dandamaev 1985: 94.

⁸ Smerdis/Bardiya, Kyros' younger son; see below, chapter 4.

⁹ Arrian 6.29; Dandamaev 1976: 104 n.421.

Kambyzes *sent* (ἀπέστειλε) the body to Persia, escorted by a eunuch; clearly this indicates that Kambyzes did not return to Persia with the body. If that is the case, where did he go, and for what reason? Herodotos and Ktesias are frustratingly silent on that point¹⁰.

Archaeology has also supplied an interesting piece of information: at some point in his reign, Kambyzes began work on a residence at Dasht-i Gohar and a tomb (unfinished) called Takht-i Rustam, both of which were relatively close to the site which would later become Persepolis¹¹. The fact that the tomb was unfinished could indicate that work on it was only begun shortly before Kambyzes left for Egypt; this, however, is speculation.

The Near Eastern sources add some clues as to Kambyzes' activities and whereabouts before the death of Kyros. The Nabonidus Chronicle and the Cyrus Cylinder both record the fall of Babylon to Kyros in 539 BC¹². The Chronicle outlines important events in and relating to Babylon, beginning with the kingship of Nabonidus. The tablet on which it is written is broken, and consequently the full extent of the Chronicle is unknown; it does, however, continue to some point after the fall of Babylon¹³. The Cyrus Cylinder deals specifically with Kyros' capture of Babylon, and appears somewhat to be a work of propaganda aimed at showing Nabonidus in the worst possible light, and making Kyros into a hero for rescuing Babylon from him¹⁴.

The Chronicle records that Kyros entered Babylon on the 3rd day of the month Arahsamnu in Nabonidus' 17th year of rule (= 29 October 539 BC)¹⁵. On the 11th of Arahsamnu (= 6 November 539 BC), Ugbaru (Kyros' general) died [l. 22]. The Chronicle then records the death of the king's wife [ll. 22-24]¹⁶; unfortunately, the month and date of her death are missing, but the period of

¹⁰ Dandamaev 1989: 71, suggests that Kambyzes may have tried to restrain the Sakas (Massagetai) in the north, and notes that the sources say nothing about this. The comment that Kambyzes sent the body of Kyros back to Persia could be all that is left of the fact that he *did* stay in the north to settle the situation there.

¹¹ Porada 1985: 801-802; Cook 1983: 34; see further below, chapter 5.

¹² For dating see Dubberstein 1938: 417 + n.1.

¹³ See Grayson 1975: 21-22 for a synopsis, and 109-111 for the relevant section of text, with translation and commentary; also *ANET* 1966: 305-307.

¹⁴ See *ANET* 1966: 315-316 for the relevant portion of the translation of the Cylinder.

¹⁵ Line 18; Grayson 1975: 21-22; *ANET* 1966: 306.

¹⁶ The Chronicle does not specifically state which king; however, since Kyros has just taken the city, and since it is Kyros' general who has died just previous to the mention of the king's wife, it is likely that the king referred to in this instance is also Kyros.

mourning in her honour took place from the 27th of the month Addaru to the 3rd of the month Nisannu (= 21-26 March 538 BC). Dandamaev feels that this wife must be Kassandane, as Herodotos related (see above), and that her death occurred shortly after that of Ugbaru, as she is mentioned immediately afterwards¹⁷.

Kambyzes must have been present in Babylon at that time, because the Chronicle, after stating the dates of the mourning period, immediately continues the narrative: "On the fourth day when Cambyzes (II), son of Cyrus, went" Clearly this is to mean 'on the 4th day of Nisannu', since the mourning period continued until the 3rd day of Nisannu [ll. 23-24]. At this point, the text becomes damaged and fragmentary. As a result, the exact reason for the mention of Kambyzes is not known.

A.L. Oppenheim has offered a restoration of the text¹⁸, in which Kambyzes went to the É.NÍG.PA.KALAM.MA.SUM.MU temple (= the "Temple-in-which-is-given-the-sceptre-for-the-entire-country"¹⁹) on the 4th of Nisannu in order to take part in a type of 'coronation' ceremony. Kambyzes was dressed in full Elamite²⁰ regalia, and he was not allowed to continue the ceremony until his weapons (spears and quivers) had been taken away. Thereupon the ceremony continued, the god Nabu went to Esagila, and Kambyzes prostrated himself before the god Bel and the son of Bel. It is generally thought that this ceremony was part of the New Year's festival (the *akitu* festival) which took place in the month of Nisannu and lasted for eleven or twelve days²¹. There is a discrepancy, in that according to a document from the Seleucid era²², the king does not take part in this ceremony until the 5th day, whereas the Chronicle seems to indicate that Kambyzes took part in

¹⁷ Dandamaev 1989: 47, 56; M. Boyce 1984: 67-71 for Kassandane's possible tomb. Diodoros [1.33.1] says that the mother of Kambyzes was Meroe, for whom he named the city in Egypt; this is not credited, or even discussed, by scholars today. There is also a tradition that it was Kambyzes' sister who was named Meroe (Eusebius *Chronotopon* 160.23, Josephus *Jud. Ant.* 2.249; Libanius *Or.* 11.59 calls her Kambyzes' wife).

¹⁸ Oppenheim 1985: 554-558.

¹⁹ Oppenheim 1985: 555.

²⁰ The various readings of l. 26 render different results—either Kambyzes was dressed in Elamite clothing, or a weaving motion was made with handles; see Grayson 1975: 111 + note on iii26.

²¹ Olmstead 1948: 86; Dandamaev 1989: 56-57; for the festival see G. Roux 1986: 365-369, and *ANET* 1966: 331-334.

²² *ANET* 1966: 331-334.

the ceremony on the 4th day. In addition, the temple listed in the section with Kambyes is not the same as the temple listed in the section dealing with Nabonidus, or in the Seleucid document.

The Chronicle reports that Nabonidus had stayed in Tema from his 7th year to at least his 11th year, and that the *akitu* festival did not take place, but that the proper offerings for the gods of Babylon and Borsippa had been made [col. ii.5-25]. The section of the text dealing with the 12th-15th years and most of the 16th year is missing. For the 17th year of Nabonidus, the Chronicle records that the king came to the É.TÛR.KALAM.MA temple, and that the New Year's festival was performed "as in normal times"²³. In contrast, the section mentioning Kambyes seems to include unusual details. Oppenheim contends that the chronicler would not have gone into such detail regarding Kambyes unless something unusual had happened²⁴; his belief is that Kambyes deliberately meant to insult the Babylonian religion and therefore came to the ceremony dressed in inappropriate attire, which had to be changed before the ceremony could proceed. While Oppenheim's hypothesis may be valid, the state of the text seems too fragmentary to determine anything more than that Kambyes took part in a ceremony in Babylon which was probably related to the New Year's festival.

Kambyes is also mentioned in the text of the Cyrus Cylinder. After the section concerning the wickedness of Nabonidus, and how wonderful Kyros was, the narrative switches to the 1st-person, and 'Kyros' gives his own version of the events. He relates his accomplishment in overcoming Nabonidus and 'liberating' Babylon, and then says: "Marduk, the great lord, was well pleased with my deeds and sent friendly blessings to myself, Cyrus, the king who worships him, to Cambyes, my son, the offspring of [my] loins, as well as to all my troops" Later in the text, Kyros asks: "May all the gods whom I have resettled in their sacred cities ask daily Bel and Nebo for a long life for me and may they recommend me (to him); to Marduk, my lord, they may say this: 'Cyrus, the king who worships you, and Cambyes, his son,...'"²⁵. Clearly Kyros has given an important role

²³ Grayson 1975: col.iii.8.

²⁴ Oppenheim 1985: 555.

²⁵ *ANET* 1966: 316.

to Kambyes in this document. This may be an indication that Kyros already considered Kambyes to be his successor. And since both the Chronicle and the Cylinder place Kambyes in Babylon shortly after its capture, it is likely that he was campaigning with Kyros.

There are also a number of business and administrative texts which pertain to the period before the Egyptian campaign. Eight documents bear the date of "first year of Cambyes, king of Babylon, the son of Cyrus, king of the lands" or "the first year of Cambyes, king of Babylon, while Cyrus, his father, is king of the lands"²⁶. Another document has the date "first year of Cyrus, king of the lands, and of Cambyes, king of Babylon"²⁷. These nine documents cover a range of seven months (the 2nd to 9th months) during the 'first' year of both Kambyes and Kyros. In addition, there are 20 documents dated by "the first year of Cambyes, king of Babylon"²⁸. These 29 texts are to be distinguished from those which refer to Kambyes as "king of Babylon, king of lands" or simply as "king of lands"—titles which refer to his exclusive rule after Kyros' death. Thus it would appear that Kambyes was installed as king of Babylon while Kyros was still alive, in fact probably just after the capture of Babylon in 539 BC. This would fit well with the prominent mentions of Kambyes in both the Nabonidus Chronicle and the Cyrus Cylinder.

This theory has produced some controversy amongst scholars. Dubberstein²⁹ contends that the Greek sources indicate that Kyros made Kambyes his successor before the battle in which he died. Therefore, since the texts with the double-dated formulas only occur in the 'first' year of Kambyes, he must have become king of Babylon at the New Year's festival of 530 BC and not in 538 BC. Confusion among the scribes would account for the variations in the dating formulas, some using Kyros, some Kambyes, and some both; one scribe, according to Dubberstein, was so confused that,

²⁶ Dandamaev 1989: 58. The relevant references are Dandamaev 1989: 58-59; Dubberstein 1938: 417-419; Parker/Dubberstein 1946: 12; San Nicolò 1941: 51-54; Dandamaev 1976: 99-102. Mrs. Celeste Peters translated a few of the cuneiform dates for me, and agreed with the translations given by Dandamaev.

²⁷ Dandamaev 1989: 58.

²⁸ Dubberstein 1938: 418; Dandamaev 1989: 58.

²⁹ 1938: 417-419; cf. also Parker/Dubberstein 1941: 12.

several months after Kyros' death, he dated a document as "*year one, accession year* of Cambyses, king of Babylon and lands"³⁰.

But Herodotos and Ktesias do not state that Kambyes was appointed heir before Kyros' last battle. As noted above, Herodotos says that Kambyes was appointed, but he does not say specifically when. The assumption that the appointment came just before the campaign is not surprising, given that the fact is mentioned in the midst of the campaign narrative³¹. However, the structure of Herodotos' narrative has the capture of Babylon immediately followed by the assertion that Kyros next desired to march against the Massagetai, and then by the preparations for the expedition [1.201ff.]; this compresses the nine years between Babylon and Kyros' death into a very short space. In fact, because of the structure of the narrative, the period after the capture of Babylon *is* the period before the battle. Ktesias only relates that Kyros, on his death-bed, bequeathed the kingship to Kambyes; he does not say that Kambyes was made co-ruler before that last conflict.

San Nicolò³² has shown that some of the texts dated to the first year of Kambyes, in which he is called only "king of Babylon", must fall into the period immediately after 539 BC. These texts name Marduk-šumu-iddina as the priest of Sippar, and his term of office ran from the 15th year of Nabonidus to the 7th year of Kyros; Bêl-uballiṣ was priest from the 8th year of Kyros to the end of Kambyes' reign (522 BC). Therefore, according to San Nicolò, the kingship of Kambyes in Babylon must have begun in 538 BC, and lasted approximately nine months³³. The documents pertaining to this double-kingship are only found in Babylon and the surrounding area (i.e., the north of Mesopotamia); in the southern areas (e.g., Nippur and Uruk) documents were dated only with the year of Kyros. This indicates that Kambyes' sphere of influence was only Babylon and its surroundings.

³⁰ Dubberstein 1938: 419.

³¹ See above, n.1.

³² 1941: 51-54.

³³ 1941: 51-53.

In an effort to reconcile these two conflicting interpretations, A. T. Olmstead³⁴ claimed that Kyros left Kambyzes in Babylon to act as a substitute for him in the New Year's festival; Kambyzes was duly made king of Babylon on the 4th of Nisannu (as proxy) and the next day he took the king's traditional role in the festival. However, since Kambyzes was only representing his father, he did not use the title "king of Babylon"; it was only when Kyros had made Kambyzes his regent that Kyros allowed him to use this title. Thus, the documents dated by the double formula refer to the period after March 530 BC, and the Nabonidus Chronicle records the participation of Kyros in the New Year's festival by means of his son Kambyzes.

Modern opinions are that Kambyzes was made king of Babylon in 538 BC, and removed from office shortly thereafter³⁵. From a document dated to the 2nd day of Adar, in the third year of Kyros, king of Babylon, king of lands (= 20 February 535 BC³⁶), it is known that Kambyzes' chief steward had his house in Sippar (approximately 50 miles north of Babylon); moreover, a messenger of the "King's Son" is documented as being in Sippar on 10 August 534 BC; another messenger of Kambyzes was a witness in March/April of 532, and later that same year the "headman of Kambyzes, the King's Son" received a loan from a banker in Babylon³⁷. It would appear, then, that after the capture of Babylon Kambyzes spent some, if not all, of his time in the northern area of Mesopotamia.

The evidence certainly supports the conclusion that Kambyzes played some prominent role in Babylon: he is mentioned by Kyros on the Cylinder, he took part in some important ceremony during the New Year's festival of 538, there are documents showing him as "king of Babylon" while Kyros is the "king of lands", and others which imply his continued presence in the Babylon-Sippar area in the 530s. The weight of the evidence points to Kambyzes being installed as king of Babylon in 538 BC. However, there are some problems with this: Why only nine months of rule? Why was

³⁴ 1948: 86-87.

³⁵ Dandamaev 1989: 58-59, who says that the reason for the removal of Kambyzes is still unknown; Oppenheim 1985: 558-559, claims that the reason was Kambyzes' behaviour and opinions, in that he was religiously intolerant; Cook 1983: 32, follows Oppenheim. Young 1988: 47-48, notes that Kambyzes was "effectively king of Babylon" for a brief time during the early part of Kyros' rule over Babylon. He sees no indication of any wrong-doing on Kambyzes' part, but does not offer a suggestion for the brevity of his appointment over Babylon.

³⁶ Olmstead 1948: 87; San Nicolò/Ungnad 1963: 27-28.

³⁷ Olmstead 1948: 87.

he removed from office (if he ~~was~~ removed)? If he was removed, why did he maintain a presence in the northern area, instead of going somewhere else? Until more information arises, the questions will have to remain unanswered.

From these various sources a tentative chronology can be worked out for Kambyases' activities in the years before the Egyptian expedition:

29 October 539	Kyros enters Babylon; Kambyases is with the army (?)
6 November 539	Ugbaru, Kyros' general, dies
between 6 Nov 539 and 20 Mar 538	
	Wife of Kyros dies (Kassandane?)
21-26 March 538	Mourning for wife of Kyros; Kambyases still in Babylon (?)
27 March 538	Kambyases in Babylon, takes part in ceremony (coronation? New Year's festival?)
Mar - Dec 538	Kambyases is king of Babylon (?); heir-apparent (?)
530s	Kambyases maintains presence in Babylon-Sippar area
summer (?) 530	Kyros dies fighting Massagetai (= Sakas); Kambyases is exclusive king of Persian empire
autumn 530 - spring 525 (order of events unknown)	
	Kambyases marries two of his own sisters
	Kambyases begins work on palace and tomb
	Kambyases prepares for expedition against Egypt
	Kambyases active in judicial matters (as necessary)
	No reform of tribute established by Kyros; however probably continues to be collected as under Kyros
spring 525	Egypt

Chapter Two: "The Marriages of Kambyzes"

Sometime during the 5-year period between 530/29 and 525 BC, Kambyzes took at least two wives¹. As Herodotos indicates, the unusual aspect about this was that these wives were two of Kambyzes' own sisters. Herodotos credits Kambyzes with this innovation, saying that it had not previously been customary for Persian men to marry their sisters.

As this is the only clear reference to Kambyzes' marriages, it will be useful to examine the passage in Herodotos more closely. To begin with, the passage is located in the midst of a list of crimes of which Kambyzes was accused. Herodotos relates that shortly after Kambyzes returned to Memphis from his abortive expedition to Nubia (= Aithiopia, in Herodotos), the god Apis appeared to the Egyptians in the form of a bull [3.27.1]. This resulted in a great celebration; Kambyzes, however, thought that the Egyptians were celebrating his own misfortunes [3.27.2]. When he was informed of the significance of the Apis, he was at first unbelieving, and had the city officials, who had told him of the calf, executed for lying [3.27.2-3]. When the priests also proclaimed the calf's divine status, he had the calf brought to him and, being somewhat insane, he tried to stab the beast in the stomach, but missed and struck it in the thigh; he then ridiculed the Apis, saying that such a god was worthy of the Egyptians. After this, Kambyzes had the priests whipped, and then stopped the celebration, ordering death for anyone caught celebrating. The calf eventually died from its wound and was buried by the priests without Kambyzes' knowledge [3.28.1-29.3].

Herodotos goes on to say that Kambyzes had not been totally sane even before this event; the Egyptians, however, were sure that he completely lost his mind as a consequence of killing the Apis

¹ Herodotos only gives information on two of Kambyzes' marriages. Given the polygamous nature of royal marriages in the ancient Near East, it is possible that Kambyzes also had other wives of whom there is no extant evidence.

calf [3.30.1]. Once Herodotos has shown the impiety of Kambyes through this tale, he continues with the list of crimes committed by Kambyes. The first crime was the murder of his brother Smerdis² [3.30.1-3]; the second crime against his family was the murder of the sister who was with Kambyes in Egypt [3.31.1-32.4]. Thus Herodotos has set the stage—Kambyes is mad, and compared with the momentous crimes he has committed, the marriages are only minor episodes, but ones which highlight his 'obvious' impiety and instability.

At this point, in the midst of the story about the murder of Kambyes' sister, Herodotos inserts the information on Kambyes' marriages. We are told that the sister whom Kambyes killed in Egypt was his full sister, and that she was also his wife. Herodotos claims that it had never previously been a custom for Persians to live with their sisters as husband and wife [3.31.1-2]. Kambyes, according to Herodotos, had fallen in love with one of his sisters³ and wanted to marry her. Since this was not a customary event, he summoned the royal judges and asked them if there was a law/custom (νόμος) which enjoined a man to marry his sister if the man so desired [3.31.2]. Among other things, these judges were interpreters of the laws (θεσμοί); when asked about this situation, they answered in a way that was both true and safe—they said that they had found no law which enjoined a brother to marry his sister, but that they *had* discovered a law which permitted the king of the Persians to do whatever he wanted [3.31.3-4]. In this way they were able to please the king (thus saving their own lives), and still adhere to the law. So Kambyes married the sister he loved. A short time later he also married another sister; she was the younger of the two, and the one whom Kambyes killed in Egypt [3.31.5-6]. Herodotos then continues the story of her death in Egypt, of which there were two accounts; in both Kambyes was held responsible for her death [3.32]⁴.

² See below, chapter 4.

³ We are not told her name at this point, but by elimination it must be Atossa: Herodotos says that, of the two sisters that Kambyes married, the younger went with him to Egypt and died there [3.31.6]; Atossa is later named as the sister and wife of "Smerdis", who had taken over the wives and concubines of Kambyes [3.68.4]; and she is also called the daughter of Kyros and the former wife of both her brother Kambyes and the magos [3.88.2]. The only other daughter of Kyros mentioned by Herodotos is Artystone, who was a virgin when Dareios I married her [3.88.2]. See also above, chapter 1, n.17.

⁴ See below, chapter 3.

The account of Kambyases' marriages in Herodotos is interesting both for what it says, and for what it does not say. First of all, the story provides a general time-frame for the marriages. When the royal judges give Kambyases their answer on the possibility of a brother-sister marriage, they cite a law which allows the *king* to do whatever he wants [3.31.4]. And we should expect that, had the marriages occurred while Kyros was still alive, he would have been included in the story, since Kambyases would probably have needed his permission. Therefore, the marriages must have taken place after Kyros' death in 530 BC. We also know that the marriages took place before Kambyases left for Egypt in 525 BC; Herodotos states that Kambyases married both sisters within a short period [3.31.6], and that he took the younger of the two with him to Egypt [3.31.1, 31.6]. Although the explanation of the marriages is placed within the narrative of Kambyases' sojourn in Egypt, the marriages did not take place there; Herodotos would surely have mentioned it if they had occurred in Egypt. And, since Kambyases only took one sister to Egypt, how could he have married the other sister first *after* he was in Egypt? If by proxy, would that not have been included in the story? Perhaps not, but it is much simpler logistically to have the marriages occur before the expedition to Egypt. Thus, the marriages took place between autumn 530 BC and spring 525 BC. Herodotos does not provide any other information which could further narrow the range.

Herodotos places great emphasis on the unusualness of the marriages; immediately following the statement that Kambyases killed the sister who went with him to Egypt, he comments that she was both Kambyases' *wife* and his *full sister* [literally: his sister from both <parents>, 3.31.1]. Herodotos' information on the degree of kinship between Kambyases and the elder sister, Atossa, is, however, sparse; Atossa is only called Kambyases' sister, not his full sister. She is known to be the daughter of Kyros [3.88.2, 133.1; 7.2.2, 2.3, 64.2], so at the very least, she was Kambyases' half-sister. Because of the prominent role in the Persian court which Herodotos assigns to Atossa as the daughter of Kyros, wife of Dareios, and mother of Xerxes [3.68, 88, 133-134; 7.2-3, 64, 82], it is

likely that she too was the daughter of Kassandane, the mother of Kambyes [2.1.1, 3.2.2]⁵. Thus, the sisters Kambyes married were probably both his full sisters⁶.

It is also interesting that Kambyes only took one sister-wife to Egypt, and that was the younger one. What about Atossa? She was still in Persia, and according to Herodotos, she was at the palace in Susa when Otanes was inquiring about the magos [3.68; for the location at Susa, 3.70]. Why did Kambyes leave her behind? Herodotos claims that Kambyes had left a magos, Patizeithes, as chief steward [3.61]⁷, so Atossa was not left in charge of the empire or palace. The reason for her remaining in Persia will probably never be known, but there is one explanation which would fit: Atossa may have stayed in Persia because she was pregnant, or had already had a child and was staying to care for it. Although Herodotos states that Kambyes had no children at the time of his death [3.66.2], it is possible that any child of Kambyes was killed during the instability following Kambyes' death⁸; after Dareios' takeover, the fact that Kambyes had fathered a child could have been so ruthlessly suppressed that no trace remains. It could even be that Atossa was pregnant when Kambyes left for Egypt, but that she miscarried or that the child died shortly after birth (infant

⁵ It is interesting to note that Herodotos does not name either of the two sisters in this section; Atossa is not named until 3.68; the younger sister is not named at all. The only other daughter of Kyros mentioned by Herodotos is Artystone, and she is only mentioned in connection with Dareios I. It is possible that Herodotos' source did not know the names of Kambyes' sister-wives, but what about Herodotos? He certainly knew the name of Atossa and that she had been both wife and sister to Kambyes [3.88], so why not just name her in this section? Unfortunately, the answer to this small puzzle will probably never be found. The sister-wife who went to Egypt may have been named Rhoxane. Ktesias [§12] records that a Rhoxane bore Kambyes a headless child, but contains no further information as to who Rhoxane was, whether she was a wife or concubine, or what happened to her. Herodotos' record of the Egyptian version of the sister-wife's death in Egypt (see below, chapter 3) says that she died from a miscarriage caused by Kambyes' having kicked her. If we assume she is the same as the woman mentioned by Ktesias, she may have been named Rhoxane—despite Ktesias' tendency to use names which do not agree with other sources (see below, chapter 4, and Drews 1973: 113-114), Rhoxane is definitely an Iranian name (from **raoxān-*, which means "bright, shining"; Professor Stolper, in a private communication of 3 June 1991). For Atossa's importance, see Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1983: 23-27, who postulates that her prominence is due to her role as Xerxes' mother, not as Kyros' daughter or Dareios' wife.

⁶ It was suggested to me (May 1991) that Herodotos may have had mistaken ideas about the 'harem' of the Persian king, and erroneously assumed that because Kambyes' sisters' quarters were in the 'harem' area, they were his wives. Herodotos, however, lived in a society which also segregated women to some extent, and if a Greek had control over his sister, she would have lived in the women's area of his house; this does not mean that everyone would have assumed she was also his wife. Herodotos may not have clearly understood the custom of wives of different 'grades', but he did understand that *all* women of one's family tended to be found in the women's area of the house, and that this did not imply sexual relations with all of these women. See Just 1989: 105-125, for women in Athens.

⁷ See below, chapter 4.

⁸ Any king who took control after Kambyes' death, whether the brother of Kambyes or a usurper, would not have wanted any of Kambyes' children left alive as a threat to the new ruler.

mortality was probably high in that period). This solution would be particularly appropriate in light of Herodotos' statement that the Persian king had to appoint a successor before leaving on a campaign [7.2.1]. Atossa could have stayed behind as the 'regent' for a child (whether already born, or simply expected).

That Kambyzes asked the royal judges about marrying a sister shows some concern on his part for the laws and customs of his people; Herodotos emphasizes that this type of marriage was not customary [3.31.1-2], but the simple act of asking about the laws governing brother-sister unions shows a respect at variance with the characterization of Kambyzes as an impious madman found in the rest of Book 3. Although the king's word was law, at that time in Persia various codes of law were in use, notably the Neo-Babylonian code and the code of Hammurabi⁹. It is unlikely that Kambyzes knew these laws intimately, and for any judicial matter requiring his attention he would have needed to consult the royal judges, whose job it was to know the intricacies of the laws [3.31.3]. So consulting the judges was perfectly normal. As to the laws, sections of both codes survive, but there is nothing concerning brother-sister marriages in the extant portions. Of course, this does not mean that no such laws existed. However, when one also considers Herodotos' statement that the royal judges found no law concerning brother-sister marriages [3.31.4], the probability diminishes that there was a law against such unions which has since been lost to us. This could indicate two opposite things: either (1) the taboo against brother-sister incestuous unions was so strong that there was no need to legislate against them, or (2) that there was no strong brother-sister incest taboo, and thus no need to legislate against it. Herodotos says that such unions were not customary¹⁰ and that no law (or 'custom'?) enjoined a brother-sister marriage, but this does not mean that such unions never occurred, or that they were forbidden.

The motive for the first marriage (to Atossa) is claimed to have been love [3.31.2, 31.6], but no reason is given for the second marriage—Herodotos only tells us that the second marriage took place shortly after the first [3.31.6]. At most, the wording of the sentence (τότε μὲν δὴ ὁ Καμβύσης ἔγνημε

⁹ *ANET* 1966: 163ff., 197ff.; Dandamaev/Lukonin 1989: 116ff.

¹⁰ He twice specifically uses forms of ἔθω to express this [3.31.2].

τὴν ἐρωμένην, μετὰ μέντοι οὐ πολλὸν χρόνον ἔσχε καὶ ἄλλην ἀδελφεήν) may indicate that Herodotos did not believe Kambyzes loved the first sister because of the short interval between the marriages. It is unlikely that love was the motive for Kambyzes' marriages to his sisters; as the king of as large an empire as Kyros left him, Kambyzes must have had many aspects to consider when he contemplated marriage¹¹, and it does not seem probable that love had a high priority.

When considering Herodotos' story, two questions arise, which seem to be two sides of the same coin:

(1) From where did Kambyzes obtain the idea of a brother-sister marriage?

(2) What were his motives in marrying two of his sisters?

The first question can be rephrased: Were there instances of brother-sister unions which could have served as examples for Kambyzes? The Greeks themselves allowed first-cousin and uncle-niece unions, as well as brother-sister unions of half-siblings with the same father but different mothers¹². One famous example is the case of Themistokles' children: Archeptolis, Themistokles' son by Archippe, married his half-sister Mnesiptolema, Themistokles' daughter by his second wife. After Themistokles' death, his daughter Nikomache married her first-cousin Phrasikles, son of Themistokles' brother¹³. This does not seem to have aroused any comment. In contrast, the case of Kimon, son of Miltiades, caused considerable comment. According to Plutarch, Kimon was charged with having incestuous relations with his sister Elpinike [*Kimon* 4.5]; this would have meant that the two were full brother and sister. Plutarch also records a variant that had Kimon and Elpinike legally married [*Kimon* 4.8; Nepos, *Cimon* 1.2]; in that case they could have been only half-siblings¹⁴.

Davies, in *Athenian Propertied Families*, has documented a number of instances of close-kin marriages among the Athenians. Aside from the two above instances, I found only one other example of a half-sibling marriage—in the stemma between pages 94 and 95, Davies shows that two

¹¹ Such as political alliances, the blood-line of the Achaemenids, the blood-line of the female, what her family wanted in exchange, etc.

¹² Philo *de spec. leg.* 3.22; see Spooner 1966: 54.

¹³ Plut. *Themistokles* 32.2, Davies 1971: 217 with stemma on 219.

¹⁴ Davies 1971: 302-304, section X.

of the children of a man from Halimous, Lysarete and Thoukritides, married one another. The stemma shows that they each had a different mother; Davies, however, has not discussed this union in the section on this family. There are also (at least) three clear instances of uncle-niece marriages¹⁵, and (at least) three examples of first-cousin marriages¹⁶. Obviously, brother-sister unions of *some* degree occasionally occurred in at least one ancient society; however, it is unlikely that Kambyses, as a Persian king, was influenced by Greek practice¹⁷—exempla from Near Eastern societies would have been more influential.

The Old Testament gives sources for early examples of close-kin marriages¹⁸. The members of the family of Abraham (who was from Ur of the Chaldeans) contracted a number of close-kin marriages: Abraham married his half-sister Sarah [same father, *Gen.* 11.29, 20.12]; Nahor, a brother of Abraham, married Milcah [the daughter of Haran, who was a brother to Nahor and Abraham, *Gen.* 11.27, 29]; Lot, the son of Haran, had intercourse with his two daughters, who each bore a son by their father [*Gen.* 19.30-38]¹⁹; Isaac, son of Abraham and Sarah [*Gen.* 21.3] married Rebekah [*Gen.* 24.67], daughter of Bethuel, son of Milcah and Nahor [*Gen.* 24.15]; and Rebekah's brother Laban had two daughters, Leah and Rachel [*Gen.* 29.10, 16], and Jacob, son of Isaac and Rebekah [*Gen.* 25.19-26], married both Leah and Rachel [*Gen.* 29.18-30]. Reuben, a son of Jacob, slept with his father's concubine, and although she was not his mother, and he did not marry her, this union was not approved [*Gen.* 35.22, 49.3-4].

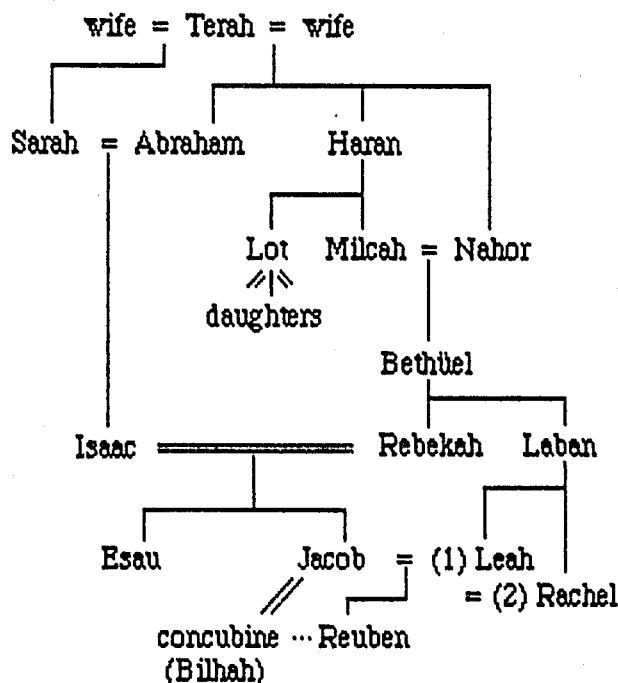
¹⁵ Davies 1971: #3885, pp. 151-154; #11672, pp. 437-438; #C9, pp. 587-590.

¹⁶ Davies 1971: #5951, see stemma p. 203; #3597, pp. 116, 122-123; #8443, p. 313.

¹⁷ Some of Herodotos' disapproving tone concerning Kambyses' marriages may stem from the fact that Kambyses married his *full* sisters, which was unlawful to a Greek.

¹⁸ See also Spooner 1966: 54.

¹⁹ It is interesting to note that in this instance there is no marriage, and Lot is the 'passive victim' of the two women, who get him drunk; the motive is procreative, and the unions are not overtly disparaged or condemned.



There is also an instance of an aunt-nephew marriage between Amram, son of Kohath, and his father's sister, Jochebed [*Exod.* 6.20]. That close-kin unions were customary can be seen by the outlawing of almost any unions closer than first-cousin marriages [*Lev.* 18]²⁰—there would have been no need to forbid these unions if they had not been a common occurrence (if not in this society, then in neighbouring ones).

The ruling dynasty of the Ur III period (ca 2100-1900 BC) may also have practised brother-sister marriages. One of the most active women in this dynasty was Šulgi-simti/tum²¹; she was the *lukur*, or priestly wife, of King Šulgi (2094-2047 BC)²². The *lukur* women of this period seem to have played an administrative role in the kingdom, as well as being consorts of the king, and fulfilling priestly duties²³. There are numerous records of this period which reveal a portion of Šulgi-simti's activities in the religious and economic spheres; however, there are no records of any activity on the part of Šulgi-simti after year 48 of King Šulgi (which was the last year of his reign)²⁴. It is possible

²⁰ See also Spooner 1966: 54.

²¹ Kang 1972: 261-270.

²² Goetze 1963: 35; Kang 1972: 262.

²³ See Kang 1972: 261, n.2; the *lukur* may also have been able to bear children.

²⁴ Kang 1972: 263, 267-270.

that Šulgi-simti died in this year²⁵; but it is also possible that she simply changed her name when the ruler changed, and continued with her various duties. Amar-Sin succeeded to the throne on Šulgi's death; beginning in year 1 of Amar-Sin, the activities of another woman, Abi-simti/tum, are recorded²⁶. Abi-simti is called the *nin* or queen of Amar-Sin²⁷, and later of his brother Šu-Sin. Unfortunately, the evidence is not clear enough to be definite. Jacobsen favours the idea that Abi-simti was the wife first of Amar-Sin, and then of his brother Šu-Sin (an example of levirate marriage)²⁸. A different interpretation is based on the hypothesis that Šulgi-simti, although not named as queen of Šulgi, filled this role, and was the mother of Amar-Sin and Šu-Sin; this is plausible, considering her dominant position in the records. To take it one step further, Šulgi-simti is Abi-simti—upon the death of Šulgi, Šulgi-simti took a new name, and continued in her religious and administrative offices as 'queen mother' during her sons' reigns²⁹. A third possibility is that Abi-simti was the daughter of Šulgi, and became queen when she married her brother Amar-Sin. Because of the lack of genealogical records, and the variations in translations of SRT 23 = *ANET* 1966: 496, it is impossible to say which hypothesis is correct.

A second example from the Ur III dynasty offers similar difficulties. Šu-Sin died in his 9th year of rule, and was succeeded by Ibbi-Sin, who may or may not have been his son³⁰. Shortly after he took the throne, Ibbi-Sin married a royal princess, Geme-Enlilla, who is called his queen (*nin*) in the 5th and 15th years of his rule³¹. Because she was called 'princess' during Ibbi-Sin's first year, the possibility has been raised that Geme-Enlilla was either the daughter or the sister of Ibbi-Sin³². Jacobsen, however, feels that she was not Ibbi-Sin's daughter (he calls the union unlikely); rather,

²⁵ Goetze 1963: 35.

²⁶ Kang 1972: 267.

²⁷ Kang 1972: 261-262.

²⁸ Jacobsen 1953: 45-47; *ANET* 1966: 496—Kramer interprets the text as being composed by a *šakru* (female) for Šu-Sin, and feels that it refers to Abi-simti as the mother of Šu-Sin, whereas Jacobsen (referring to the same text) thinks that it indicates Abi-simti was Šu-Sin's wife.

²⁹ Kang 1972: 267-268 n.1.

³⁰ Jacobsen 1953: 36 + n.3.

³¹ Jacobsen 1953: 37 + n.6.

³² Jacobsen 1953: 37, n.6; Kang 1972: 267-268 n.1.

son; once again there is not evidence for brother-sister unions.⁴² For the Neo-Elamite period the succession line is similar to that for the Middle Elamite period. There is one instance of a possible brother-sister marriage, from an inscription of King Hhanni, who mentions his "beloved wife-sister Huhin".⁴³

Another obvious source for close-kin marriages is Egypt.⁴⁴ W.M.F. Petrie, in *A History of Egypt*, has a number of examples. The 18th dynasty (ca. 1600-1300 BC) practised close-kin marriages almost exclusively in the early years; there are at least 6 instances of brother-sister marriages in five generations: Aahmes I married his half-sister Nefertari (both had the same mother, Aahhotep I); their son Amenhotep I married their daughter (his sister) Aahhotep II; Tahutmes I, the son of Amenhotep I by another woman, married two of his half-sisters, Aahmes and Mutnefert; Hatshepsut, the daughter of Aahmes and Tahutmes I, married her half-brother Tahutmes II, son of Tahutmes I and Mutnefert; Merytra Hatshepsut, daughter of Tahutmes II and Hatshepsut, married her half-brother Tahutmes III, son of Tahutmes II and another woman⁴⁵.

Ramessu II is claimed to have married at least two, and possibly three, of his own daughters⁴⁶. His eldest daughter Banutanta/Bintanta had a tomb in the valley of the Queens' Tombs, and was called both "royal daughter" and "great royal wife"; it is therefore likely that she married her father, as the title is not an empty one⁴⁷. Another daughter, Merytamen, also had a tomb in the valley of the Queens' Tombs, and had the title "great royal wife, lady of both lands"; she probably also married her father⁴⁸. The third instance involves Nebttaui, daughter #8; she too was styled "great royal wife", with a tomb in the valley, but there is a suggestion that she was married to someone else, because her daughter Astemakh was not a child of Ramessu II. Petrie does point out that Nebttaui

⁴² Van Soldt 1990: 587.

⁴³ Van Soldt 1990: 587-588, who states that the term 'sister' is literal. Although this falls within a period closer to that of Kambyes' reign, this example comes from the eighth century, about two hundred years earlier than the Persian supremacy.

⁴⁴ See Hopkins 1980 for a general study, even though it does not specifically deal with this period.

⁴⁵ For the 18th dynasty see Petrie 1972: vol. 2, pp. 1-3, 9, 13, 37-39, 40, 52, 54-55, 57, 59-60, 71-72, 78, 96, 99-100, 143, 153, 164-166, 170, 335-338. For general reading see Middleton 1962: 603-611.

⁴⁶ Middleton 1962: 603-611.

⁴⁷ Petrie 1972: vol. 3, pp. 87-88.

⁴⁸ Petrie 1972: vol. 3, p. 88.

could have been married again after Ramessu's death. There is also the possibility that the Astemakh referred to was the daughter of Nebta, daughter of Amenhotep⁴⁹.

What about the Persians themselves? Are there any indications that they practised close-kin marriages? A number of classical authors say that Persians and/or magoi customarily had sexual relations with and/or married their mothers, daughters or sisters (Xanthos of Lydia fr. 28⁵⁰; Sotion of Alexandria in Diogenes Laertius *prooem* 1.7; Strabo 15.3.20; Ktesias fr. 22 = König p. 200; Curtius 8.2.19; Plutarch, *de Alex. fort.* = *Moralia* 328c; Euripides, *Andromache* ll. 173-175; Diogenes Laertius 9.83)⁵¹. The fragment of Xanthos is the earliest classical source, pre-dating Herodotos: 'The magoi have intercourse with their mothers and daughters; and it is (held to be) righteous to have intercourse with their sisters; and the women are shared, not by force or secretly, but with both agreeing, whenever one wants to marry the woman of another man.' Euripides adds that their laws do not forbid such things; Sotion remarks that the magoi consider mother-son and father-daughter marriages to be holy; Diogenes, in his life of Pyrrho, says that the Persians do not consider it unusual to live with their daughters; Strabo merely remarks that it is an ancestral custom for the magoi to have intercourse with their mothers; and Plutarch and Curtius each have information purporting to be from Alexander's era—Plutarch tells that Alexander persuaded the Persians to respect their mothers and not to marry them, while Curtius comments that the satrap of Sogdiana, Sisimithres, had two sons from his own mother, and that it was sanctioned among them for parents to live with (i.e., have sexual relations with) their children. Unfortunately, much of this seems to be a 'topos' associated with the Persians and the magoi⁵²; the fragment of Xanthos, however, could suggest that the magoi did not have a strong incest taboo. It is particularly interesting, since Herodotos 'credits' Kambyzes with the innovation of brother-sister unions.

⁴⁹ Petrie 1972: vol. 3, pp. 88-89. The 21st dynasty also exhibits a number of close-kin marriages, see Petrie 1972: vol. 3, pp. 189-190.

⁵⁰ Miller 1975: 118-119.

⁵¹ See further Bistritz 1947: 612-617.

⁵² Herrenschildt 1987: 56-57; Lee 1988: 405-406.

These 'accusations' may stem from a practice in the Zoroastrian religion called *khvāērdadthū* = "next-of-kin marriage", from the Old Persian *khvāētu* = "household or agnate family group"⁵³. This practice is mentioned in numerous Zoroastrian sacred writings⁵⁴, and it is always portrayed as a positive and sacred act. These writings are, unfortunately, quite late, most of them being from the 1st millennium AD⁵⁵. However, many concepts and linguistic aspects have been traced back to the 1st and 2nd millenniums BC⁵⁶, and Boyce has placed the beginning of Zoroastrianism in the 2nd millennium BC, ca 1400-1000 BC⁵⁷. Boyce further speculates that, in the early stages of the religion, the priests became agreeable to close-kin marriages because of the small Zoroastrian population; in order to 'justify' these unions, the priests came to the conclusion that this practice was holy and strengthened the religion⁵⁸.

This, indeed, might explain the recurrence of close-kin unions throughout the Achaemenid dynasty. Kyros was an Achaemenid [BI §1-4, 10] and married Kassandane, the daughter of Pharnaspes, who was also an Achaemenid [Hdt. 2.1, 3.2.2, 3.3]. Unfortunately, the degree of kinship between them is not known. Their son Kambyzes married his full sister, whose name has not come down to us, and he also married his sister Atossa, who is simply called the daughter of Kyros. From the phrasing in Herodotos, and Atossa's prominent role in the Persian court, it is likely that she too was the daughter of Kassandane, and a full sister to Kambyzes. Dareios I married his niece Phratagoune, the daughter of his half-brother Artanes [Hdt. 7.224.2]. In addition, he married Atossa (Kambyzes' sister-widow), Artystone (another daughter of Kyros), Parmys (the daughter of Kambyzes' brother Smerdis) and Phaidime (the daughter of Otanes, son of Pharnaspes, probably the Pharnaspes who was the father of Kyros' wife Kassandane, and therefore an Achaemenid)[3.88]. This would make all five of Dareios' wives Achaemenids by blood. Dareios II (423-404 BC), the

⁵³ Boyce *AEZ* I 1975: 13, *AEZ* II 1982: 75. But see also West's appendix in the *SSEF* 18, 1970: 389-430; he does not specify a time period but does hypothesize that the practice arose for two reasons: procreation and religious purity. Duchesne-Guillemin 1970: 206-209, sees a link to an ancient matriarchal system and 'purity'.

⁵⁴ E.g., *Yasha* 12.9; *Gah* 4.8; *Visparad* 3.3 (in *SSEF* 31, 1969: 250, 342, 385-386); *Yasht* 24.15, 17 (in *SSEF* 23, 1969: 332); *Dinkard* 7.4.5 (*SSEF* 47, 1969: 51); and the Pahlavi texts 3.82 (in *SSEF* 18, 1970: 105).

⁵⁵ Boyce *AEZ* I 1975: xii; Dandamaev/Lukonin 1989: 323-324; *SSEF* 18, 1970: 394.

⁵⁶ Boyce *AEZ* I 1975: 1 + n.4, 14-17, 19-20, 190.

⁵⁷ Boyce *AEZ* I 1975: 1 + n.4, 181-191, 286 + n.38; *AEZ* II 1982: 1-3; cf. Dandamaev/Lukonin 1989: 320-323.

⁵⁸ Boyce *AEZ* II 1982: 76.

son of Artaxerxes I (465-424 BC), married his half-sister Parysatis while their father was still king [Ktesias §44]. Their son, Artaxerxes II (404-358 BC), with the consent and encouragement of his mother, married at least one of his own daughters (Atossa), and possibly a second as well (Amestris) [Plut. *Artax.*, 23.2-5, 27.4-5]. And Dareios III, whom Alexander defeated, was married to his sister Stateira, although it is not known if she was his full or half-sister [Plut. *Alex.* 30, Arrian 2.11, Curtius 3.11.24, 12.11]. As Boyce points out, it is unlikely that Kambyes originated this practice, "since such personal influence as he might have exerted during his short reign would have been speedily extinguished through the hostility of Darius."⁵⁹

However, this explanation assumes that Kyros and Kambyes were Zoroastrians, a hypothesis which is still being debated⁶⁰.

As has been shown, there were many ancient societies which practised some form of close-kin marriages including brother-sister marriages. Knowledge of the practices of any one of these societies *could* have inspired Kambyes, although the influence of some societies would have been more feasible than others, for reasons such as the time factor. Which leads to the other side of the coin: motive. Why did Kambyes choose to marry his sister? And why marry a second one?

Modern opinions vary on this subject⁶¹. It has been suggested that the influence of the Elamite culture on Persia was very great; therefore, Kambyes' marriages reflected the Elamite matrilineal tradition of the throne being passed through the women of the royal family⁶². It is true that Elamite culture influenced Persian society⁶³; there does not, however, appear to be any evidence that the

⁵⁹ *AE* II 1982: 75.

⁶⁰ Boyce *AE* II 1982: 49-69; Dandamaev/Lukonin 1989: 336-348. The possibility that Kambyes was a Zoroastrian would fit in well with Herodotos. Kambyes asked the royal judges about the marriage, but if there was no taboo because of the acceptance of such unions in the Zoroastrian community, there may have been nothing which legally supported or forbade it. Kambyes may have been the first *Farsān kīzr* to marry that close a relative. This would also leave space for another motive, since the decision to marry a sister (for whatever reason) would have the support of the religion—a kind of bonus, as it were.

⁶¹ There has not been an in-depth study of Kambyes' marriages that I can find—scholars tend to look at a solution which they find likely, without exploring the other possibilities, especially in regard to motive.

⁶² Cameron 1968: 20; Frye 1984: 97; Olmstead 1948: 87.

⁶³ Root 1979: 34-35 with chart; Diskonoff 1985: 24.

Persians were matrilineal. In fact, the theory that *Elamite kingship* was passed through the women of the royal family has recently been argued against.⁶⁴

The evidence from the Third Dynasty of Ur is simply too fragmentary to be of use in postulating a motivating factor for Kambyases' marriages. The situation was one of political instability at that time⁶⁵. If brother-sister marriages took place at that time, it may have been connected to the instability; however, there is not enough evidence to make any definite statement as to what affect the situation had on the royal marriages as far as close-kin marriages are concerned. There is also the added factor of time—the Ur III Dynasty (ca 2100-1900 BC) was so far removed in time from Kambyases that its influence was probably nil.

The Biblical examples of close-kin marriages show a society in which there are basically no incest taboos (other than against a son sleeping with his father's concubine, and this was possibly aimed at the 'paternity of children' factor). The reasons for such an occurrence might stem from the idea of religious or racial purity, but an even more imperative set of factors could have been the combination of (a) the relatively small population in the circumstances outlined in *Genesis*; (b) the pastoral nature of the society at that time, and (c) the emphasis on family units and the importance of keeping them together. This could have led to the acceptance of close-kin marriages, and a lack of incest taboo, which had to be instilled through religious prohibition [*Lev*: 18]. That such a lack could (and did) exist in a Near Eastern society does lend support to the possibility that the royal judges found no law concerning brother-sister marriages because there was no taboo, and no need to legislate against it. The society presented in *Genesis* is, once again, too far removed in time (and the circumstances of the two societies are too different) to have directly motivated Kambyases. It is possible, however, that early Iranian society had a similar lack of taboos for similar reasons.⁶⁶

This would conform well with Boyce's examination and evaluation of early Iranian culture and Zoroastrianism, especially in regard to *khvāērvdutha*. Early Iranian culture was pastoral, and could

⁶⁴ Diakonoff 1985: 13.

⁶⁵ The Third Dynasty ended with the capture of Ibbi-Sin; Jacobsen 1953: 36-45.

⁶⁶ For early Iranian society see Boyce *AE* I 1975: 3-21, and Dandamayev/Lukonin 1989: 1-89.

well have been influenced by similar circumstances as the Biblical culture. However, with the added influence of the persecution of the Zoroastrian religion, *khvūērvudatha* may have been institutionalized rather than prohibited because the population pool of devout believers was so small.⁶⁷ If Kambyes was a Zoroastrian, a marriage to his sister would not have seemed unusual to him. However, the fact that he was now king of a large empire, with different law codes, may have led him to inquire about the legality of such a union, according to the *adopted laws* rather than the customs. This is not to say that Kambyes' motivation was religious; it simply means that, if he was a Zoroastrian, he had religious sanction for such a union, whatever the true motivation for the marriage.

Spooner sees the practice of brother-sister unions as one "designed to help reconcile an alien dynasty by adopting customs which the people would expect from an indigenous one".⁶⁸ He feels that it was a common occurrence in the Mesopotamian area and was adopted by the Persians, but there is no evidence that this was the case. It is not until the first millennium AD that 'Mesopotamia' (as distinct from the 'Persians') made a practice of close-kin marriages, other than the previously mentioned cases of the Ur III dynasty.⁶⁹

Egypt offers numerous examples of brother-sister marriages, and it has been suggested that Kambyes was copying Egyptian practices⁷⁰. K.M.T. Atkinson has theorized that Kambyes' marriage (mentioning only the one marriage to the sister who went to Egypt) was part of his "desire to conform as far as possible with Egyptian traditions in his capacity as king of Egypt", and this was tied up in his desire "to give an impression of legitimacy where none existed"⁷¹. But this interpretation raises more questions than it answers: Why did Kambyes marry *two* sisters, if one would give him the conformity he desired? Why marry both sisters *before* the expedition against Egypt, especially when there was no guarantee that he would win? And why not marry a daughter of

⁶⁷ Boyce *AEZ* II 1982: 75-77; *AEZ* I 1975: 249-252 on the persecution of the religion.

⁶⁸ Spooner 1966: 56.

⁶⁹ Lee 1988: 403-413.

⁷⁰ Middleton 1962: 603-611. It is also interesting to note the suggestion that the Ptolemies followed Persian practice regarding their incestuous marriages (Middleton 1962: 608-609).

⁷¹ Atkinson 1956: 176-177.

Psammenitos or of Amasis, if legitimacy was the issue? In addition, there is no evidence to suggest that Psammenitos, or Amasis, or Apries ever married their own sisters⁷², so Kambyes would not have had any recent examples upon which to draw.

In exploring the motivations for Kambyes' marriages, Diakonoff's evaluation of the Elamite system of marriage in the royal family may provide an answer, or at least the beginning of an answer. Diakonoff emphasizes that "the Elamite family was definitely of a patriarchal type" and he states that "the system ... of inheritance of the crown ... was *designed* to keep the imperial heritage *strictly within one single patriarchal family and exclude its passing outside through marriage*. Similar devices, resulting in brother-and-sister marriages, are known from Ancient Egypt, Asia Minor, and Achaemenian Iran."⁷³ (italics mine). It seems quite possible that Kambyes married his sisters to ensure that the power and kingship remained in his own hands. A nobleman married to one of the daughters of Kyros might have been tempted to usurp the throne; the actions of Dareios I clearly show the prestige associated with Kyros' female descendants—the first thing he did when he became king was to marry Atossa and Artystone, Kyros' surviving daughters [Hdt. 3.88.2, Justin 1.10.14], and Parmys, the daughter of Smerdis/Bardiya and the granddaughter of Kyros [Hdt. 3.88.2]. Thus, by marrying his own sisters, Kambyes avoided the problem of being dethroned by a brother-in-law. It also effectively cut off the access of the Persian nobility to royal power. Another aspect which may have been a consideration is that of children. Kambyes may have thought that a son of his from a union with one of his sisters would be the most legitimate successor he could have. And it would also ensure that his sisters would not have children (from marriages to the nobles) who could take the throne from his own descendants. Political marriages in any royal family are nothing unusual; what is unusual about these societies is that they married inside the family rather than outside the family in order to maintain family power. If close-kin marriages did not already exist in the Achaemenid family, Kambyes may have picked up the idea from another society, such as Elam or Egypt, or from

⁷² Petrie 1972: vol. 3, pp. 342-359.

⁷³ Diakonoff 1985: 13; see also Havenschildt 1987: 56-57.

religious example simply because the practice suited his purposes: it was useful for restricting access to the throne.

As Herrenschmidt comments⁷⁴, it is possible that brother-sister marriages were allowed among the Persians before Kambyzes married his sisters; this does not mean it was the norm. It is also possible that the marriages occurred at a time of and/or in response to some conflict between Kambyzes and the Persian nobility⁷⁵. The whole area of 'kinship groups' among the Persians needs further study, but as a possible solution to the puzzle of Kambyzes' marriages, the 'political' motivation seems to take into account the various problems more easily than any other proposal.

⁷⁴ Herrenschmidt 1987: 57.

⁷⁵ Herodotos certainly records stories hostile to Kambyzes, which may have had their origin in some conflict with the nobles [e.g., 3.34-38]. And the fact of the rebellion of Smerdis/Bardiya (see below, chapter 4) indicates that there were problems which did not seem to exist when Kambyzes took the throne (there is no suggestion in the sources that the transition from Kyros to Kambyzes was anything but smooth). However, the marriages took place *before* the campaign against Egypt, and there is no evidence of any trouble at that time.

Chapter Three: 'Egypt'

One area of Kambyases' reign for which there is a comparatively large body of evidence is his campaign against, and occupation of, Egypt. Of the classical sources, Herodotos and Ktesias offer the most detailed accounts¹.

Ktesias' version (or rather, Photios' version of Ktesias) does not give any chronological references; the campaign against Egypt, section 9, is placed immediately after section 8, which records the bestowing of the empire on Kambyases, and is followed by section 10, the beginning of the 'False Smerdis' saga. The only thing definite about this is that Kambyases attacked Egypt after he became king and before the 'Smerdis' affair. It would be interesting to have the original text, to see if Ktesias actually included some sort of time-frame in his history. Much of the surviving detail is questionable, if not downright wrong (but see below)². The king of Egypt is named as Amyrtaios, a mistake proven by the Egyptian records³. As usual, there is a eunuch—Kombaphes, a powerful eunuch in the Egyptian court, betrays the Nile defenses and other Egyptian defenses to Kambyases, on the condition that he be made ὑπαρχος of Egypt. Kombaphes is consequently given the position, apparently through the influence of Kombaphes' nephew, Izabates (presumably the same Izabates mentioned earlier in §9 as an influential eunuch at the Persian court). The Egyptian king, Amyrtaios, is captured alive and suffers no more than transportation to Susa along with 6000 Egyptians whom he himself selected⁴. Ktesias also notes that 50,000 Egyptians died in the battle, but only 7000 Persians.

¹ The few sentences in Justin concerning Kambyases in Egypt [1.9.1-6] seem to be based upon Herodotos.

² Cook 1985: 205-206.

³ Petrie 1972: vol. 3, pp. 347-359; Dandamaev 1989: 75.

⁴ Many Egyptian artifacts have been found at Persepolis and Susa, see Dandamaev 1989: 75. Diodoros [1.46.4] records that the Persians (under Kambyases) transported great amounts of silver, gold, ivory and precious stones to 'Asia', along with Egyptian artisans to help build the palaces.

Ktesias' version of events is very basic—Kambyzes conquered Egypt through the help of a highly-placed traitor, and the Egyptian king was captured alive and deported to Susa. There is no mention of the various details which Herodotos gives (the motive for the attack, the expeditions against Carthage, Ammon and Ethiopia, the madness of Kambyzes, his sacrilegious behaviour in Egypt)⁵. Since Ktesias' sources were Persian, it seems likely that the Egyptian stories did not reach Persia, or at least did not reach that segment of society to which Ktesias had access⁶. In fact the absence of those details *might* indicate that they were wholly Egyptian, and that the concept of Kambyzes' 'madness' did not exist in Persia⁷.

Herodotos' account of Kambyzes' Egyptian campaign is the most extensive and detailed narrative available. The bulk of the narrative is in Book 3 [1-38], with a few pieces of information scattered throughout the rest of the work. Because of the lack of other literary sources for this expedition, scholars have naturally tended to rely on Herodotos' information. There are, however, Egyptian sources which can be used when examining Herodotos' story, and which give a very different point of view. Persian sources are sadly lacking—the Behistun Inscription confirms that Kambyzes went to Egypt (*after* he had killed his brother Bardiya, on which see further below, and chapter 4); it also says that while Kambyzes was in Egypt, "the people were given over to evil. Then lies in the land grew very numerous ..." [§10]⁸, but provides no information on what happened in Egypt. Thus, we come back to Herodotos.

The narrative begins with the statement that Kambyzes marched against Amasis [3.1.1], and then moves on to the reason for the campaign. Herodotos gives three versions of this: (1) the Persian version, (2) the Egyptian version, and (3) a version from an undesignated source. According to the Persians [3.1.5], the trouble began when Kyros asked Amasis to send him the best eye-doctor in Egypt. Amasis complied, but the result was not good—the doctor was furious at having been

⁵ See below.

⁶ At §1 of the epitome, Photios writes that Ktesias claimed to have either seen what he wrote about, or had heard it from the Persians themselves; see Drews 1973: 105-108; Cook 1985: 205-206; Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1987: 35-39.

⁷ Conclusions of such a kind must be cautiously proposed, as it is difficult to say exactly *what* Ktesias included in his *ἱστορίαι* when only the epitome is extant. One interesting section of Ktesias, which survives in Athenaios, will be covered in this chapter in relation to the parallel section of Herodotos.

⁸ Von Voigtlander 1978: 54-55.

dragged from the bosom of his family [3.1.1]. In revenge, the doctor told Kambyes to ask Amasis for his daughter, the idea being that giving her to Kambyes would cause Amasis grief, and not giving her would arouse Kambyes' wrath [3.1.2]. Kambyes sent the request as the doctor had suggested [3.1.1, 1.2]. As had been foreseen by the doctor, Amasis was in a quandary over what to do—he could not refuse the request because of his fear of the Persians' strength, but he equally could not give his daughter away, since he knew that Kambyes wanted her not as a wife but as a concubine [3.1.2]. Amasis' solution was to substitute Nitetis (the daughter of Apries, the former king) for his own daughter [3.1.3]. Some time later, when Kambyes addressed Nitetis by her (supposed) patronymic, she revealed the deception [3.1.4]; Kambyes was angered by this, and thus decided to attack Egypt [3.1.5]. Such is the account which Herodotos implicitly believes.

The Egyptians gave Herodotos a different version, in which *Kyros* had sent for Amasis' daughter, and Kambyes was therefore the *son* of Nitetis [3.2.2]. Herodotos does not believe this for two reasons: (1) he says that the Egyptians were aware of the Persian law which forbade an illegitimate son from succeeding to the throne if there was a legitimate one, and (2) Kambyes was the son of Kassandane, the daughter of Pharnaspes (an Achaemenid). Herodotos concludes that the Egyptians falsified the story so that they would appear to be related to Kyros' family [3.2.2].

There is also a third tale, which does not convince Herodotos, namely that when Kambyes was ten years old, a Persian woman visited Kyros' wives, and greatly admired Kassandane's children. Kassandane, however, felt that even though she had borne Kyros' children, he still was not honouring her, instead preferring that Egyptian woman (Nitetis). Kambyes, hearing this, promised her that when he was a man, he would turn Egypt upside-down for her, and he did so [3.3.1-3]⁹.

Athenaios [13.10 d-e] preserves a section from Ktesias on this topic, which Photios left out of the epitome¹⁰; Ktesias apparently also laid the blame for the Egyptian campaign on a woman. According to him, Kambyes asked Amasis for one of his daughters in marriage after he had learned

⁹ As weak as the other two reasons are, I do agree that this seems unlikely. When Kambyes was 10, Babylon hadn't even been captured yet, so how could he have planned on conquering Egypt?

¹⁰ König 1972: 131 = fr. Mü 37 = Jac 13a = Gil 30 = L 46.

that Egyptian women were better in bed than other women. Amasis suspected that his daughter would not be honoured as a wife, but instead would be a concubine, so he substituted Neitētis¹¹, the daughter of Aprios¹², for his own daughter. Kambyes enjoyed Neitētis, and when he was very aroused he learned from her that Amasis had killed her father Aprios. She asked Kambyes to avenge her father's murder, and he was persuaded to campaign against the Egyptians.

This version is quite similar to that of Herodotos, the main difference being that Ktesias left out the eye-doctor, and gave Kambyes a different motive for asking Amasis for his daughter! Unfortunately, this does not necessarily confirm that Herodotos' version was the one current in Persia; Ktesias, or his source, could have got the story from Herodotos, and simply changed it somewhat. What *is* important is that this fragment is a contrast to Photios' epitome; it shows just how much information has been lost through the epitomization process. I suspect that Ktesias, for all his seeming errors, may not have been as bad as is commonly thought¹³.

This portion of Athenaios (13.560 f) also preserves a record of the 'Egyptian' version. Dinon and Lykeas of Naukratis both recorded that Kambyes was the son of Neitētis and Kyros; but it was to avenge his mother that Kambyes attacked Egypt.

Examination of the two main versions reveals problems with both. Amasis, according to Herodotos, ruled Egypt for 44 years [3.10.2], and his son Psammenitos (III) only ruled 6 months [3.14.1]. Apries had ruled for 25 years [2.161.2] before Amasis took the throne. The Egyptian sources give a slightly different chronology. Apries ruled 19 years alone as king of Egypt, and shared 3 years in a 'nominally' joint reign with Amasis¹⁴. The joint rule is included in the chronology of the sole reign of Amasis, which Egyptian sources and lunar calculations also give as 44 years¹⁵.

¹¹ This is Ktesias' spelling of Nitētis.

¹² Apries.

¹³ Drews 1973: 105-116, especially 105-108; Cook 1985: 205-206; Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1987: 35-39. I am beginning to suspect that the emphasis on eunuchs is at least as much Photios' doing as Ktesias', if not more so.

¹⁴ Petrie 1972: vol. 3, p. 352. According to Petrie, although the rule was supposedly a joint one, Apries was kept under 'house arrest' while Amasis ruled the country.

¹⁵ Parker 1957: 208-212; Petrie 1972: vol. 3, p. 352.

Kambyzes, as I have already discussed, prepared for the expedition between 530 BC and 526/5 BC. Regardless of when the doctor was sent to Kyros in the Persian variation, it was still Kambyzes (according to Herodotos) who asked for Amasis' daughter, and carried out the campaign. Although it is not stated, it is reasonable to assume that Kambyzes would have asked for the daughter *after* Kyros had died, when he was sole ruler of the empire. This stipulated, since Anasis died somewhere around the end of 526 (to allow Psammenitos 6 months before the spring of 525 BC)¹⁶, the years 530-526 BC would have been his 40-44th years of rule. Even if we assume that during the joint rule of Apries and Amasis, Apries was allowed to father any children, at the *very* least, any daughter of his would be 37 years old in 530 BC (and she probably was much older). It is foolish to suppose that Kambyzes could be deceived by a substitution such as that to which Herodotos and Ktesias attest.

The story that Nitetis was sent to Kyros, and was the mother of Kambyzes, fits in better with the chronology only if she was born at least 4 years prior to Apries' death¹⁷. Herodotos, however, is very sure that Kambyzes was Kassandane's son [2.1.1, 3.2.2]. Even without a law such as Herodotos mentions (i.e., that the Persians give the throne to a legitimate son before an illegitimate one), Kyros would probably have been much more inclined to name as his heir the son of a Persian wife rather than a foreign wife. And since Kassandane was an Achaemenid and seems to have been 'queen' (the highest rank of wife)¹⁸, a son of hers would have had precedence over any other sons of Kyros.

To some extent these stories were contaminated by other elements. The mere fact that the motivation for the campaign is a woman is very Greek in nature—Herodotos' introduction to his *Histories* tells of various 'abductions' of women which eventually brought the Greeks and Persians into conflict [1.1-5]; and one of the most famous campaigns in Greek history/mythology—the Trojan

¹⁶ Parker 1957: 208-212; Dandamaev 1989: 73 + n.2.

¹⁷ Kambyzes was probably at least 18 years old in 539 when Kyros captured Babylon; using 18 years, he would have been born ca. 557 BC. Amasis had been ruling exclusively for 10 years at that time. Assuming a girl was not married until 14 years old, Nitetis would have had to be born at least in 571 in order to be old enough to be Kambyzes' mother.

¹⁸ See above, chapter 1.

War—came about because of a woman. The story of Amasis' fear that his daughter would have been a concubine, not a wife, also seems Greek in nature; both the Egyptians and the Persians practised polygamy and had several 'grades' of wives, but the Greeks did not, and they probably assumed that there was only one 'real' wife, the rest were concubines¹⁹.

Folk-tale elements are also evident in the stories. Anger plays a part, first the anger of the eye-doctor, and then the anger of Kambyzes when he learns of the deception; then too, in the story (rejected by Herodotos) about the young Kambyzes there is Kassandane's anger against Kyros' Egyptian woman²⁰. The substitution/deception motif is common to folk and fairy tales (e.g., the Prince and the Pauper, many myths involving gods, the 'Smerdis' episode). And there is the uncertainty as to which 'hero' got the girl, Kyros or Kambyzes—in the folk-tale genre, the 'who' is not as important as the 'what happened'.

Atkinson sees in these stories an attempt by Kambyzes to legitimize his rule over Egypt: "... in the case of the alleged Egyptian marriage the clear evidence ... points to Cambyzes, who stood to gain by the invention. It might serve to propitiate the Egyptians (in actual fact it conspicuously failed to do this); but more important, it eliminated all Persians other than the heir of Cyrus and his heirs from the legitimate succession in Egypt, and might serve to cancel out the dangerous precedent of annexation by conquest."²¹ In some ways, this makes little sense. Why would Kambyzes be worrying about contenders for the throne of Egypt? If Kambyzes was worried about rivals, surely his first concern would have been with the Persian area? If (as it turned out) he lost the Persian throne, what value would the Egyptian throne have been? Would it not make more sense to see this as an attempt by the Egyptians to find a link with the people who have conquered them, a kind of 'Oh, its okay, he's really one of us anyway' rationalization?

If anything, the story of Nitetis, whether she is linked with Kyros or Kambyzes, is important because it links the Persians with *Apries*. Kambyzes, as either the grandson or the son-in-law of

¹⁹ Cf. Atkinson 1956: 172.

²⁰ See Balcer 1987: 73-74.

²¹ Atkinson 1956: 176.

Apries, came and wrested the kingdom from the usurper Amasis' family; the link with Apries would have provided legitimacy²². But would a man as aware of Egyptian custom as Amasis not have married Nitetis himself if she were the sure-fire method of establishing legitimacy?

Kambyes used other means to 'legitimate' his rule over Egypt. The inscription of Udjahorresnet²³ "dwells with particular insistence on the way in which Cambyes had accepted the traditional model of Egyptian kingship and regulated his behaviour by it."²⁴ Udjahorresnet begins by claiming Kambyes' foreignness, calling him "The Great King of All Foreign Lands" [l. 11]²⁵; with the conquest of Egypt accomplished, Kambyes becomes the "Great Ruler of Egypt, and the Great Chief of All Foreign Lands" [l. 12]²⁶. As the foreign king, he was a force of chaos; once he accepted the role of "Great King Of Egypt" he became a representative of universal order. "As far as Egypt was concerned, therefore, the status of Cambyes had changed, and with it, his very essence, irrespective of his role beyond the valley of the Nile."²⁷ Kambyes received a royal title, *Mesuti-rē*, which not only indicates that he was a child of Rē (Ra), but also hints that he was a divine child²⁸. Kambyes also made a particular effort to fulfil the role of Pharaoh: he cleansed and restored the temple of Neith, reaffirmed the sacrifices to be given to the gods at the city of Sais, reaffirmed the organization of the festivals of the gods, and paid worship to the goddess Neith [ll. 18-26]²⁹. The words and phrases used to describe these activities emphasize the Pharaonic nature associated with Kambyes³⁰. As Lloyd comments, "If someone acts like Pharaoh, he *is* Pharaoh!"³¹

In this connection, Lloyd takes a different view of the Egyptian version of the legend. He sees the possibility that the story is based on the Egyptian tradition in which Re or Ammon-re would

²² Bresciani 1985: 503-504.

²³ The Inscription of Udjahorresnet is found on a naophoros statue (Vatican Museum 158 [113]). For more on this inscription, see below.

²⁴ Lloyd 1982: 170.

²⁵ Lloyd 1982: 169.

²⁶ Lloyd 1982: 169, 170.

²⁷ Lloyd 1982: 177.

²⁸ Lloyd 1982: 171.

²⁹ Lloyd 1982: 169-170.

³⁰ Lloyd 1982: 170-173.

³¹ Lloyd 1983: 297.

become incarnated in the husband of the queen, and thus be the father of the future Pharaoh. He admits that the case of Kambyzes is less sure than the legend attached to Alexander (i.e., that his father was Nectanebo II, not Philip II)³², but still considers it possible that there was an Egyptian tradition which had Re incarnated in Kyros when Kambyzes was conceived³³.

It is almost impossible to say whether or not there was a historical marriage or request for marriage which served as a basis for any of the three stories. It is possible that Kyros at one time sought an alliance with Amasis, with a marriage to seal it. Perhaps it was Amasis who sought an alliance with one of the Persian kings, on account of the growing strength of the Persians; or perhaps the daughter of Apries went to the Persian court of her own volition and convinced the king to champion her cause—there are numerous possibilities. It is also conceivable that one of Kyros' or Kambyzes' wives was an Egyptian woman of high rank. However, I seriously doubt that Kambyzes' motivation for the campaign was at all related to a 'substitution/deception' or to vengeance on behalf of a supposed grandfather. The three stories rather seem to be of the folk-tale variety, concocted after-the-fact to explain in a romantic way the very political activity of the conquest.

The Campaign

Kambyzes had prepared for his expedition: he had gathered soldiers from various areas in his empire, including Ionian and Aeolian Greeks [Hdt. 3.1.1], and there were Mytilenians in the fleet [3.13.1], as well as Cypriots and Phoinikians [3.19.1-3]³⁴. He had also asked for and received a pledge of safe-conduct from the Arabian king so that he and his army could get across the Sinai desert [3.7.1-2]—the Arabian king filled camel-skins with water and took them into the desert to await Kambyzes' soldiers [3.9.1], thereby providing sufficient water for survival.

³² This would also explain the notion that Alexander disclaimed Philip as his father and was called the son of Ammon by Egyptian priests.

³³ Lloyd 1982: 175; Lloyd 1983: 297-298.

³⁴ Herodotos [7.1.2] says that Darios was preparing for his expedition against Greece for three years; Kambyzes' preparations must have taken at least a year, and probably longer if, as Wallinga suggests (1987: 47-77), the fleet had to be built up from practically nothing.

According to Herodotos, it was Phanes who suggested to Kambyzes that he ask the Arabs for help in crossing the desert [3.4.3]. Phanes was from Halikarnassos³⁵, and had been serving as a mercenary in Amasis' army [3.4.1]. Apparently he held a fairly high rank, and knew quite a lot about the military capabilities and defenses of Egypt [3.4.2]. At any rate, when Phanes for some reason was no longer content in Amasis' service, he escaped by sea, and Amasis was concerned enough to send his most trusted eunuch after him [3.4.2]. The eunuch captured Phanes in Lykia, but Phanes managed to escape by getting his guards drunk [3.4.2-3]. He then made his way to the Persian court, where Kambyzes was trying to find a way to cross the desert in safety [3.4.3]. Phanes suggested the safe-conduct, and also told Kambyzes everything he could about Amasis' affairs [3.4.3].

Meanwhile, in late 526 or early 525 BC, Amasis died and was succeeded by his son Psammenitos³⁶. Amasis, as mentioned above, had ruled for 44 years. Herodotos relates that Amasis was mummified and buried in a tomb which he had built [3.10.2]. Thus it was Psammenitos who fought Kambyzes. Psammenitos positioned himself and his army at the so-called Pelusian mouth of the Nile [3.10.1]. The Persians took up a position near the Egyptians; but before the battle took place, the Greek and Karian mercenaries exacted revenge on Phanes for bringing a foreign army into Egypt—they used the sons of Phanes as sacrificial animals, slitting the throat of each boy so that his blood drained into a bowl, and when the last had died, they added water and wine to the blood and drank it, and all of this before Phanes' very eyes [3.11.1-3].

The really interesting thing about Phanes, in my opinion, is the part he plays as a traitor to the Egyptians. Ktesias' version of the expedition also has a traitor—Kombaphes, a powerful eunuch at the Egyptian court [§9]. As mentioned above, we are told that Kombaphes betrayed the Nile defenses, and other Egyptian defenses, but we are not told how he did this³⁷. And Kombaphes

³⁵ Perhaps the reason why he was included in the narrative?

³⁶ Psammetichos III = Psamtek III; see Petrie 1972: 357-359.

³⁷ The epitome does not say whether he stayed in Egypt or escaped to Kambyzes and made a triumphant return with the king.

trades his betrayal for a high position in the Persian administration of Egypt³⁸. Thus, each version has a person of high standing, whose betrayal of Psammenitos is an important factor in Kambyes victory.

This is interesting because there is an Egyptian source which shows that there *was* a high-ranking person (an Egyptian) who switched his allegiance from Egypt to Persia, from Psammenitos to Kambyes. The Inscription of Udjahorresnet³⁹ provides important information for the period of the Persian invasion of Egypt, as well as information on Udjahorresnet's role under both the Egyptians and the Persians. Udjahorresnet held many important posts, beginning in the reign of Amasis and continuing into the reign of Dareios:

"(7) The one honoured by Neith-the-Great, the mother of god, and by the gods of Sais, the prince, count, royal seal-bearer, sole companion, true beloved King's friend, the scribe, inspector of council scribes, chief scribe of the great outer hall, administrator of the palace, (9) commander of the royal navy under the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, *Khenemibre* [=Amasis], commander of the royal navy under the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, *Ankhkare* [= Psamtik III], Udjahorresne ... says: ... His majesty [Kambyes] assigned to me the office of chief physician. (13) He made me live at his side as companion and administrator of the palace."⁴⁰

At least two of these titles were given to Udjahorresnet by Kambyes [l.13]⁴¹, and Kambyes appointed him as chief physician, which meant that he "had a leading position in the House of Life (i.e. *scriptorium* and temple library), which was a seat of learning for religion and science (including medicine)⁴². These obviously were prestigious appointments; and Dareios also seems to have continued Udjahorresnet in these positions, as he was still the chief physician when Dareios ordered him "to return to Egypt—when his majesty was in Elam and was Great Chief of all foreign lands and

³⁸ Whereas Phanes left Egypt because of some dissatisfaction. Herodotos does not say whether Phanes remained in Kambyes' service or not, or even what Phanes' reward was for his information.

³⁹ See above, n.23.

⁴⁰ M. Lichtheim 1980: 37.

⁴¹ Lloyd 1982: 169.

⁴² Holm-Rasmussen 1988: 37.

the Great Ruler of Egypt—in order to restore the establishment of the House of Life - - - [lacuna], after it had decayed."⁴³ This was quite an impressive career (albeit a non-military career)⁴⁴ for someone who had been the commander of the Egyptian fleet under both Amasis and Psammenitos!

Olmstead accused Udjahorresnet of having "treacherously" induced the surrender of the city Sais⁴⁵. Cook comments that this commander of the fleet "remains judiciously silent about his part in the war" but ended up with an impressive list of titles under Kambyzes and Dareios⁴⁶. Young feels that perhaps Udjahorresnet was responsible for the fleet's inaction, based on an 'argument from silence' in that the lack of mention of the fleet in the Inscription could indicate that Udjahorresnet did betray Egypt⁴⁷. Dandamaev says that Udjahorresnet did not resist the Persians and "surrendered Sais and the fleet without a fight".⁴⁸ But since the inscription does not actually tell what happened, the most that can be claimed is that Udjahorresnet actively collaborated with the Persians once they had won, particularly because the kings were willing to play the proper role of Pharaoh⁴⁹.

Neither Herodotos nor Ktesias mentions any Egyptians who betrayed the Pharaoh. In addition, there is an inscription on a vase dedicated to Apollo which says, "Phanes dedicated me"⁵⁰. This is taken by Petrie to be the Phanes of Herodotos but there is nothing which indicates that the Phanes in the inscription is the same man as in Herodotos. Yet it is curious that both of the Greek versions include a character who has access to important information on the defenses of Egypt and who goes over to the Persians. And Kombaphes does end up in an important administrative position. Perhaps the story of Udjahorresnet (or someone like him, a man of influence) circulated, became distorted, and eventually was used as a basis for these tales, with an appropriate *persona* grafted on. Perhaps

⁴³ Lichtheim 1980: 39.

⁴⁴ Lloyd 1982: 169.

⁴⁵ Olmstead 1948: 88.

⁴⁶ 1983: 48.

⁴⁷ 1988: 49.

⁴⁸ 1989: 75.

⁴⁹ Lloyd 1982: 173-174, 179-180; Holm-Rasmussen 1988: 35-36. Holm-Rasmussen 1988: 32-33, gives numerous examples of collaboration on the parts of various peoples in the Persian empire, showing that there was nothing unusual in Udjahorresnet's collaboration, and that the early Achaemenid kings, by keeping the local administrations and showing a willingness to respect the cultures and religions of the conquered, actively pursued a policy conducive to collaboration.

⁵⁰ Petrie 1972: vol. 3, p. 358, has a reproduction of the Greek.

Udjahorresnet actually did defect to Kambyes; this might explain the lack of mention of any sea battles during the conquest⁵¹.

In any event, battle was joined between the two land forces, and after a hard-fought encounter, the Egyptians were defeated [3.11.3]⁵². The remnants of the Egyptian force fled to Memphis and barricaded themselves in the city [3.13.1]; Kambyes sent a messenger to Memphis on a Mytilenean ship, proposing that they come to terms [3.13.1], but the Egyptians seized the ship, killed everyone on board, and took the remains back into Memphis [3.13.2]⁵³. Kambyes besieged the city. The Egyptians held out for a while, but finally surrendered [3.13.3].

The Libyans, fearing what had happened to the Egyptians, surrendered themselves to Kambyes without a fight, and agreed to pay tribute and send gifts; the people of Kyrene and Barka, fearing the same thing, also surrendered [3.13.3]. Herodotos then says that Kambyes received kindly (*φιλοφρόνως*) the gifts of the Libyans, but that he found fault with (*μεμψείς*) the gift from the Kyrenians (in *Herodotos' opinion* because it was too small [3.13.4]), and seizing the money in his own hands, he threw it to his troops. Now, Herodotos says that the Kyrenians had sent 500 minae of silver to Kambyes [3.13.4]. That is equivalent to 50,000 silver drachmae, or 8¹/₃ talents of silver. As Burn commented, that amount would take a *lot* of throwing!⁵⁴

There is other evidence in Herodotos which calls Kambyes' dissatisfaction into question. At 2.181, Herodotos relates that Amasis, after concluding an alliance with the Kyrenians [2.181.2], married a woman of Kyrene named Ladike, either because he wanted a Greek wife, or because of his fondness for the Kyrenians [2.181.1-2]. Ladike was the daughter either of Battos, the son of Arkesilaos, or of Kritoboulos, one of the noblemen of the city [2.181.2]. And Kambyes, after he had conquered Egypt and *learned who Ladike was*, sent her unharmed back to Kyrene [2.181.5].

⁵¹ Cf. Wallinga 1987: 47-48. Wallinga also mentions the possibility that the Egyptian navy was taken by surprise when Kambyes attacked, and the fleet was not yet strong enough to offer resistance, pp. 65-66. See also Dandamaev 1989: 75.

⁵² Herodotos, who claims to have seen the battlefield with its skeletal remains [3.12], does not give any casualty figures other than heavy losses to both armies; Ktesias (§9), who probably did not see the field, gives 50,000 dead on the Egyptian side but only 7000 on the Persian.

⁵³ Possibly they did this in order to prevent the Persians from properly burying their dead, a means of insulting the enemy; or perhaps it was a way of showing off the dead.

⁵⁴ Burn 1987: 207 n.1, and 36-37.

No explanation is given as to why her identity was important or why she was returned unharmed to her home.

There may, however, be a clue in a later section. At 4.161.1, Herodotos says that Battos, the son of Arkesilaos, took over the rule of Kyrene; and Battos and his wife Pheretime had a son, Arkesilaos, who succeeded his father to the throne [4.162.1-2]. Arkesilaos had a stormy reign, and eventually went into exile in Barka and died there [4.162-164]; and while Arkesilaos was in Barka, his mother Pheretime took his place in Kyrene [4.165.1]. But when she learned about her son's death, she fled to Egypt to the hyparch Aryandes, *because her son Arkesilaos had done some favours for Kambyzes, one of which was that Arkesilaos had surrendered Kyrene to Kambyzes and had agreed to pay tribute* [4.165.2].

Thus, the return of Ladike would make sense if she was the daughter of Battos and the sister of the Arkesilaos who surrendered Kyrene (depending on when Kambyzes found out about her, she may have been part of the original deal to surrender the city, i.e., a swap, or she may have been returned as a reciprocal favour after the surrender). And, given the status of Ladike, and the role of Arkesilaos, it is unlikely that Kambyzes was dissatisfied with the amount of the gift—if anything, he probably gave the money to his soldiers as a donative to celebrate the conquest of Egypt⁵⁵.

Psammenitos and Amasis

Herodotos relates that ten days after the capture of Memphis, Kambyzes put Psammenitos through an outrageous test; he had Psammenitos seated with some other Egyptians [3.14.1], and first had his daughter and the daughters of the other Egyptians dressed as slaves and paraded before their fathers as the girls fetched water [3.14.2]. Kambyzes then had the sons bridled and led to their executions past their fathers, the royal judges having decided that ten noble Egyptians should die for every man killed from the Mytilenian ship at Memphis [3.14.4-5]. In both instances Psammenitos only glanced at his children, and then looked away [3.14.3, 14.6]; he only revealed his grief upon

⁵⁵ Cf. Lloyd 1988: 63.

seeing an old friend reduced to begging [3.14.7]. Kambyzes was impressed by Psammenitos' empathy for a friend's trouble, and decided to save Psammenitos' son; he was too late to stop the execution, but he did have Psammenitos live in the palace and treated him well [3.14.8-15.1]. But when Psammenitos tried to raise a rebellion against Kambyzes, he justly paid the price, according to Herodotos; for when Kambyzes found out about this, Psammenitos drank bull's blood⁵⁶ and died immediately [3.15.2-4]. Herodotos also states that, had Psammenitos stayed out of trouble, he probably would have been allowed to govern Egypt, since the Persians tended to treat sons of kings well, even letting them rule in their own countries [3.15.2-3]⁵⁷. While the story of Psammenitos' trial seems more literary than historical⁵⁸, it is possible that he did try to regain his throne by rebellion⁵⁹.

After the death of Psammenitos, Kambyzes left Memphis and went to Sais [3.16.1]. According to Herodotos, Kambyzes had already considered what he would do when he got there; as soon as he arrived at the palace, he ordered that the corpse of Amasis be carried out of the tomb. Kambyzes then, among the other outrages inflicted on it, had the corpse whipped, struck with a goad, and its hairs plucked out [3.16.1]. But since the corpse had been embalmed, it stayed intact; therefore Kambyzes ordered that it be burned [3.16.2]. Herodotos comments on what a sacrilege this was, because, on the one hand, the Persians believed that 'fire' was a god and that it was not right to feed the body of a man to the god, and on the other hand, the Egyptians believed that 'fire' was a living wild animal that devoured whatever it could get hold of, and the Egyptians embalmed corpses because it was not their custom to give bodies to wild animals to eat [3.16.2-4]. In burning the mummy, Kambyzes was acting contrary to the customs of both countries⁶⁰.

⁵⁶ How/Wells 1964: 260; for more on bull's blood, see below, chapter 4.

⁵⁷ See above for the Persian policy to encourage collaboration by keeping the administration and government relatively intact. See also How/Wells 1964: 259-260.

⁵⁸ See Balcer 1987: 75.

⁵⁹ Cf. Petrie 1972: vol. 3, p. 351, for the claim on the funeral stela of Apries, that Apries had escaped from Sais and revolted from Amasis during their 'joint' rule. Herodotos does not record this; he says that the Egyptians demanded Apries' death because he was very hostile to both Amasis and themselves [2.169.1-4]. Perhaps it refers to an attempted revolt, but that is not certain. In any case, this is not the first mention of a revolt by a former ruler. See How/Wells 1964: 259-260.

⁶⁰ How/Wells 1964: 261, notes that the mummy of Amasis' queen had not been damaged by any fire.

In order to 'rescue the story of the maltreatment of Amasis' mummy from the category of myth' Atkinson⁶¹ recalls an argument which proposed that Kambyes had abused the mummy to emphasize that Amasis had usurped the rightful rule of Apries. According to Atkinson, this is in accord with the theory that Kambyes invented the stories of Nitetis' link with the Achaemenids in order to legitimize his rule in Egypt⁶². Bresciani takes a similar view⁶³, saying that the story of Amasis' corpse makes sense when considered in respect to the story of Kambyes' being the grandson of Apries: 'Above all the conqueror of Egypt wanted to present himself to the Egyptian people as the legitimate descendant of the Saite dynasty, who had come to claim the throne which the usurper Amasis had taken from the rightful Pharaoh, Apries.'⁶⁴

The problem is that there is no evidence that Kambyes wanted to seem the "legitimate descendant of the Saite dynasty"⁶⁵. It can be seen from the inscription of Udjahorresnet that Kambyes wanted to seem to be the *Pharaoh* of Egypt—he took an Egyptian title, *Mesuti-rē*, he went to the temple of Neith and prostrated himself before the goddess 'as every king has done'⁶⁶, he made a magnificent offering to Neith "as every beneficent king has done"⁶⁷, and he performed other such services which Udjahorresnet records. But in all of the actions of Kambyes which he records, there is no mention of any link between Kambyes and Apries, or suggestion that it is appropriate that Kambyes do such things because he is the grandson of Apries.

It may well be that Kambyes set out to damn Amasis' memory; there are instances where the name of Amasis (or Psammenitos) has been removed from an inscription, and the name of Kambyes substituted⁶⁸. This does not mean that any *damnatio memoriae* of Amasis was justified by means of a tale about Kambyes' link with Apries. If Kambyes had burned Amasis' corpse, it could have

61 1956: 171-172.

62 See above, chapter 2; Atkinson 1956: 171-177.

63 1985: 503-504.

64 Bresciani 1985: 503.

65 Bresciani 1985: 503.

66 Lichtheim 1980: 38.

67 Lichtheim 1980: 38.

68 Bresciani 1985: 504; Hodjache/Berlev 1977: 37-39.

been part of a *damnatio*, and been aimed at destroying Amasis' chances of a proper afterlife⁶⁹. Kambyes would not have been concerned about the Persian beliefs regarding fire because Amasis was not a Persian: the important thing would have been to treat the corpse in a manner that was abusive to *Egyptian* beliefs because Amasis had been an Egyptian⁷⁰. The *damnatio* could just as likely have been based on the revolt of Psammenitos mentioned by Herodotos at 3.15. It is equally possible that the idea of Amasis' 'illegitimate' rule came from the Egyptians themselves, i.e., from an anti-Amasis faction: they may well have started this story for their own reasons⁷¹.

The Three Expeditions

Kambyes' next activity was the planning of three different campaigns, one against the Karchedonians (= Carthaginians), one against the Ammonians, and one against the "long-lived Aithiopians" [3.17.1]. He apparently decided on sending a diplomatic mission to Aithiopia—Herodotos records that Kambyes summoned some "Fish-eaters" from Elephantine (because they knew the Aithiopian language) in order to have them spy out the area for him under the guise of bringing gifts to the Aithiopian king [3.17.2, 19.1]. While the "Fish-eaters" were being summoned, Kambyes turned his attention to the Carthaginian expedition, and ordered the fleet to set out against Carthage; the Phoinikians, however, refused to take part on the grounds that (1) there were great oaths or treaties sworn between themselves and the people of Carthage, and (2) the Carthaginians were their children and it would not be pious/lawful to campaign against them [3.19.2]. The

⁶⁹ Kambyes would have needed expert advice on how to effect this, as he clearly could not have been an expert on the complex Egyptian theory of the afterlife—after all, he did not even know the laws of his own country in detail and had to have the royal judges advise him (see above, chapter 2). It may have been Udjahorresnet who was his adviser in this, since he shows up in the inscription as Kambyes' adviser for many aspects of Egyptian custom—the royal title, the importance of Sais as the seat of the goddess Neith, the various aspects of the gods and goddesses and their importance, the proper ceremonies and offerings to be given, etc. (Lichtheim 1980: 37-39)

⁷⁰ Herodotos records that the Egyptians had a different story: it was not the body of Amasis that was abused, but of another man; Amasis had foreseen what would happen and placed another body in a prominent area of the tomb to mislead Kambyes [3.16.5-7]. Herodotos does not believe this tale, and thinks it was told by the Egyptians so that they could save face.

⁷¹ See How/Wells 1964: 260, and Lloyd 1988: 62. It is natural to assume that all Egyptians would have been pro-Amasis and anti-Persian, but it is important to remember that this may not have been true—not all Egyptians may have been well-disposed towards Amasis.

remainder of the fleet⁷² was not strong enough to carry out the task [3.19.2], and Kambyes would not force them to go because the entire fleet depended on the Phoinikians [3.19.3].

Wallinga has argued (convincingly, in my opinion) that the Phoinikians actually were the crew of ships which Kambyes supplied⁷³. Herodotos later reports that the Persians said that Kambyes had not only held his father's territories but also held in addition both Egypt and the sea [3.34.4]; of course, Egypt had built up a fairly impressive sea power during the Saite dynasty⁷⁴, and the conquest of Egypt put this power into Kambyes' hands. Still, to maintain that strength would need the cooperation of the Phoinikians, so it is no wonder that Kambyes preferred to give in to them.

Unfortunately, Herodotos does not give any information on why Kambyes wanted to campaign against Carthage; nor does this seem to be a particularly important event—it is presented simply as an idea that never got off the ground, and Kambyes does not show any anger over the Phoinikians' refusal. Its importance is rather as the first of three 'failed' expeditions which form a kind of tricolon crescendo of disaster'.

The second and third campaigns are initiated by Kambyes' anger [3.25.1]. The "Fish-eaters", as instructed, had obtained an audience with the king of the Aithiopians [3.20.1-24.4]. The tale is typical folk-lore: the king is the tallest, strongest and most handsome man in the country [3.20.1-2]; he is also discerning, for he *knows* that Kambyes sent the "Fish-eaters" as spies under the guise of desiring friendship [3.21.1-2]; he despises the gifts of Kambyes, all but the wine, because the presents (dyed wool, myrrh, etc.) are all pretending to be something other than their natural state [3.22.1-4]⁷⁵. The king, when asked, reveals the secrets of their long lives—milk, boiled meat and bathing in the waters of a spring which smelled of violets [3.23.1-3]. He also gives the "Fish-eaters" a huge bow to give to Kambyes, and bids them to tell him that when he can string the bow, then he

⁷² Presumably this includes the Kypriots whom Herodotos mentions at 3.19.3 as having voluntarily signed on for the campaign against Egypt.

⁷³ Wallinga 1987: 47, 68f.

⁷⁴ Wallinga 1987: 55-56.

⁷⁵ The king does not despise the wine, even though it is not in its natural state.

can fight the Aithiopians—until then, he should be thankful that the Aithiopians had no desire to conquer *him* [3.21.2-22.1].

This message roused Kambyzes to rage; leaving Sais, he set out south to march against the Aithiopians, *without supplies or preparations* [3.25.1]. Along the way, at Thebes, he dispatched a portion of his troops to attack the Ammonians and burn the oracle of Zeus [3.25.3]. After sending off the troops for Ammon, he then continued on his way; but the food soon ran out, and his men were forced to eat the pack animals, then grasses and greenery, and finally each other—for one in every ten was chosen by lot to be the victim [3.25.4-7]. Herodotos records that Kambyzes was mad [3.25.2] and insensitive to the men's needs [3.25.1, 25.5], until the cannibalism sickened even him. When he found out about it, he turned back, with a greatly reduced army, and returned to Memphis.

This third expedition, against the Aithiopians, appears to be more fantastic than real. It is filled with story elements: the anger of the king (Kambyzes), his deceitfulness, the 'noble' savage, the madness of the king which causes his own downfall⁷⁶, the brief reverting to his senses before all is totally lost. The Aithiopians appear as a typical fringe group of a type similar to the Scythians, etc. [4.1-2, 59-76.1]. It is generally accepted that Herodotos' Aithiopians did not exist, or at least were not the ones Kambyzes came into contact with⁷⁷. There does appear to be some evidence that Kambyzes campaigned against the neighbouring Nubians who had been subject to the Egyptians. This may be to whom Herodotos is referring in 3.97 when he talks of the Aithiopians bordering on Egypt having paid gifts since Kambyzes' campaign. Nubia proper, however, did not yet appear on the tribute lists⁷⁸. Herodotos presents this campaign in the narrative as the second failed expedition, when it is actually the third. Kambyzes has now deteriorated to irrationality, and has 'sinned' against his own men by taking them on campaign without proper preparations, with the result of cannibalism (a dire expedient laid directly on Kambyzes' doorstep).

⁷⁶ Balcer calls this Kambyzes' tragic flaw, 1987: 73ff.

⁷⁷ Balcer 1987: 82-84; Young 1988: 49-50.

⁷⁸ Hertzfeld 1968: 283; Young 1988: 49-50. It was once thought that an inscription which told of a battle with a certain *Km Armla* referred to Kambyzes; the inscription is now believed to refer to someone else, and to date to the 4th century, not the 6th century; see Cook 1985: 214; Dandamaev 1989: 79-81.

The second 'doomed' expedition, the force against the Ammonians, actually falls in the narrative after the third expedition [3.26.1-3], to allow for a smoother narrative flow. The story itself is fairly simple—the force marched from Thebes in the company of guides, and apparently got as far as a town called Oasis (called 'Islands of the Blessed' in Greek), but disappeared from there. The Ammonians themselves reported that the force had left Oasis, and had reached a spot half-way between that town and the edge of Ammonian territory; they had stopped for lunch when a sandstorm struck, and they were buried forever.

Now, the only real claim to fame that the Ammonians had was that Siwah was the location of the famous oracle of Ammon (= Zeus). It is located in the north-western area of Egypt, an oasis in the midst of desert. It is difficult to believe that a commander who had prepared so well for his attack on Egypt would leave Sais, march as far south as Thebes, and then detach a unit of men to travel almost as far north again and westwardly, in order to attack and burn an oracle of Ammon—or at least, not without some very good reason. Perhaps the priests of the oracle had been involved in the revolt of Psammenitos, and Kambyes was sending a unit out to subdue and control them. Or perhaps Kambyes actually made a trip out to Siwah to consult the oracle, just as Alexander was later to do⁷⁹, and this journey was recast as an attack by the army. Without further evidence, it is unlikely that the truth will ever be known⁸⁰.

What can be seen is the role this story plays in Herodotos' characterization of Kambyes. At Sais, in burning the body of Amasis, Kambyes had acted contrary to the customs of both the Egyptians and the Persians. But in his madness, he sent out troops to attack a *god* (Ammon). Although Herodotos does not explicitly state it, it is only after Kambyes has made this impious decision that things go terribly wrong—he loses a large portion of his troops (without even meeting the enemy in battle) because of hunger, his men are forced to cannibalism, and the unit sent to Siwah

⁷⁹ Curtius 4.7.5-30, Arrian 3.3-4, Plut. *Alex.* 26-27. Plutarch even mentions Kambyes' army, when discussing the famed and dangerous south wind which blows in that area.

⁸⁰ See How/Wells 1964: 262-263.

vanishes without a trace. In Herodotos' narrative, this impiety leads to an even greater impiety—not an *attempted* attack on a god, but an *accomplished* attack on the god Apis⁸¹.

The Sacrileges of Kambyzes

Much of Kambyzes' negative reputation stems from the stories in Herodotos, and especially the stories of the outrages directed against the gods and Kambyzes' own family. Fortunately, there are Egyptian sources which provide a counterbalance to some of the charges against Kambyzes.

The most well-documented evidence concerns the Apis bull which Kambyzes was alleged to have killed. Herodotos' account of the Apis bull is placed chronologically after Kambyzes' return from the Aithiopian expedition, but in actual placement, the account immediately follows upon the story of the doomed expedition against the Ammonians; thus, the proposed (but thwarted) attack on one god is immediately followed by the story of a successful attack on another god.

Herodotos relates that after Kambyzes' arrival in Memphis, the Egyptian god Apis appeared. The Egyptians, naturally, began celebrating with festivities [3.27.1]. Kambyzes was convinced that they were celebrating because he had fared badly; he summoned the administrators, and when they arrived, he asked them why the Egyptians had not acted like this on his previous visit instead of now when he had arrived without a large part of his army [3.27.2]. The administrators explained that a god had appeared which customarily appeared only after a long absence, and that whenever he was manifest all the Egyptians celebrated. Kambyzes heard them out, called them liars, and had them executed for this [3.27.3]. He then summoned the priests to him, and when they said the same things as the administrators had, Kambyzes asserted that he would find out himself if some god had appeared and was present. So saying, he ordered them to bring the Apis to him [3.28.1]. The priests brought the Apis to Kambyzes, who, being somewhat mad (*ὕπομαργότερος*), drew his dagger and took aim at the stomach of the Apis bull, but missed and wounded it in the thigh [3.29.1]. Kambyzes then laughed and ridiculed the priests, saying that a god that bled was suitable for the

⁸¹ Cf. Balcer 1987: 84-85.

Egyptians, and that they would not make a fool of him with impunity. Thereupon he ordered that the priests be whipped, and that any Egyptian caught celebrating be killed [3.29.2]. So the Egyptians were disbanded, the priests punished, and the Apis wasted away in the temple until it died; the priests then buried the Apis calf without Kambyes' knowledge [3.29.3].

The Egyptian evidence contradicts this story. Epitaphs exist from the burials of two different Apis bulls, one in the reign of Kambyes, the other in the reign of Dareios⁸². The epitaph inscription relating to the burial of the Apis in Kambyes' reign indicates that the bull was buried on the 10th day (?) of the 3rd month of the season Shemou in the 6th year of Kambyes' rule; all of the proper ceremonies were performed in the embalming room; the bull was properly adorned—everything was done according to Kambyes' orders⁸³. The year referred to, the 6th year, is reckoned according to Kambyes' succession to the Persian throne⁸⁴. The next date seen in the inscription refers to a 27th year; there is also a reference to another year, but the text is mutilated and the actual figures are not extant⁸⁵. Part of Kambyes' name is preserved at the end of the text, while the beginning of the text records his royal title⁸⁶. According to Posener, four dates are usually given in Apis epitaphs: the date of burial (in line 1), the date of birth, the date of 'enthronement' and the date of death⁸⁷. Normally there is a 70-day interval between the death and the burial. Since the burial date was given in line 1, the "year 27" must refer to one of the other dates; it cannot refer to the date of death, because another date follows it, and because that would be either an extraordinarily long-lived bull, or an extraordinarily long interval between the death and burial (since the only "year 27" previous to Kambyes' reign would be during Amasis' reign). Thus it can only refer to a date of birth or date of enthronement; Posener feels it is probably the date of birth, since another date follows, probably the

⁸² See especially Posener 1936: 30-37, 171-175; Gauthier 1916: 135-139; Atkinson 1956: 168-171; Parker 1957: 209-210 + n.3; Parker 1941: 298-301; also Dandamaev 1989: 82; Bresciani 1985: 504-505; Root 1979: 123-125; Olmstead 1948: 89-90; Cook 1983: 49; Young 1988: 51.

⁸³ Posener 1936: 33.

⁸⁴ Posener 1936: 33, (a). One of the problems in dealing with the Egyptian evidence from Kambyes' reign is the dating system used—or more precisely, the fact that more than one system is used. Apparently, some documents are dated from the time Kambyes took the Persian throne, while others are dated from the death of Amasis. See Posener 1936: 33.

⁸⁵ Posener 1936: 33.

⁸⁶ Posener 1936: 33, 35.

⁸⁷ Posener 1936: 34.

enthronement date⁸⁸. Since the reference "year 27" can only refer to Amasis' rule, the bull lived approximately 19 years.

The stele on which the epitaph is found also has an area of sculpture, which shows Kambyes in Egyptian garments, kneeling before a table, with the dead Apis bull on the right⁸⁹. There is also a sarcophagos which Posener believes must have belonged to the bull mentioned in the epitaph, since it is the only one recorded as having been buried in Kambyes' reign⁹⁰. The inscription lists both Kambyes' royal names and his first-name, and says that he gave a good quality monument to Apis-Osiris, a large granite sarcophagos, dedicated by Kambyes⁹¹. Posener dates the sarcophagos to 524 BC, the 6th Persian year of Kambyes⁹².

As Posener points out, it is difficult to reconcile the evidence from these inscriptions with the narrative of Herodotos⁹³—the one shows Kambyes observing all of the Pharaonic duties regarding the proper burial of the bull, while the other shows him as having ridiculed the idea that the bull was a god, and indicates that the bull was buried *without Kambyes' knowledge*. The bull in the inscriptions can not be the one referred to by Herodotos. The next Apis bull to be buried was one which died in Dareios' 4th year, having been born in the 5th year, 5th month, 29th day of Kambyes' reign⁹⁴, so that Apis cannot have been killed by Kambyes either.

The date of birth of the second Apis creates a new problem—there is an overlap of over one year when there are two Apis bulls. This is contrary to Egyptian beliefs, since the god can not inhabit two bulls at once (the length of the succession being counted from the birth date of one bull to the birth date of the next)⁹⁵. To solve this problem, Posener postulates that there was an abnormally long interval between the death and the burial of the Apis in Kambyes' reign⁹⁶. The date of death is

⁸⁸ Posener 1936: 34.

⁸⁹ Root 1979: 123-124; Olmstead 1948: 90.

⁹⁰ Posener 1936: 35-36.

⁹¹ Posener 1936: 36.

⁹² Posener 1936: 171.

⁹³ Posener 1936: 171.

⁹⁴ Posener 1936: 172.

⁹⁵ Posener 1936: 172.

⁹⁶ Posener 1936: 172-173

missing from the epitaph; if one calculates from the date of burial the usual 70-day interval, this shows an overlap with the birth of the next Apis⁹⁷. But it is possible that the interval was longer than the normal 70 days; the text suggests (according to Posener) that the burial took place under abnormal conditions and that Kambyes needed to step in to facilitate the burial⁹⁸. The birth of the second Apis, on the 29th day of the 5th month of the 5th year coincides with the conquest of Egypt in May-June of 525 BC. Since the first bull should have died before the second was born, it is possible that the bull buried by Kambyes died shortly before May 525, but in the confusion of the conquest, the funeral was delayed for over a year⁹⁹. This would account for the overlap, and would not leave room for the bull in Herodotos' story¹⁰⁰. Posener also argues against a proposal by Wiedemann that Kambyes killed the Apis bull as in Herodotos' story, that the overlap period is actually the life-span of that Apis, and that the period was added into the life-span of the bull buried by Dareios so that the crime could be hidden. The first four lines of the text, which tell of the embalming and official nature of the burial, had not been restored when Wiedemann made his proposal; the official aspect is also supported and emphasized by the sarcophagos, its sculpture, inscription and size. There is no support for Wiedemann's theory in recent scholarship.

Atkinson¹⁰¹ also discusses the validity of Herodotos' story, but has a different explanation for the problem of the overlap. According to her, the discrepancy arises from the use of two different dating systems, Kambyes having used the Egyptian, while Dareios used the Persian. This would give a date of death for the first Apis at the end of August 525 BC, using the Egyptian system, and a date of 25 August 525 BC for the birth of the second Apis¹⁰². This would also account for the problem of the length of life recorded for the second Apis (the uncertainty is between reading 7 years

⁹⁷ Posener 1936: 172.

⁹⁸ Posener 1936: 173.

⁹⁹ Posener 1936: 173.

¹⁰⁰ Bresciani 1985: 504-505, Parker 1957: 209 n.3, and Olmstead 1948: 90 all support Posener's theory; Dandamaev 1989: 82 supports the idea that Kambyes did not kill either bull, but says that the second bull was not born until Dareios' first year.

¹⁰¹ Atkinson 1956: 168-171.

¹⁰² Atkinson 1956: 170.

and 8 years)¹⁰³, the trouble having arisen because of the confusion between the two systems¹⁰⁴. However, Parker¹⁰⁵ has raised some objections to the assumptions made by Atkinson: (1) that Kambyzes "dated his reign retroactively after his conquest of Egypt"¹⁰⁶, (2) that Kambyzes used the Egyptian system without an accession year, and (3) that Dareios used the Persian system in Egypt. The problem of the different dating systems does not seem to have a solution yet.

Whatever the explanation, in this instance, at least, the Egyptian sources contradict Herodotos. Yet clearly this episode was important to Herodotos, since it led into the theme of Kambyzes' madness and his further impious and criminal acts. The Egyptians, according to Herodotos, believed that Kambyzes went totally insane as a result of the murder of the Apis (he had been only 'partly mad' before this) [3.30.1]. And Herodotos relates the resultant crimes as proofs of Kambyzes' insanity.

The first crime was the murder of Kambyzes' full-brother, Smerdis [3.30.1]¹⁰⁷. Herodotos writes that Kambyzes envied Smerdis because he was the only one of the Persians who could draw on the Aithiopian bow at all (he drew it approximately two fingers' worth); therefore, Kambyzes sent him home from Egypt to Persia [3.30.1]. After Smerdis had arrived in Persia, Kambyzes had a dream in which a messenger came to him from the Persians to announce that Smerdis was sitting on the royal throne and that he was touching the sky with his head [3.30.2]. Kambyzes was afraid for his own life, in case the dream meant that Smerdis would kill him and take over the rule; so he sent Prexaspes, the Persian he most trusted, to Persia with orders to kill Smerdis. When Prexaspes arrived at Susa he killed Smerdis. Even in Herodotos' day, it was not definitely known how Smerdis

¹⁰³ See Parker 1941: 286-287.

¹⁰⁴ Atkinson 1956: 170-171. Root (1979: 125) and Cook (1983: 49) both follow this theory.

¹⁰⁵ Parker 1957: 209-210 n.3.

¹⁰⁶ Parker 1957: 209 n.3.

¹⁰⁷ There are other pieces of evidence for the murder of Smerdis: Ktesias [§10-11], Troguis [1.9.4-9] and Dareios' Behistun [Bisitun] Inscription [§10]. These will be discussed in detail in chapter 4; for the present, it is important to note that (1) both Herodotos' and Ktesias' information must have ultimately derived from the version given in the Behistun Inscription or from a tradition which originated with someone intimately involved with the events (Cook 1985: 203-204, 205-206), and (2) that although these versions attribute the murder to Kambyzes, neither Ktesias nor the Behistun Inscription mentions Kambyzes' madness.

was killed: Herodotos reports two versions, one of which has Smerdis killed while hunting, the other of which has him drowned in the Red Sea (= Persian Gulf) [3.30.3].

This story contains a number of folk-lore elements. First there is the jealousy over the bow: as Balcer has commented, this bow represents kingly power—Kambyzes could not conquer the Aithiopians until he was able to draw the bow as well as the Aithiopian king could; yet Smerdis was able to draw it to a greater extent than any other Persian. This obviously meant that Smerdis now had the kingly power¹⁰⁸. This naturally is confirmed by the dream which Kambyzes interprets as a threat to his own power and kingship¹⁰⁹. Then there is the 'faithful servant/friend' who does his bidding, even to the extent of committing murder. And there is the fact of the uncertainty over how Smerdis died—that he was killed was more important than how¹¹⁰. All of these elements serve to advance the theme of Kambyzes' madness: if it were not for the other pieces of evidence, and especially the Behistun Inscription, this whole sequence might be doubted. As it stands, it is only the details that are doubtful; the fact of Smerdis' death is accepted¹¹¹.

The murder of Smerdis leads quite naturally into Kambyzes' second crime, the murder of his sister-wife in Egypt. Kambyzes had married two of his own sisters in Persia¹¹², and the younger sister accompanied him to Egypt [3.31.1, 31.6]. While they were in Egypt, Kambyzes killed this sister-wife [3.31.6], and, as in the case of Smerdis, there are two versions of her death [3.32.1ff.]. In the Greek account Kambyzes had staged a fight between a lion-cub and a puppy, and his wife was watching the spectacle. The puppy was losing the battle, when a brother pup from the same litter broke its chain and came to the rescue, and the two puppies managed to overcome the lion-cub [3.32.1]. Kambyzes was pleased with the show, but his wife was in tears because, when she saw the puppies' actions, she was reminded that Smerdis was no longer an avenger for Kambyzes (i.e., Smerdis was no longer available to come to Kambyzes' aid and unite to fight off an enemy—a

¹⁰⁸ Balcer 1987: 80-82.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Hdt. 1.209 for Kyros' dream that Dareios was plotting to take over the throne.

¹¹⁰ Balcer 1987: 86-87.

¹¹¹ See, for example, Cook 1985: 203-204; Dandamaev 1989: 83ff.; Cook 1983: 49ff.; Olmstead 1948: 92-93.

¹¹² See above, chapter 2.

wonderful piece of foreshadowing!) [3.32.2]. According to the Greeks, she was killed by Kambyes because of this [3.32.3].

The Egyptians had a different account of her death. She and Kambyes were at dinner, when she picked up a lettuce and began stripping the leaves off it; then she asked Kambyes if he liked it better with or without the leaves. He said he liked it better with its leaves, whereupon his wife replied that he had mimicked the lettuce in that he stripped bare the house of Kyros [3.32.3-4]. Kambyes, in a rage, kicked her; as she was pregnant, the blow caused her to miscarry and resulted in her death [3.32.4].

It is interesting to note that in the Greek version, his wife is concerned for Kambyes, because he no longer has anyone to help him (which at the same time also implies that he *needs* help), but in the Egyptian version she takes the role of rebuker, her concern being for Kyros' family rather than Kambyes. Also, the Greek account does not actually say that Kambyes was angry—that is left for the reader to infer; the Egyptian story, on the other hand, explicitly says that Kambyes became enraged and her death resulted from his actions while he was angry. Again, the Egyptian story shows Kambyes in the worst possible light.

As previously mentioned, the epitome of Ktesias (§12) offers a piece of information which may relate to this: in the narrative about Kambyes' death, a number of negative omens precede this event; one of these omens is that a woman named Rhoxane bore him a headless child. This Rhoxane may be the wife Herodotos says Kambyes killed. It may very well be that Kambyes' wife died due to complications with her pregnancy, and that the stories of her death at Kambyes' hands arose as part of the theme of his madness.

At this point, Herodotos calls into question the Egyptian belief that it was the killing of the Apis bull which caused Kambyes' madness [3.33], although he affirms his opinion that the murders of Kambyes' own brother and sister were committed by a madman. Herodotos relates an alternative story, that Kambyes had suffered from birth from the 'great disease' (the 'sacred disease'), and he finds nothing unusual in someone's brain being affected by an illness of the body. Thus, although he

does support the belief that Kambyzes was insane, he seems to throw some doubt on the interpretation that the insanity stemmed from the death of the Apis bull.

The two murders also provide a link with the next section in Herodotos' list of Kambyzes' crimes. The 'flow' has moved from Egypt, to the murder of the Egyptian god, to the madness this caused, to the proof of the madness in the murder of both Kambyzes' brother and sister, to his insane behaviour towards other Persians [3.34.1ff]. The first example of crimes against the Persians involves Prexaspes again. The story went (λέγεται, with no indication as to source) that Kambyzes asked Prexaspes what the Persians thought of him [3.34.1]; Prexaspes answered that he was greatly praised, but that they thought he was too fond of his wine [3.34.2]. This enraged Kambyzes, who had already had a few drinks [3.34.3], and to prove whether or not they were correct, he told Prexaspes that if he shot an arrow into the middle of Prexaspes' son's heart (Prexaspes' son was Kambyzes' cup-bearer, [3.34.1]), the Persians would be wrong, and if he missed they would be correct and he would not be sane [3.35.1-2]. So Kambyzes drew his bow, shot the child, and had him cut open to show that he had indeed shot the boy through the heart [3.35.3]. Kambyzes then laughed, commented that he was sane and the Persians mad, and asked Prexaspes if he had seen anyone shoot so successfully [3.35.3-4]. Prexaspes, seeing that Kambyzes was insane, and fearing for his own life, answered that he did not think the god¹¹³ himself could shoot as well [3.35.4].

This tale too seems more of the folk-tale variety than an actual event. Herodotos, earlier in his narrative, tells how Astyages in anger punished Harpagos by killing his son and feeding him to Harpagos [1.118ff.]; this tale seems to be a variation on the theme¹¹⁴. Again there is the king's anger and the insane action he takes against his most trusted companion; and once more the bow appears, as a symbol of power. The main point being made in the story about Kambyzes is the irrational nature of his actions.

¹¹³ Possibly Apollo or Mithra?

¹¹⁴ Cf. the story of Atreus and Thyestes.

This leads to the mention of Kambyzes' other acts, beginning with that of burying twelve Persian nobles in the sand up to their necks¹¹⁵, for no good reason [3.35.5]. There are no details regarding this story, although it does seem from the wording that there was a reason for the punishment, even if Herodotos says it was not sufficient reason (ἐπ' οὐδεμὴν αἰτίῃ ἀξιοχρέω).

Next there occurs the story of Kroisos [3.36.1-6], in which Kroisos warns Kambyzes that the indiscriminate killing of Persians and children will cause revolts (another nice bit of foreshadowing, and a convenient peg on which to hang the rebellion); this (of course) angers Kambyzes, who then orders Kroisos' death; some servants hide him, knowing that Kambyzes will change his mind, which he does; when Kambyzes has cooled off, he is overjoyed to see Kroisos, but punishes the servants in anger for disobedience. Aside from the unlikelihood of Kroisos' still being alive, this story again is mostly a 'topos' to which various names have been applied¹¹⁶.

Herodotos comments that Kambyzes in his madness did many such things to the Persians and the allies [3.37.1]. He then goes on to tell of further outrages which Kambyzes committed in Memphis. Kambyzes is charged with opening the ancient tombs and looking at the mummies [3.37.1], entering the temple of Hephaistos and mocking the image there [3.37.2], and entering the temple of the Kabeiroi (only priests were allowed to enter) and mocking and burning the images [3.37.3]¹¹⁷.

The Behistun Inscription, Ktesias and Justin are the only other sources for the murder of Smerdis¹¹⁸; as to the murder of Kambyzes' sister-wife and the other outrages committed against the Persians, there is no other near-contemporary evidence at all for these events, and the abundance of folk-tale elements in these stories casts doubt on their veracity. However, other evidence is available in relation to the stories of the sacrileges against the temples.

¹¹⁵ This is a controversial phrase in the Greek, which is translated either as 'head down in the sand', or 'up to their necks'; cf. How/Wells 1964: vol. 1 at 3.35.5. However, it seems sufficiently similar in intent to a punishment related by Plutarch [*Artax.* 6.2-4], and it should therefore be taken to mean 'buried up to the neck'.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Astyages and Harpagos at Herodotos 1.117ff.; Balcer 1987: 102-103.

¹¹⁷ As Balcer has commented, 1987: 86-87, there is evident ring-composition: Herodotos begins with the sacrilege against the Apis, goes through the proofs of Kambyzes' madness, and comes full circle back to more sacrileges against the gods.

¹¹⁸ See below, chapter 4.

Once again, the Inscription of Udjahorresnet provides a different account of Kambyes' activities in Egypt:

I made a petition (18) to the majesty of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, *Cambyes*, about all the foreigners who dwelled in the temple of Neith, in order to have them expelled from it, so as to let the temple of Neith be in all its splendor, as it had been before. His majesty commanded to expel all the foreigners (20) [who] dwelled in the temple of Neith, to demolish all their houses and all their unclean things that were in this temple.

When they had carried [all their] personal [belongings] outside the wall of the temple, his majesty commanded to cleanse the temple of Neith and to return all its personnel to it, (22) the - - - and the hour-priests of the temple. His majesty commanded to give divine offerings to Neith-the-Great, the mother of god, and to the great gods of Sais, as it had been before. His majesty commanded [to perform] all their festivals and all their processions, as had been done before. His majesty did this because I had let his majesty know the greatness of Sais, that it is the city of all the gods, who dwell there on their seats forever.¹¹⁹

This indicates that it was the "foreigners" (i.e., Kambyes' troops) who were desecrating the temples; Kambyes, when informed of the situation, took steps to rectify it—a religiously and politically astute move on his part¹²⁰. As Lloyd comments, "It is difficult to see how such a text could have been written if Cambyes had been guilty of such heinous crimes as Herodotus describes."¹²¹

As for his inspection of the tombs, that does not seem to have been unusual; during the reign of Ramessu X (1153-1134 BC) an inspection was made of a number of royal tombs in response to concern over robberies¹²², so perhaps Kambyes had ordered a similar inspection. Or perhaps it was simply curiosity of the kind Alexander displayed for Kyros' tomb¹²³. Either way, the act need not be taken as stemming from disrespect for Egyptian religion and customs.

¹¹⁹ Lichtheim 1980: 38.

¹²⁰ Bresciani 1985: 505; Lloyd 1982: 171-173.

¹²¹ Lloyd 1988: 64.

¹²² Petrie 1972: vol. 2, pp. 339-342; vol. 3, pp. 180-183.

¹²³ Arrian 6.29f.; Curtius 10.1.30-32.

There is also a document which provides evidence of economic sanctions against some Egyptian temples, and scholars tend to see this as the reason for all the negative reports about Kambyases¹²⁴. A demotic papyrus records a decree of Kambyases in which he reduced and modified the revenue amounts established for the temples during Amasis' reign¹²⁵. Only three temples were to keep their former revenue levels; the remainder had restrictions such as: (1) firewood had to be gathered from certain areas, (2) the number of animals given for sacrifices was halved, and (3) birds were no longer to be supplied (but the priests could offer birds which they had raised themselves). Kambyases did *not* prevent worship in the temples, nor did he do this because of impiety—it was an economic measure¹²⁶. Nevertheless, such an act would surely have angered the priestly population of Egypt, and who better to begin rumours of Kambyases' impiety and madness? These stories could have then been modified by Greek attitudes and finally overlaid with Herodotos' literary techniques and style¹²⁷.

Kambyases' reputation as an impious madman stems, in my opinion, from the Egyptian sources of Herodotos. Ktesias used mainly Persian sources for his history (however bad the sources may have been)¹²⁸, and Photios' epitome does not show any trace of the 'madness' theme which dominates Herodotos' version. This is not to deny the possibility that Ktesias *did* record such a tradition; however, if it was in the *Persika*, Photios did a remarkably thorough job of excising it! Nor does the Behistun Inscription give any indication that Kambyases was mad:

King Darius states: This is what I did under the protection of Ahura Mazda after I became king.¹² There was a certain man, Cambyases, the son of Cyrus, king of Persia, king of lands. He - who was of our line - became king here. The brother of that Cambyases was Barziya. They (had) the same father (and) the same mother. Then¹³ that Cambyases killed

¹²⁴ Olmstead 1948: 91-92; Cook 1985: 215 + n.2; Cook 1983: 49; Holm-Rasmussen (1988: 35-36) follows Dandamaev 1976: 144-157, in seeing the Persians as the main source for the negative characterization of Kambyases, which the Egyptians then embellished.

¹²⁵ Lloyd 1988: 64-65; Bresciani 1985: 505-506.

¹²⁶ Bresciani 1985: 506. Udjahorresnet's mention of the importance of Neith and the emphasis on everything being done as it was done before may refer to a special dispensation for the temple *after* the decree reducing revenues was enacted, see Bresciani 1985: 506-507.

¹²⁷ Lloyd 1988: 65-66.

¹²⁸ See above, n.6.

Barziya. After Cambyses killed Barziya, it was not known to the people that Barziya had been killed. Then Cambyses¹⁴ went off to Egypt with an army. After Cambyses arrived in Egypt, the people were given over to evil. Then lies in the lands grew very numerous, in Persia, in Media,¹⁵ in Babylonia, and in other lands.¹²⁹

The murder of Smerdis/Bardiya is recorded, as is the campaign against Egypt, but there is no indication that Kambyzes was considered insane: this could be due to the brevity of the text, but if it had been an important factor, or if it was common knowledge, why not include it, and use it to Dareios' advantage?

There are two other very brief mentions of Kambyzes in Herodotos which seem to show that he was not a madman in Persian eyes. At 7.8a.1f., Nerves is speaking and he talks of the things done by Kyros, *Kambyzes* and Dareios and the nations they had won, and how he wants to do as much. And at 7.18.2, Artabanos uses three examples of disastrous campaigns as a means of dissuading Nerves from attacking Greece: Kyros' campaign against the Massagetai, Kambyzes against the Aithiopians, and Dareios against the Skythians. Neither passage shows any indication that Kambyzes was considered mad when he ruled or when he suffered a setback in the Aithiopian campaign—he is simply listed in his proper spot as king between Kyros and Dareios, and he is credited with similar gains and losses as both of them.

Herodotos' sources for Kambyzes' sojourn in Egypt are mainly Egyptian and, as can be seen, it is in the Egyptian tales that the theme of 'madness' predominates—the sacrileges against corpses, the failed expeditions, the murder of Apis, the outrages against Persians (all of which occur in *Egypt*), the desecration of tombs and temples. Where there is independent evidence, the stories in Herodotos are shown to be false, and this makes the other tales concerning Kambyzes' insane actions more doubtful. Which is not to say that Herodotos is generally not a reliable source: but it is necessary to be aware of the other evidence, of the type of information Herodotos was given, and his literary style and how it affects his presentation of his narrative—in other words, one must be

¹²⁹ Von Voigtlander 1978: 54-55.

cautious in accepting without question Herodotos' statements about Kambyes' behaviour in Egypt. Kambyes was not the madman portrayed by Herodotos.¹³⁰

¹³⁰ For general works on the madness of Kambyes see Brown 1982; Gammie 1986; Munson 1991.

Chapter Four: 'The Smerdis Saga'

The murder of Kambyzes' brother has generated much scholarly debate: Who killed him? Where? Why? and When? Did the magoi really take over the throne? Did Dareios kill Kyros' son or a pretender, or both? And all of this debate is made no easier by the problem of the names (which I will discuss later in this chapter): to keep things clear, I am using 'Smerdis/Bardiya' to indicate Kambyzes' brother, and 'Smerdis/Gaumata' when referring to the pretender.

There is more written evidence available for this subject, the murder of Kambyzes' brother, than for most other areas of research on Kambyzes' reign. As is often the case, this has not resulted in less controversy. The Behistun Inscription¹ of Dareios I provides contemporary evidence from Persian spheres, as do various documents dated by the name of King Bardiya. On the classical side, Herodotos is again a major source, along with Ktesias and Justin, and Aischylos also provides some interesting information; in addition, there are brief mentions of the murder in various other later classical authors.

The Behistun Inscription is the victory monument of Dareios I, manufactured shortly after the beginning of his reign²; it commemorates his numerous victories in the rebellions which occurred when he came to the throne. It is inscribed on a cliff about 65 miles from Hamadan = Ecbatana³, at a place variously called Behistun (from medieval Arabic), *'bagastāna* (Old Persian = "Place of the God") from which came the Greek βαγίστανον [Ktesias at Diod. 2.13], or in Modern Persian, Bīsītūn or Bīsutūn or Bīstūn (popularly = "without columns")⁴. Ktesias (wrongly) credited its

¹ Hereafter = BI.

² In §45-48 of the Babylonian version, he states that the events described all took place within one year, just after he came to the throne; the last part of the Inscription, dealing with the defeat of the Skythian king, was added after 519 BC (Root 1979: 125).

³ Kent 1953: 107; Root 1979: 184-185.

⁴ Kent 1953: 102.

existence to Semiramis and claimed it was sacred to Zeus [Diod. 2.13.1-2]. It consists of both sculpture and text. The sculpture shows Dareios having conquered Smerdis/Gaumata, who is lying prostrate beneath Dareios' foot; facing Dareios are nine bound rebel 'kings', while behind him are his spear-carrier and bow-carrier; centered above the scene is a winged Ahuramazda symbol. The columns of the text are inscribed above, below and to each side of the central scene⁵. The text itself is in three Near Eastern languages: Old Persian, Elamite, and Akkadian (= Babylonian)⁶; there also exists, in fragmentary form, an Aramaic text of part of the inscription⁷. This provides a convenient triple-check of the text, but does create difficulties when the various versions give different readings⁸.

The record of Kambyzes, Smerdis/Bardiya and Smerdis/Gaumata appears in sections 10-13 of the inscription (OP paragraphs 10-14). It is important enough to quote in full:⁹

§10 (OP 10)

King Darius states: This is what I did under the protection of Ahura Mazda after I became king.¹² There was a certain man, Cambyzes, the son of Cyrus, king of Persia, king of lands. [The OP and Elamite do not have Kyros' titles, see also l. 16, and von Voigtlander 1978: 14; Kent 1953: 119.] He - who was of our line - became king here. The brother of that Cambyzes was Barziya [= Bardiya]. They (had) the same father (and) the same mother. Then¹³ that Cambyzes killed Barziya. After Cambyzes killed Barziya, it was not known to the people that Barziya had been killed. Then Cambyzes¹⁴ went off to Egypt with an army. [The OP omits the mention of the army.] After Cambyzes arrived in Egypt, the people were given over to evil. Then lies in the lands grew very numerous, in Persia, in Media,¹⁵ in Babylonia, and in other lands. [The Babylonian includes "Babylonia", the OP and Elamite do not. Cf. ll. 17, 19, 20; von

⁵ Kent 1953: 107; von Voigtlander 1978: 1; Root 1979: 184-186.

⁶ Kent 1953: 107.

⁷ Greenfield/Porten 1982: especially 1-15, although there are only a few fragments from the portion of the text quoted below on the following pages.

⁸ See below, chapter 5, for an example. I am using E. von Voigtlander's translation of the Babylonian version, and will note any important variances from Kent, *OP/Persia*.

⁹ The superscript numbers refer to the lines of the text; comments are in reduced print and square brackets; there is only one footnote in the quote, in §12.

Voigtlander 1978: 14; Kent 1953: 119.] (OP 11) Then there was a certain Mede, Gaumāta, a Magush. [The OP omits the designation "Mede"; Kent 1953: 120.] He set out from Pishīkhumadu [= OP 'Paishiyauvada'; Kent 1953: 120; Balcer 1987: 94 says this is Pasargadae], Mt. Arakadri, by name - from thence - on the 14th day of Addaru [= OP 'Viyakhna'; Kent 1953: 120, who translates that 14 days "were past"]. He ¹⁶ kept lying to the people thus, "I am Barziya, the son of Cyrus, king of Persia, and the younger brother of Cambyses." [The OP omits "younger"; Kent 1953: 120.] Then all the troops [OP = 'people'; Kent 1953: 120] revolted from Cambyses and went over to him - Persia, Media, ¹⁷ Babylonia, Elam (and) other lands. [OP and Elamite omit "Babylonia" and "Elam", see above 1. 15.] On the 9th day of Du'ūzu [OP = 'Garmapada'; Kent 1953: 120, says: 9 days "were past"] that (man) took possession of the kingship of Cambyses. Then Cambyses died a self-(inflicted) death. [Kent 1953: 120, translates "Cambyses died by his own hand"; see chapter 5 for discussion of this.]

§11 (OP 12)

King Darius states: ¹⁸ The kingship which that Gaumāta, the Magush, took from Cambyses, that was from the beginning ours, and it belongs to our descendants. [Kent 1953: 120, translates that the "kingdom from long ago had belonged to our family"; there is no mention of descendants.] Then that Gaumāta, the Magush, ¹⁹ took the kingship from Cambyses. Persia, Media, Babylonia, and other lands he made his own. [See 1. 15.] He became king.

§12 (OP 13)

King Darius states: There was no one - ²⁰ not a Persian, not a Mede, not a Babylonian [see 1. 15], no one in the (other) lands [not in OP version; Kent 1953: 120], (and) not a man of our line - who would take the kingship from that Gaumāta, the Magush. The people were in great fear of him. ²¹ He was killing many people who had known Barziya previously. [Kent 1953: 120, translates the OP as "(thinking that) he would slay".] For this reason he would kill people - "that no one should detect that I

am not Barziya, the son of Cyrus." No one would fare well in the matter of ²² that Gaumāta, the Magush, and no one would speak until I came. [The OP does not mention the "not faring well"; Kent 1953: 120.] Then I prayed to Ahura Mazda. Ahura Mazda supported me. Under the protection of Ahura Mazda ['Ahura Mazda' is in the Elamite, but not in the OP; von Voigtlander 1978: 16] ²³ on the 10th day of Tashritu [= OP 'Bagayadi'; Kent 1953: 120 reads 10 days "were past"], accompanied by a few nobles [Kent 1953: 120 translates OP as "a few men"]¹⁰, I killed that Gaumata, the Magush, and the nobles who were with him. [Kent 1953: 120 has "and ... his foremost followers".] In the town Sikūbatti [OP = 'Sikayauvati'—a fortress, Kent 1953: 120; see also Cook 1983: 54; Esler 1987: 94 equates Sikūbatti with Behistun], in the territory of Nissaya, by name, which is in Media ²⁴ - there I killed him. I took the kingship. Under the protection of Ahura Mazda I became king. Ahura Mazda gave me the kingship.

§13 (OP 14)

King Darius states: The kingship which ²⁵ he had carried off from our line. I brought back just as before. I restored it to its place. I rebuilt the temples of the gods which that Gaumāta, the Magush, had torn down. I ²⁶ gave back to the army the herds, the flocks, the fields, (and) the hired workers (comprising) the "bow" estates which that Gaumāta, the Magush, had taken from them. I resettled the populace in its place. [ll. 25-26 are contentious, as each version admits of different translations and meanings; see Gershevitch 1979a: 130-131; Hinz 1963: 231-235.] Persia, Media, ²⁷ and the other lands which he had taken I established just as before. Under the protection of Ahura Mazda, this I accomplished. I acted effectively until our royal house ²⁸ I had re-established just as before. I repeatedly acted effectively under the protection of Ahura Mazda so that Gaumāta, the Magush, did not take away our royal house.¹¹

¹⁰ Darius lists them in §54 (OP 68) as Vintaparna (son of Visparw/OP Vāyaspāra), Vittana (son of Sukhra/OP Thukhra), Gubaru (son of Marduniya), Vidarna (son of Bagabigns/OP Bagābigna), Bagabukshu (son of Zātūa/OP Dātuvahya), Ardimanish (?) (son of Vakhkw/OP Vahauka); see von Voigtlander 1978: 62.

¹¹ Von Voigtlander 1978: 54-55.

It is important to notice the organization of this passage. Dareios begins by placing after he became king the events which actually took place before his kingship [§10]. According to this version of events, Kambyzes killed Smerdis/Bardiya *before* he went to Egypt [§10]. Smerdis/Gaumata then raised a revolt, got the backing of the troops, and claimed the throne, after which Kambyzes died¹² [§10]. There was a slaughter of people who had known Smerdis/Bardiya but no one spoke up until Dareios came on the scene. Dareios with a few helpers, killed Smerdis/Gaumata in *Media*. Thereupon Dareios became king. And here we get a list of the restorations made by Dareios *after* he became king, in recompense for what Smerdis/Gaumata had done.

Among the classical sources, Herodotos again has the most detailed account. The murder of Smerdis by Prexaspes has been mentioned as the first crime of Kambyzes against his own family¹³. It was noted that although the murder apparently took place in the heart of the empire, Herodotos was not certain as to exactly where and how Smerdis/Bardiya died. What was certain, as far as Herodotos was concerned, was that Smerdis/Bardiya had been present in Egypt with the army, had been sent back to Persia while Kambyzes was still in Egypt, and had been killed there.

Herodotos picks up this particular story line at 3.61, with the revolt in Persia. While Kambyzes was lingering in Egypt, two brothers (who were magoi)¹⁴ rebelled; one of these brothers had been left by Kambyzes as the manager in charge of the palace, and he revolted after learning that Smerdis/Bardiya was dead, and that few Persians were aware of this (most believed that Smerdis/Bardiya was still among the living). After considering the situation, this manager made an attempt on the kingship, which was helped by the fact that his own brother not only closely resembled Kambyzes' dead brother, but also had the same name—'Smerdis'. This manager, Patizeithes, convinced his brother to perform the charade, and made Smerdis/Gaumata the king; he

¹² On which, see below, chapter 5.

¹³ See above, chapter 3.

¹⁴ Herodotos [1.107] calls the magoi dream interpreters. See Gnoli 1974: 148, who says that the magoi were particularly known for dream interpretation, and were generally technicians of the religion and experts in purification. See also Boyce *AZ* I 1975: 9-11 on the possible origins of the 'tribe' of magoi.

then sent heralds throughout the empire, including Egypt, to announce to the army that it must listen to Smerdis from now on instead of Kambyzes [3.61.1-3]. The herald sent to Egypt found Kambyzes and the army at Agbatana in Syria; and standing in the middle (of the camp?) he made his announcement. When Kambyzes heard the announcement, he believed that Prexaspes had betrayed him by not killing Smerdis/Bardiya, and he confronted Prexaspes. Prexaspes denied that Smerdis could have rebelled as he himself had obeyed Kambyzes and buried Smerdis/Bardiya with his own hands; he then suggested that the herald be questioned about his announcement [3.62.1-4]. Kambyzes agreed, and the herald was brought back and questioned as to who had ordered him to make the announcement. He informed them that he had not seen Smerdis, the son of Kyros, since Kambyzes had left for Egypt—the magos whom Kambyzes had left in charge had given him the orders, and had said that Smerdis the son of Kyros had commanded that this announcement be made. Kambyzes' faith in Prexaspes was restored, but he wondered who had rebelled in the name of Smerdis. Prexaspes' reply was that it must have been the magoi who had rebelled, Patizeithes and his brother Smerdis [3.63.1-4]. As soon as Kambyzes heard the name 'Smerdis', he realized that this must be the case, that the dream had come true, and that he had killed his brother in vain. He lamented his brother's death, and in his grief and displeasure over the whole situation, he mounted onto his horse, intending to march immediately to Susa against the magoi; but as he was mounting, the cap of the scabbard of his sword fell off, and the exposed sword wounded him in the thigh, in the very spot where, according to Herodotos, Kambyzes had wounded the Apis bull. Kambyzes, believing he was going to die, asked the name of the town he was in, and was told that it was Agbatana. An oracle from the city of Buto had said that he would die in Agbatana, and Kambyzes had assumed that this referred to Agbatana in Media; but it obviously meant Agbatana in Syria. When he heard the name of the town, the knowledge of the revolt and the shock of the wound combined to restore his sanity [3.64.1-5]. Approximately twenty days later he summoned the most notable of the Persians who were with him, and confessed all: the dream, the murder of his brother by Prexaspes, and the revolt of the two magoi. Lamenting the loss of his brother, Kambyzes enjoined everyone, and especially those of the Achaimenidai who were present, not to allow the leadership to pass again

to the Medes, but to recover the power whether by treachery or by force, praying for wonderful benefices if they should do this, and calling down horrible curses if they should not attempt to regain control, or fail in the attempt [3.65.1-7]. Kambyzes died sometime after this, as gangrene had set in his leg and the wound had mortified. He had ruled for seven full years and five months, according to Herodotos, and died childless [3.66.2].

Herodotos relates that the Persians present when Kambyzes died were sceptical about the story of the magoi, believing instead that Kambyzes had spoken slanderously so that all of Persia would be hostile towards Smerdis/Bardiya [3.66.3], whom they thought was running the kingdom [3.67.1]. Prexaspes, afraid to admit that he had killed Kyros' son, denied the murder. Thus the magos, having usurped the name 'Smerdis, son of Kyros', ruled without fear after Kambyzes' death. His reign was seven months (which were the number of months needed to give Kambyzes an eight-year reign). While the magos was on the throne, he gave great benefits to his subjects, with the result that when he died his passing was regretted by everyone in Asia except the Persians: he had granted to every nation under his rule a three-year exemption from military service and from tribute [3.67.1-3].

At this point Herodotos introduces the story which leads to the discovery of the deception. Otanes, the son of Pharnaspes¹⁵, became suspicious because the king (Smerdis/Gaumata) was not in the habit of leaving the akropolis, and because he did not summon any of the Persian nobles for an audience. Otanes therefore sent a message to his daughter Phaidymie, asking her if she knew whether she was sleeping with Kyros' son or someone else: she had been a wife of Kambyzes, and along with all of Kambyzes' other wives was now the wife of the magos. Her answer was that she did not know, since she had never seen Smerdis/Bardiya. Otanes then sent a second message, telling her to ask Atossa, since she would surely know her own brother. Phaidymie's answer was that she could not converse with Atossa or any other wife because as soon as the new husband had seized the throne, he had separated all of the women [3.68.1-5]. Otanes then sent a third message, enlisting his daughter's help in exposing the magos: she was to wait until her husband was asleep (on his next

¹⁵ An Achaemenid, see above, chapter 2.

visit) and then feel his ears. If he had ears, he was Smerdis, the son of Kyros, and if not, he was the magos (Smerdis/Gaumata had had his ears cut off by order of Kyros as a punishment). Phaidymie replied that it was an enormous risk, since she would be killed if he was the magos, and discovered that she was feeling for his ears; nevertheless, she said she would do it [3.69.1-5]. The plan was carried out. Phaidymie discovered that her husband had no ears, and first thing the next morning, she communicated this to her father [3.69.6].

Otanes then revealed this to Aspathines and Gobryas, who were eminent Persians and most suitable for Otanes to trust. These two had already had their own suspicions, and were receptive to Otanes' revelations. The three men then decided each to bring on board one other Persian whom he particularly trusted—Otanes co-opted Intaphrenes, Gobryas asked Megabyzos, and Aspathines Hydarnes. Meanwhile, Dareios, the son of Hystaspes, arrived at Susa from Persia, where his father was ὑπαρχος and the six decided to enlist Dareios as well [3.70.1-3].

Dareios, when they all met to give pledges of loyalty, remarked that he had thought he was the only one who knew that the magos was ruling and Smerdis/Bardiya was dead; and he had hastened there to contrive the magos' death. He then urged that they move quickly [3.71.1-2]. Otanes raised some objections, one of which was how they might gain entrance to the palace [3.71.3-72.1]. Dareios' answer was that (1) the guards would not hinder their entry on account of their rank, and (2) he would lie and say that he had come from Persia and wanted to give the king a message from his father [3.72.2-3]. Gobryas supported Dareios' suggestions, reminded them of Kambyzes' curse, and proposed that they set out at once, to which the rest agreed [3.73.1-3]. In the meantime, the two magoi had decided to befriend Prexaspes because: (1) Kambyzes had killed his son, (2) he alone knew about the death of Smerdis/Bardiya, and (3) he was still held in particularly high esteem in Persia. When Prexaspes agreed to say nothing about the deception, the magoi proposed to summon all the Persians and have Prexaspes announce that they were ruled by Smerdis, the son of Kyros, and no one else [3.74.1-3]. Prexaspes, however, instead confessed the entire truth of the situation, called upon the Persians to reclaim the empire, and then killed himself [3.75.1-3]. The seven conspirators were half-way to the palace when they heard this news; they stopped to discuss the situation, Otanes'

group wanting to wait, and Dareios' wanting to continue: an omen, however, convinced them to continue with their plan [3.76.1-3]. The seven had no trouble getting past the guards at the gate, as Dareios had said, but were questioned by some eunuchs, and their violent answer alerted the magoi to their presence [3.77.1-78.1]. Although the two magoi put up a good fight (wounding Aspathines and Intaphrenes), they were both killed and decapitated [3.78.1-79.1]. The five uninjured men told the Persians about the magoi and their own parts in the killing of these two, and then began killing any magoi they happened upon [3.79.1]. The Persians soon joined in, and there was a huge slaughter of magoi. According to Herodotos, this day is particularly observed, and is celebrated with a festival known as the Magophonia, in which no magos is allowed to appear outside [3.79.3]. Thus ends the saga of Smerdis in Herodotos.

Ktesias has yet another version of the story. In this account [§10], a magos named Sphandadates was upset with Tanyoxarkes¹⁶ because he had been beaten by Tanyoxarkes: the magos therefore went to Kambyses and slandered Tanyoxarkes, saying that he was plotting against Kambyses, and as proof Sphandadates suggested to Kambyses that he summon his brother, and that he would not come. Kambyses did send for Tanyoxarkes, who was occupied with other matters and did not go. Thereupon Sphandadates slandered Kambyses' brother even more. Amytis (the mother of Kambyses and Tanyoxarkes [§8]) did not trust the magos' words, and she warned Kambyses not to trust him either: her son *pretended* that he did not trust Sphandadates, but in reality he did trust him.

When Kambyses summoned Tanyoxarkes a third time¹⁷, he finally appeared. Kambyses deceitfully welcomed his brother, all the while planning to kill him. He hastened to accomplish the deed without Amytis' knowledge, and managed to carry it off. Sphandadates told Kambyses to follow a plan he had devised—the magos bore a close resemblance to Tanyoxarkes, so he advised Kambyses to *publicly* order that Sphandadates' head be cut off because he was making accusations against the king's brother; but he was *secretly* to kill Tanyoxarkes, and dress the magos in his

¹⁶ Smerdis/Bardiya.

¹⁷ The second summons seems to have gotten lost in the epitomization process.

clothes so that he would appear to be Tanyoxarkes. Kambyzes followed this plan: Tanyoxarkes was killed by drinking bull's blood, and Sphandadates was dressed in his clothes and was thought to be the king's brother. The deception passed unnoticed for a long time; only three other people knew the truth—Artasyras, Bagapates and Izabates, to whom Kambyzes had confided the deed.

At this point [§11], the epitome says that Kambyzes summoned Labyxos, who was Tanyoxarkes' head eunuch; pointing to Sphandadates, Kambyzes asked Labyxos if he thought this man was Tanyoxarkes. The eunuch was surprised and asked who else he should consider him to be. Thus the magos, because of his likeness to Tanyoxarkes, succeeded with the substitution. He was then sent to Baktria, where he played out the role of the king's brother. After five years had passed, Amytis learned of the deception from the eunuch Tibetheis, who had been struck by the magos¹⁸. Amytis demanded that Kambyzes hand Sphandadates over to her, but he declined; whereupon she cursed him, drank some poison, and died.

Section 12 of Ktesias deals with Kambyzes' death, which will be discussed in chapter 5. Suffice it to say that Kambyzes died. Now, [§13] before Kambyzes' death, Bagapates and Artasyras had advised the magos to seize the throne. And he *did* rule after the death of Kambyzes. Izabates took Kambyzes' body to Persia (Kambyzes having died in Babylon, according to the epitome [§12]), and arrived in Persia while Sphandadates was ruling as king under Tanyoxarkes' name. Izabates addressed the entire army¹⁹, led the magos in triumph, and fled to a sanctuary; then he was seized and cut to pieces.

Thereupon [§14] seven notable Persians organized (a plot amongst?)²⁰ one another against the Magos—Onophas, Idernes, Norondabates, Mardonios, Barisses, Artaphernes, and Dareios, the son of Hystaspes²¹. Trusting the others (because of given oaths), he²² made Artasyras an accessory, and

¹⁸ Presumably informing Amytis is a sort of revenge. But how did he know it was not Tanyoxarkes?

¹⁹ Did he denounce the magos to the entire army? The epitome is not clear, but it would fit into the context.

²⁰ The Greek is lacking in obvious cohesion.

²¹ See above, n.10, for the names as given in the Behistun Inscription. How/Wells 1964: 275, where the names are compared from Herodotos, Ktesias and the BI. How/Wells says that Herodotos has all but one agree with the names in the BI, whereas Ktesias only one which agrees. See, however, Dandamaev 1989: 103-105, who says that Ktesias was correct with three of his names.

²² Presumably Dareios? Again the epitome is not clear.

then Bagapates, who had all the keys to the palace. The seven entered the palace by means of Bagapates, and they found the magos sleeping with a Babylonian concubine. As soon as he saw them, he leapt up; and finding no military gear (Bagapates had secretly carried everything away), he grew angry, smashed apart a golden chair, and grabbing the foot of the chair he battled with the conspirators. Finally, he was killed by the seven of them, having ruled seven months. The epitome [§15] also mentions the festival of the Magophonia, the day on which Sphandadates the magos was killed.

Justin's epitome seems to be based, in this section, on Herodotos, with variations at a number of points. Kambyzes, while in Egypt, dreamed that his brother Mergis would be king [1.9.4], and so planned his murder [1.9.5]. He chose from among his friends a magos named Cometes to carry out the deed [1.9.7]. Before the murder could be accomplished, Kambyzes died from a wound to the thigh [1.9.8]. When the magos found out about Kambyzes' death before it became public knowledge, he quickly killed Mergis, the heir to the throne, and substituted his own brother Oropastes [1.9.9].²³ Oropastes resembled Mergis in both facial features and build, and since no one suspected the switch, Oropastes was declared king [1.9.10]. One of the circumstances which helped the secrecy of the substitution was the fact that the Persian king was not seen in public, supposedly because this was undignified for the king [1.9.11]. Once on the throne, the magoi courted the support of the people by granting tax-remissions and a three-year exemption from military service [1.9.12].

Hostanes (= Otanes in Herodotos) was the first to suspect the switch [1.9.14]; he sent a message by way of couriers to his daughter (who was a royal concubine) <asking> if the king was the son of Kyros [1.9.15]. Her answer was that she did not know, and because the concubines were kept separated, she could not find out from anyone else [1.9.16]. Hostanes told her to feel the king's head when he was asleep, as Kambyzes had cut off the magos' ears [1.9.17]; and she later reported

²³ Dandamaev 1989: 86 + n.10, notes that the name 'Oropastes' is Iranian, and that Cometes seems to be a direct transliteration into Latin of the name 'Gaumāta'. Therefore Trogrus had a Persian source which was unknown to Herodotos and which was not Ktesias.

to her father that the king had no ears. He then confided in some Persian nobles, persuaded them to kill the fraud, and sealed the pact with a solemn pledge [1.9.18]. There were seven conspirators in total; making their way to the palace, they killed anyone who opposed them, and got through to the magoi (who defended themselves spiritedly) [1.9.19-20]. The magoi managed to kill two of the conspirators [1.9.21], but were overwhelmed. Gobryas grabbed one of the magoi by the waist, but his conspirators were afraid that they might strike him instead of the magos, since it was dark. Gobryas, however, told them to strike even through his own body [1.9.22]. As luck would have it, the magos was the one killed, not Gobryas [1.9.23].

There is also a passage in Aischylos' *Persai* which mentions Kambyzes' brother. When Dareios' ghost recounts the king-list to Xerxes, he lists 'Mardos' as the fifth to rule, and calls him a disgrace to the country and the ancestral throne [ll. 774-775]. Artaphrenes killed him in his palace by treachery, cunning, and he had the help of friends, including Dareios [ll. 775-779]. Line 778 mentions that 'Maraphis' was the sixth member and Artaphrenes was the seventh; however, the authenticity of this line has been questioned²⁴.

In addition, Plato records [*Ep* 7.322A] that Dareios overcame a *Mede* and a *eunuch* when he took the throne. Strabo gives a very short account which leaves out Smerdis, and has the magoi rebelling against Kambyzes [15.3.24]. And Plutarch [*Mor.* 490A] tells that Kambyzes killed his brother because of the dream that his brother would rule Asia. The magoi are not mentioned in this section; Plutarch only says that after Kambyzes' death, the throne passed from Kyros' family to Dareios' family.

One very important aspect of these versions is the fact that there are two distinct stories: (1) the death of Smerdis/Bardiya, the son of Kyros, and (2) the usurper, Smerdis/Gaumata. Both the Behistun Inscription and Herodotos acknowledge this. The BI states that Kambyzes killed Smerdis/Bardiya before he left for Egypt; Kambyzes conquered Egypt in the spring or early summer of 525 BC²⁵, and the BI dates Smerdis/Gaumata's revolt to the 14th day of Addaru of the year

²⁴ See the apparatus criticus to Page's text 1972: 30; Podlecki 1970: 93, note on l. 778.

²⁵ Dandamaev 1989: 88; also see above, chapter 3.

Dareios became king (= 11 March 522)²⁶; this means that, following the inscription, there is at least a three-year period between Smerdis/Bardiya's death, and the revolt of Smerdis/Gaumata²⁷. There is no overlap in the two events: that the pretender claimed to be Smerdis/Bardiya, the son of Kyros, only means that he took advantage of the name; and he was not the only one, as the BI states that a Persian named Vahyazdata also claimed to be Smerdis/Bardiya, the son of Kyros [§33-35, OP 40-43]²⁸.

Herodotos separates the two stories physically and spatially. The death of Smerdis/Bardiya while Kambyzes was in Egypt is the first of many crimes which Herodotos presents in a chronological sequence; this does not mean that they occurred in this order, it simply means that Herodotos *placed* the crimes in this order and created a period of uncertain length between the death of Smerdis/Bardiya and the advent of Smerdis/Gaumata. Since Herodotos places Smerdis/Bardiya's death during the period of Kambyzes' sojourn in Egypt, he does not leave as long a gap as the Behistun Inscription seems to; however, Herodotos does show contextually that there are two separate stories by describing the death of Kambyzes' brother at 3.30, then listing other crimes attributed to Kambyzes [3.31-38], then digressing on Polykrates of Samos [3.39-60], and *then* relating the story of the magos-usurper [3.61ff.]. Again, the connection between the two stories is that the magos claims to be the son of Kyros.

In contrast, the epitomes of Ktesias and Trogus both link the two stories. Ktesias has the magos plot against Kambyzes' brother, which leads to the brother's death. The magos then fills the role of Smerdis/Bardiya (= Tanyoxarkes in Ktesias), and rules Baktria for five years. Thus the two events are shown as being closely related chronologically, and intertwined. The magos manipulates Kambyzes in order to achieve Smerdis/Bardiya's death, and takes his place, but *does not revolt from Kambyzes*. He is *encouraged* to revolt, but rules only *after* Kambyzes' death.

²⁶ Dandamaev 1989: 92 + n.17; Olmstead 1938: 395, 415. The last known date for Kambyzes is April 522, variously pinpointed as 29 April by Olmstead and 18 April by Parker/Dubberstein 1946: 12 and Dandamaev.

²⁷ Dandamaev 1989: 88, thinks that Smerdis/Bardiya probably died in 526 BC or the beginning of 525.

²⁸ In addition, two rebels claimed to be Nebuchadnezzar, a son of Nabu-na'id [§15, 39, 41], and two others claimed to be descended from Cyaxares [§22, 26, 41]. Gershevitch 1979b: 339, on Vahyazdata, asks how he was able to fool the entourage around the king; but the entourage could easily be persuaded to go along with the pretence.

Trogus' version has the magos as Smerdis/Bardiya's killer, and he is murdered *after* Kambyzes has died. This is the ultimate in linking, as the two stories come together with only a negligible time-lapse between Smerdis/Bardiya's death and the substitution of the magos' brother. And once again, the magos has not revolted against Kambyzes, but only takes advantage of his death to put his own brother on the throne.

It is interesting that both epitomes portray the magos as deeply involved with Smerdis/Bardiya's death, *and* relate that the magos (or, as in Trogus, the brother of the magos) ruled only *after* Kambyzes' death and did not revolt against him. It raises the questions (once again) of what has been left out, and to what degree the extant versions are the work of the epitomators rather than the original authors.

The son of Kyros

There are a number of controversial points in the Smerdis/Bardiya episode. The first discrepancy which arises is the 'name' problem. The sources give at least five different names for the brother of Kambyzes:

Behistun Inscription - Bard(z)iya

Aischylos - Mardos

Herodotos - Smerdis

Ktesias - Tanyoxarkes

Trogus - Mergis

The name used in the Behistun Inscription, Bard(z)iya, is the 'official' name of Kambyzes' brother; it is the name which appears in the dating formulae of texts²⁹. The name 'Bardiya' means "high, exalted"³⁰. Since Tanyoxarkes, the name found in Ktesias, means "(possessing) a big (/strong) body", some scholars have concluded that Tanyoxarkes was a nickname given to Smerdis/Bardiya

²⁹ Dandamaev 1989: 84 n.3, 92; Parker/Dubberstein 1946: 12.

³⁰ Dandamaev 1989: 85 n.5.

because of his extraordinary strength³¹; this proposal seems to be supported by Herodotos' claim that Smerdis/Bardiya was the only Persian able to draw the Aithiopian bow at all [3.30.1].

As for Smerdis, Mergis, and Mardos, these seem to be variations on a Greek form of Bardiya. The initial "B" in Persian becomes an "M" in Greek, the Persian "a" becomes "e", the "-ya" disappears if the Greeks borrowed a short version of the name³². However, the initial "S" in Smerdis is unexpected; Hegyi thinks this may have occurred because of the similarity to a Greek name which already existed in Asia Minor—a 'Smerdies' was the lover of Polykrates of Samos, and a 'Smerdes' was the murderer of the king of Mytilene³³. Thus it is possible that Herodotos mistook the name 'Merdis' or 'Mardos' for 'Smerdis', with which he was familiar³⁴.

Smerdis/Bardiya was the full brother of Kambyzes, according to the Behistun Inscription, Herodotos and Ktesias. The BI says that he and Kambyzes had the same mother and father, and names Kyros as Kambyzes' father but does not mention their mother's identity [§10]. Herodotos, as noted above (chapter 1 and chapter 3), calls Smerdis/Bardiya the full brother of Kambyzes [3.30.1], and states that Kyros and Kassandane (the daughter of Pharnaspes) were the parents of Kambyzes (and therefore of Smerdis/Bardiya [2.1.1-2, 3.2.2]). Ktesias also indicates that they were full brothers, and the sons of Kyros, but he claims that their mother was Amytis, a daughter of Astyages [§2, 5.8, 10, 11, 12], and that she outlived Kyros and Smerdis/Bardiya [§8, 10, 11]. One piece of evidence which seems to strengthen Herodotos' claim and weaken Ktesias' is the mention in the Nabonidus Chronicle of the death of Kyros' wife and the official mourning³⁵; Herodotos also records the death of Kyros' wife (Kassandane) while Kyros was still alive, and mentions the public mourning for her [2.1.1]. Since Kassandane was also an Achaemenid [2.1.1-2, 3.2.2], it seems very likely that she was Kyros' chief wife and queen, and the mother of the heirs. As for the Amytis

³¹ Dandamaev 1989: 85 n.5, Gershevitch 1979b: 345; see also Dandamaev 1976: 110 n.452.

³² Cf. Kambyzes, which is Ka(m)bujiya in Persian; the Greek has the lost the "-ya"; Hegyi 1973: 79; Kent 1953: 117.

³³ Hegyi 1973: 79.

³⁴ Hegyi 1973: 79; Kent 1953: 117.

³⁵ See above, chapter 1; *AJZT* 1966: 306.

whom Ktesias records, perhaps she was another wife of Kyros, who was elevated to a higher role after the death of Kassandane.

Another area of disagreement among the sources is that of motive; or to put it another way, who initiated the murder, who contracted for it, why, and where did it occur? The Behistun Inscription does not say anything other than that Kambyzes killed Smerdis/Bardiya—why, how, where, and by whom are not revealed [§10].

Herodotos says that the motive for the murder was based on Kambyzes' dream, since Kambyzes *feared* that Smerdis/Bardiya would kill him and rule in his place [3.30]. Thus fear is the underlying cause; of course, as Herodotos shapes the story, this fear was probably enhanced by the "bow" incident, which, as has been mentioned, could be considered a challenge to Kambyzes' kingship³⁶. Prexaspes is the actual 'hit man': Kambyzes, according to Herodotos, sent him to Susa, where Smerdis/Bardiya was. But there is uncertainty as to exactly where and how the murder was accomplished—one story has it that Smerdis/Bardiya was killed while hunting, the other says that he was drowned in the Red Sea (i.e., Persian Gulf). Both versions raise questions: How likely was it that there were no witnesses? After all, a son of Kyros probably had an entourage, and the entourage (or some members of it) would naturally have gone hunting with him, or down to the shore. And what about the hypothesis that Smerdis/Bardiya was a huge, strong man? Prexaspes must have been very strong himself, or his attack on Smerdis/Bardiya must have been a complete surprise for Prexaspes to have overpowered and killed Smerdis/Bardiya (if the hypothesis is correct). The very vagueness about the details makes it more likely that the stories arose from an oral tradition, and are therefore more imaginative than real³⁷.

Ktesias' version has the magos as the initiator. He is the one who convinces Kambyzes that his brother is plotting against him [§10], and who suggests the plan for killing Smerdis/Bardiya; Kambyzes only seems to be a pawn for the accomplishment of the magos' vengeance. And the reason for Kambyzes' acquiescence is again fear [§10]. Ktesias is unclear as to where the murder

³⁶ See above, chapter 3.

³⁷ Balcer 1987: 86-87, 89-90, sees behind these vague stories the hand of Darius, who was hostile to Kambyzes.

takes place, but presumably it is at one of the royal palaces³⁸. The matter of how Smerdis/Bardiya dies is again not consistent: Sphandadates suggests to Kambyzes that he pretend to behead the magos but in reality to switch the magos and Smerdis/Bardiya and thus get rid of his brother. Ktesias (or Photios) says that this is done, and then says that Smerdis/Bardiya died by drinking bull's blood!³⁹ This again seems to reflect two versions of Smerdis/Bardiya's death, which Photios has condensed to the point where it does not make clear sense.

Fear is also the motive in Trogus' story—Kambyzes has a dream in which Smerdis/Bardiya becomes king, and in fear of this he arranges his murder [1.9.4-5]. This section of Trogus seems to be based on Herodotos, but without the detail. The twist is that it is the magos Cometes who actually kills Smerdis/Bardiya [1.9.7-9]. Again, there is no mention of where or how the murder is carried out and the same concerns arise as for Prexaspes—were there any witnesses, and how did he overcome Smerdis/Bardiya?

Thus, in Ktesias and Trogus (the two epitomes) the magos (by whatever name) has a prime role in the death of Smerdis/Bardiya, whether as initiator or as murderer. The Behistun Inscription and Herodotos, on the other hand, do not show any connection between the Smerdis/Bardiya story and magos story—in these versions it is Kambyzes who is ultimately responsible, even if the murder is carried out by someone else. So too in the Trogus version; however, there the magos Cometes is also directly responsible, as Kambyzes had already died when Smerdis/Bardiya was killed—the magos took advantage of Kambyzes' death (when he could have simply *not carried out* the murder), took the initiative, and killed Smerdis/Bardiya to make way for his own brother.

Associated with this is the problem of when the murder took place, and who knew about it. The sources which give a time reference do not agree as to when the murder occurred. The Behistun Inscription, the earliest and first written source for the murder, says that Kambyzes killed his brother Smerdis/Bardiya *before* he went to Egypt, and that this event was hidden from "the people" (§10). It

³⁸ Probably not Babylon, since in §12 he *goes to* Babylon.

³⁹ It is usually thought that bull's blood = poison; see Balcer 1987: 75; also Gershevitch 1979b: 346ff., where she suggests that bull's blood = local wine, the idea being to get Smerdis/Bardiya so drunk that he would not resist the switch.

was only after Kambyzes had gone to Egypt that the situation in the empire deteriorated [§10]. But the BI does not give a specific date for the murder or for the expedition to Egypt—the only specific dates in this section relate to Smerdis/Gaumata, not Smerdis/Bardiya [§10-12]. If the standard dates of spring/summer 525 BC for the Egyptian conquest, and 11 March 522 BC for the uprising of Smerdis/Gaumata are used, this means that the murder of Smerdis/Bardiya remained a secret for a minimum of three years⁴⁰. It also becomes clear that, if Dareios really killed a usurper, the murder of Smerdis/Bardiya was *totally* a secret. Presumably the magos Smerdis/Gaumata knew that Smerdis/Bardiya was dead—otherwise, why would he claim to be Bardiya, son of Kyros? And presumably Dareios [§12] and the nobles with him⁴¹ knew that Smerdis/Gaumata was not the real Bardiya—otherwise, why kill him and claim that he was not the son of Kyros?

Herodotos, as mentioned, says [3.50] that Smerdis/Bardiya was sent back from Egypt and killed while Kambyzes was in Egypt: the murder, according to his narrative, took place after the Apis incident and before the murder of Kambyzes' sister-wife. Therefore, the murder occurred less than three years before the revolt of Smerdis/Gaumata (and possibly closer to two, or even one year before—since Herodotos does not give specifics, it is difficult to be exact). Herodotos does not mention that the murder was kept secret until he narrates the revolt of the magoi at 3.61.1, when he claims that only a few Persians were aware of the death of Smerdis/Bardiya. Prexaspes and Kambyzes of course knew; the sister-wife in Egypt apparently knew, since Herodotos' two versions of her death hinge on her knowledge and criticism of the murder [3.32]⁴². Herodotos states that the steward Patizeithes knew [3.61.1], and his brother Smerdis/Gaumata [3.61.1-3]. Also, all of the

⁴⁰ The only other dates at all in the Behistun Inscription are the dates of battles against rebels; the section on Smerdis/Gaumata (see below) is *the only one* which gives the dates of the revolt of the usurper, the declaration of his kingship, and the killing of the usurper. The other dates refer only to battles—the BI does not record the dates the revolts began, when the kingship was 'usurped' or when the rebels were executed. Even in the case of Vahyazdata, who also claimed to be Bardiya, the only dates given refer to the battles fought; yet some period must have passed between his revolt, his claiming of the kingship, and his final defeat on the 5th day of Du'uzu. Even then, he was captured alive, and executed, but the specific date is not mentioned. This adds emphasis to the person of Smerdis/Gaumata; what was so special about him that necessitated specifics? Granted that the overthrow of Smerdis/Gaumata was the beginning of Dareios' reign, the other revolts, and especially that of Vahyazdata, were also important and could have possibly been more important militarily, yet the dates for these events are not included.

⁴¹ BI §54 names them as Vintaparna, Vittana, Gubaru, Vidarna, Bagabukshu, and Ardimanish.

⁴² But how did someone find out that the sister knew?

noblemen present at Kambyzes' death-bed were told of Smerdis/Bardiya's death [3.65], although they are said to have been sceptical of Kambyzes' confession. Dareios became aware of it [3.70-71; see below]⁴³, as did Otanes and his daughter [3.68-70], and the other five conspirators. Thus, the list grows, and it seems that more than a 'few' nobles eventually knew about it.

Ktesias' version does not specifically state when the murder of Smerdis/Bardiya occurred. The epitome places the murder *after* the section about Kambyzes' expedition against Egypt, which *implies* that it occurred after Kambyzes had returned from Egypt. This version has the impostor, Sphandadates, rule for five years as Smerdis/Bardiya, unbeknownst to most people; other than Kambyzes and the magos himself, only Artasyras, Bagapates and Izabates were told of the deed. After 5 years, Amytis, the mother of Smerdis/Bardiya and Kambyzes (in this version), was informed of the truth by the eunuch Tibetheis (there is no mention of who Tibetheis was, or how he found out). After the death of Kambyzes, Izabates denounced the magos to the army, so presumably the troops or officers knew; but judging by the statement that he was chased to a sanctuary and butchered, it would appear that he was not believed. And presumably the seven conspirators found out somehow (once again, this is implied but not specified). The amazing thing is that the concealment of the murder succeeded for 5 years!

Some scholars have concluded that Ktesias' information supports the Behistun Inscription in placing Smerdis/Bardiya's death before Egypt, on the grounds that Smerdis/Gaumata is said to have governed Baktria for five years, and Kambyzes was only in Egypt for three years⁴⁴. This does not, however, take into account that Ktesias assigns a reign of 18 years to Kambyzes; an 18-year rule provides ample time for Kambyzes to return from Egypt, kill his brother, and replace him for five years with the magos. Therefore it is possible that the epitome *does* show the sequence Ktesias used

⁴³ It is possible that Dareios was at the death-bed confession, as Herodotos records that he was in Egypt as a member of Kambyzes' guard [3.139].

⁴⁴ See Dandamaev 1989: 84ff.

(Egypt, return, murder, 5-year of substitute), which has Smerdis/Bardiya murdered *after* Kambyzes' return from Egypt, and not before the expedition set out⁴⁵.

Justin's epitome is the only source which has Smerdis/Bardiya killed *after* Kambyzes has died. There is no reference to how long the magos' brother ruled as Smerdis/Bardiya—the only comment is that he granted a 3-year exemption; the epitome does not say he *ruled* for three years. Aside from Kambyzes, who never actually knew that the murder was carried out, Cometes (the magos-assassin) and Oropastes (the magos' brother and impostor) knew of the murder. At some later point Hostanes (Otanes), his daughter, and those Persians whom Hostanes told (including Gobryas) all found out; again, there is no reference to the times when the events occurred.

The circumstances surrounding this murder are contradictory and mysterious. The sources have some similarities (Smerdis/Bardiya is Kambyzes' brother, Kambyzes is somehow involved in Smerdis/Bardiya's death, the murder remains unknown for a period of time, and a magos is somehow tied in to the story) and many discrepancies (when, how, and where the murder occurred, the motive for the murder, Kambyzes' role in the killing, how long Smerdis/Bardiya's death was hidden, who knew about it, the role of the magos in Smerdis/Bardiya's death, and the names of Smerdis/Bardiya and the others involved). The details are different in each source; things such as names and places are the aspects which often are changed in the telling of a story, so it is not too surprising that these differences exist. And the very vagueness of the details raises suspicions.

The magos-usurper

The tale of Smerdis/Gaumata, the magos, also poses problems. The Behistun Inscription, Herodotos, Ktesias and Trogus all included in their versions a magos and/or an impostor—these are one and the same in the BI and Ktesias, but in Herodotos and Trogus, the 'one' becomes 'two'. The

⁴⁵ The 18 years of rule attributed to Kambyzes by Ktesias is a bit of a problem as it is generally accepted that Kambyzes only ruled for 8 years; Parker/Dubberstein 1946: 12. One solution is to postulate a misreading of the Greek numeral η' (8) for ηγ' (18). But as another author (Clemens of Alexandria, *Stromata* 1.21.128.1) also records a reign of 19 years, it is unlikely to be a numerical corruption; and see Develin 1990: 31-45, on the corruption of numbers in texts. The most logical solution to me is that Ktesias was using a source (probably Babylonian) which took into account Kambyzes' title of 'King of Babylon' in 539 BC; this would give a reign of approximately 18 years, overlapping the last 10 years of Kyros' rule.

B1 names a "Mede, Gaumāta, a magush" (§10) as the man who falsely claimed to be Bardiya, Kyros son. Ktesias says that it was the magos Sphandadates who impersonated Smerdis/Bardiya (§10-11). In Herodotos' version, however, it is Patizeithes who is the magos, and his brother 'Smerdis' who pretends to be the son of Kyros [3.61]. Similarly, Trogus records the magos Cometes, the killer of Smerdis/Bardiya in his version, as the brother of Oropastes, who took the throne in place of Smerdis/Bardiya [1.9.7-10]. The existence of the 'brother' tends to be doubted, partly due to the lack of mention in the Behistun Inscription, and partly due to the folk-tale quality of it. It has been suggested that Herodotos, or his source, was the origin of this 'doubling'⁴⁶.

Then, too, the names of Smerdis/Gaumata are as diverse as Smerdis/Bardiya's: the Behistun Inscription calls the magos Gaumata, a Mede (§10); Herodotos names the magos as Patizeithes, whose brother, the impostor, coincidentally has the name Smerdis [3.61]; Ktesias says the magos was named Sphandadates (§10), and Trogus gives Cometes for the magos name, and Oropastes for his brother [1.9]. Now, there is no reason to doubt the existence of *someone* named Gaumata; and Trogus' rendering of the name as Cometes can be seen to be a transliteration of the name 'Gaumata'. As previously mentioned, Smerdis can be traced back to the name Bardiya. Patizeithes may well be the Greek rendering (as a name) of a Persian title **pašyūzāta* which means "collateral heir"⁴⁷. Herzfeld postulates that this title was given to Smerdis/Bardiya—in effect, he held the role of chief steward mentioned in Herodotos. Presumably Herodotos misunderstood the whole idea that Smerdis/Bardiya held this title, and he invented a brother named Patizeithes for the impostor, in order to account for this word, which he had heard linked with the name 'Smerdis'. Herzfeld thinks that the name Oropastes, found in Trogus, must mean something similar, perhaps linked with an Old Persian term referring to an officer who reports directly to the king rather than to a satrap⁴⁸. Dandamaev, however, feels it is an Iranian name⁴⁹. The name 'Cometes' is surprising in that it is the only similar rendering of 'Gaumata': as Dandamaev comments, this means that Trogus (or Justin?)

⁴⁶ Hegyi 1973: 78-79; see also Dandamaev 1989: 84-85.

⁴⁷ Herzfeld 1974: 205.

⁴⁸ Herzfeld 1974: 205.

⁴⁹ Dandamaev 1989: 86 n.10.

had access to and used "a reliable and oral historical tradition of the Persians ... unknown to Herodotus"⁵⁰. As for the name Sphandadates, it was a genuine Iranian name meaning "created by the sacred spirit"; it is not known whether this was another of Gaumata's names or whether it refers to someone else⁵¹. Generally, it can be seen how such a confusion of names arose, but it has not made it any easier to find solutions for the Smerdis/Gaumata issue.

As already noted, the role of the magos in the whole episode of Smerdis/Bardiya's death differs from version to version. The Behistun Inscription does not link the magos at all with the death of Smerdis/Bardiya, nor does Herodotos—in both cases the usurper took advantage of the secrecy surrounding the murder, but had no involvement in it. Ktesias, in contrast, shows the magos scheming to have Smerdis/Bardiya killed for personal motives; and Trogus goes a step further, saying that the *magos* was the assassin. These variations could easily be the result of changes and embellishments in the continual retelling of the story.

The substitution story also raises some questions. Herodotos, Ktesias and Trogus all comment on the fact that Smerdis/Gaumata so closely resembled Smerdis/Bardiya in size and features that when he took the place of Kambyses' brother he was able to carry off the pretence for some time. Of course, the details vary from story to story. Herodotos says that Smerdis/Gaumata also segregated his wives and concubines so that they could not speak with one another⁵² and possibly stumble on to the truth of his identity (according to Herodotos, the magos Smerdis/Gaumata had had his ears cut off as a punishment; this would have instantly given him away)⁵³. And to make his discovery even less likely, Smerdis/Gaumata also kept himself hidden away in the palace—obviously, in that case, the similarity was not so great that it could not be discovered by anyone who knew Smerdis/Bardiya at all well. Trogus, following Herodotos, says that the resemblance was great enough to deceive, and that

⁵⁰ Dandamaev 1989: 86.

⁵¹ Dandamaev 1989: 85.

⁵² They were not so isolated that they could not communicate outside, as can be seen with Phaidymis and Otanes, which was a more unlikely event than inner-palace communication.

⁵³ See Calmeyer 1987: 12-13, on how the Persian king *šš* leave his ears uncovered; Bertin 1890: 821-822, on the theory that the term 'magos' was taken to mean "having no ears" and that Herodotos' story stems from this misunderstanding; and Demandt 1972: 94-101, who concludes that the story of the ears was a Greek invention which possibly arose from the representation in art of commoners with their ears covered.

it was helped by the fact that Persian kings were kept sequestered to keep their dignity. Ktesias' story is that the resemblance was so strong, the chief eunuch of Smerdis/Bardiya could not tell the difference. But if the magos looked so much like the son of Kyros, why was it necessary to ensure that no one saw him? The Behistun Inscription does not claim that Smerdis/Gaumata resembled Smerdis/Bardiya, only that he declared that he *was* Smerdis/Bardiya. But the BI does state that Smerdis/Gaumata was killing those who had known Smerdis/Bardiya, so that he would not be discovered. This does make sense, but why wait until after Kambyzes' death, and after the seizure of the kingship? Why not make sure beforehand? The whole idea of a substitute who closely resembles the dead man is a typical aspect of folk-tales⁵⁴: although the Behistun Inscription does not come out and say that there was a similarity in appearance, one can see how such tales could arise to explain the continued secrecy surrounding Smerdis/Bardiya's death and the acceptance of Smerdis/Gaumata on the throne.

For the sources all agree that Smerdis/Gaumata was accepted as ruler of Persia. The Behistun Inscription says that when Smerdis/Gaumata declared himself, the entire army sided with him, as did the people (§10), and no one moved against him (§12). Herodotos states that when Kambyzes told those nobles gathered at his death-bed about the murder of Smerdis/Bardiya and the rebellion of Smerdis/Gaumata, they refused to believe him. Smerdis/Gaumata was also mourned after his death, probably in part because of the benefits which Herodotos says he conferred on the empire (a 3-year exemption from military service and taxes). Trogus adds no new details, as he follows Herodotos here. Ktesias' version lacks cohesion, but it is clear that the army at least supported Smerdis/Gaumata, since after Izabates denounced Smerdis/Gaumata to the army, he, Izabates, was cut to pieces (§13). Thus, the statement in the Behistun Inscription, to the effect that Smerdis/Gaumata had destroyed temples, and alienated the army by confiscating flocks, fields and

⁵⁴ Bickerman/Tadmor 1978: 248-249; Balcer 1987: 101-102.

workers⁵⁵ [§13] is probably typical propaganda aimed at blackening one's predecessor in order to legitimize a usurpation or hostile take-over⁵⁶.

The whole episode of the magos pretending to be the son of Kyros raises suspicions. And since the ultimate source is the Behistun Inscription, it is there that one must look. There is nothing truly unusual about the possibility that Kambyzes *did* kill his brother, as reported in the BI; after all, Achaemenid history is filled with examples of fratricide, and it has become a topos that Oriental (and other) monarchs dispose of all rivals as soon as possible⁵⁷. But what benefit would there be for Kambyzes to hide the fact? Why not simply claim that Smerdis/Bardiya was plotting against him, a situation which *does* show up in various ways in the sources⁵⁸. Such a solution would have made much more sense than hiding the fact of Smerdis/Bardiya's death.

But if Kambyzes did *not* kill his brother, who did? And why should Dareios claim that Kambyzes *did* kill Smerdis/Bardiya? History is often the version of the winning side, and in this case it is Dareios' version. And there are curious elements which suggest that, despite his insistence on 'Truth', the entire truth has not been written in stone. For instance, why did Dareios choose that spot for his inscription, rather than one of his capitals? It has been stated that this was the spot at which Dareios and his co-conspirators killed Smerdis/Gaumata⁵⁹, and that would certainly explain why the inscription might have been placed at Behistun. But why was this rebellion any different from the ones that followed? The rebellion of Smerdis/Gaumata is described in greater detail: dates are given for the initial uprising, the usurpation of the kingship, and the death of the magos. This occurs for none of the other rebels, not even for Vahyazdata, who also claimed to be Bardiya—only the dates of the battles are given for the remaining rebellions. Was it simply because Dareios was claiming the kingship from the time he killed Gaumata? It is entirely possible that Gaumata was an

⁵⁵ Bickerman/Tadmor 1978: 244-245.

⁵⁶ Such as the 'propaganda' recorded in the Cyrus Cylinder, see above, chapter 1 and *ANET* 1966: 306.

⁵⁷ For example, Plut. *Artax.* 26-30 records the plotting going on amongst the various sons of Artaxerxes.

⁵⁸ Herodotos has the supposed revolt appear in a dream, Ktesias says that Sphandadates persuaded Kambyzes that Smerdis/Bardiya was plotting against him (although it was not true), and Trogus reports the dream as in Herodotos; see above.

⁵⁹ Balcer 1987: 158.

impostor, that only Dareios and a few others knew this and were willing to move against him, and that Dareios emphasized his legitimacy because he knew there were other claimants to the throne who had more right to it than himself⁶⁰. But why put up this type of victory monument, which is unparalleled in Achaemenid art and monuments⁶¹? It seems equally plausible to suggest, as many have⁶², that Dareios did not kill Smerdis/Gaumata, a magos, but Smerdis/Bardiya, the true son of Kyros, who had seized the throne from Kambyzes. There is no mention of a battle, as in the other rebellions, which suggests that some sort of treachery was involved; the idea that Kambyzes killed his brother and then went off to Egypt for three years, and was able to keep Smerdis/Bardiya's death a secret all that time is questionable; the emphasis on the magos' being a pretender, and the very existence and location of the Inscription seem to suggest an importance belied by the status of a magian usurper.

As is the case with many aspects of history, this one has a number of tantalizing and puzzling elements: the weight of the evidence points to Kambyzes as a fratricide, yet there are also a number of things which throw doubt on this—the folk-tale aspects in the classical sources, the secrecy element, the problems with the Behistun Inscription. Without further evidence, my mind says that while it is not proved either way, the extant evidence is clear in blaming Kambyzes and should be taken at face value; my gut reaction is that it is simply too pat an explanation, that there is more to the Behistun Inscription than seems evident at first, and that some kind of cover-up occurred, the most likely one being that Dareios killed Kambyzes' brother Smerdis/Bardiya and usurped the throne from the rightful heir.

⁶⁰ The Behistun Inscription records that Dareios' father was still alive (and in Parthia) when Dareios took the throne (§28); surely his father would have had more right to rule?

⁶¹ Root 1979: 182-184.

⁶² Dandamaev 1976: 108-127; Balcer 1987: 153-166; Bickerman/Tadmor 1978: 239-261; Olmstead 1938: 394-397; Cook 1983: 50-52.

Chapter Five: 'The Death of Kambyases'

The death of Kambyases is as controversial as were the circumstances of his life, and has been a topic of scholarly debate. According to Herodotos [3.62-66], Kambyases was in Syria when he learned of the rebellion at home¹; when, in a state of rage and bitterness, he realized that he had misinterpreted his dream about Smerdis², he decided to march against the usurper. But while he was mounting his horse, the cap of the sheath of his sword came off and he suffered a wound to the thigh in the precise place where he had supposedly stabbed the Apis bull. Herodotos relates that Kambyases, believing he was going to die, asked the name of the city he was in. He was told that the place was named Agbatana; when he heard this, he recalled an oracle which had said that he would end his life in Agbatana. Kambyases had always assumed that Agbatana in Media was meant, and he had thought that he would die an old man in Media. But the oracle had meant Syrian Agbatana, and when Kambyases realized this, he knew that he would die there. He said no more for the time being but about twenty days later he summoned the nobles present and confessed about the murder of Smerdis/Bardiya, exhorting them to regain the throne from the magoi and calling down a curse on them if they should fail. Kambyases died shortly after this, evidently from gangrene³.

¹ Was he already on his way home, or had he already heard of the rebellion? It seems very *unreasonable* that Kambyases should already have left Egypt. The Behistun Inscription (§10) says that "the people were given over to evil" when Kambyases was in Egypt (von Voigtlander 1978: 55), so perhaps he was on his way back to deal with whatever problems had arisen; see Balcer 1987: 95. Evidence from the dating formulae of texts indicate that Bardiya was recognized as the king while Kambyases was still alive and nominally king; see Parker/Dubberstein 1946: 12; Balcer 1987: 106-108; Dandamaev 1989: 92-93.

² See above, chapters 3 and 4.

³ Because of the swiftness of Kambyases' death, within a month of his being wounded, it seemed possible that perhaps he died from tetanus rather than gangrene. The text, however, is specific in saying that the bone abscessed (mortified), ἐσφακέλισέ τε τὸ ὀστέον, 3.66.2. According to the doctor with whom I discussed this, it is entirely possible that a man could die within a month from a gangrenous wound, particularly if proper medical treatment is not quickly administered. Other factors which would play a part are the health of the individual, the strength of his immune system, the location of the wound, the geographical location of the individual, which type of gangrene it was, and the treatment which was given. For further information, see *Black's Medical Dictionary*, s.v. Gangrene.

By mentioning the Egyptian god Apis, Herodotos implies that Kambyzes' death was in retribution for the sacrilege of killing the bull, a very literary type of 'full circle' completion. But as has already been discussed⁴, Kambyzes did not kill the Apis bull. The oracle of Kambyzes' death also seems very 'literary' and unreal. For one thing, there is no known place called Agbatana in Syria⁵. And why would Kambyzes have been unaware of where he and his army were camped? It also seems far-fetched to suppose that a seriously wounded man would be more concerned over the name of the town than over his wound. And if he was so sure that he would die in Media, why immediately fear that the injury was life-threatening? The oracle can be counted as a literary device of the type where a dying man acknowledges the truth of an oracle as he is realizing the mistakes he has made⁶. Another curious element is the approximately twenty-day gap between Kambyzes' injury and the meeting with the nobles: the likely explanation is that Kambyzes only summoned the meeting when he knew for certain that the wound was likely to be fatal. But the 'death-bed confession' is also a literary topos (and a common occurrence in real life), and may stem from oral tradition.

Trogus' version [1.9.7-9], as in other areas, follows Herodotos closely here. The epitome states that Kambyzes died after he had chosen Cometes as Smerdis/Bardiya's assassin, but before the deed was carried out. As in Herodotos, Kambyzes' sword became unsheathed, and he was wounded in the thigh. Trogus (or Justin) directly comments that this was in payment for either the death of Smerdis/Bardiya or the sacrilege (probably in reference to the Apis bull). There is no mention of where Kambyzes died.

Ktesias (§12), as usual, gives a somewhat different account, and one suspects that yet again much has been left out of the epitome. Kambyzes' death is preceded by a number of negative omens: sacrificial victims do not bleed, Rhoxane⁷ has a headless child, the magoi tell Kambyzes that he will

⁴ See above, chapter 3; Balcer 1987: 95.

⁵ Balcer 1987: 93-94, feels that the mention of Agbatana was to draw attention to the 'Median' aspect of the rebellion. It may be that Kambyzes' army was camped at some small town in Syria, of which there is today no trace, and that its name sounded similar to Agbatana. Another possible reason for the inclusion of Agbatana in the story is that Kambyzes may have been heading for Agbatana as that was where Smerdis/Gaumata was basing himself. Balcer 1987: 112, claims that the site of Sikūbatti/sikayauvati [EI §12] is the same as the site of Bisitun. See also Balcer 1987: 99.

⁶ Balcer 1987: 94-95.

⁷ See above, chapter 2, for a discussion of Rhoxane.

have no successor, and his mother appears (in a vision) threatening 'blood guilt'. Kambyzes becomes more and more frightened after each event. He goes to Babylon and while whittling a bit of wood he (accidentally) stabs himself in the thigh muscle. He dies on the 11th day after the incident, having ruled for 18 years⁸.

While an Achaemenid king may well have had a hobby, wood-whittling as a means of death is somewhat unlikely. Nor does it seem probable that Kambyzes would have been moping around Babylon while part of his kingdom was in revolt. But the wound to the thigh, and the delay before death are consistent elements in the classical authors. Some tradition somewhere preserved those elements, and there is a ring of truth to them—it is easy to imagine a thigh wound deteriorating to the point of gangrene and eventual death. It is possible that such an accident could have occurred with his sword when Kambyzes was mounting a horse, if he were armed with an *akinakes* (a type of dagger), which had a cap that could slip off⁹. The Elamite-Persian dagger "has a pointed sheath without a cap", and could not have caused such a wound¹⁰.

The Behistun Inscription, in contrast, does not give any details, but does provide an "occasion for a lot of spilled ink"¹¹. The Inscription states that after Kambyzes went to Egypt "the people were given over to evil" [§10]¹². After Gaumata arose, the troops revolted from Kambyzes and sided with Gaumata. On the 9th day of the month Du'uzu (= 1 July 522 BC) Gaumata seized the throne [BI §10]¹³. "Then Cambyzes died a self-(inflicted) death." [§10]¹⁴. The phrase translated by von Voigtlander as "self-(inflicted) death" is the crux (*mi-tu-tu ra-ma-ni-šuv mi-i-ti* in Babylonian). Von Voigtlander notes that this should likely be translated as "died a self-inflicted death (by mishap)".

⁸ See above, chapter 4, for a discussion on the length of Kambyzes' reign. The possibility that the 18 years was counted from the 'joint' rule with Kyros, when added to the statement that Kambyzes died in Babylon, and that the usurper was in bed with a Babylonian concubine when the seven conspirators attacked [§14], points to a Babylonian source for Ktesias' section on Kambyzes.

⁹ Calmeyer 1987: 11-13.

¹⁰ Calmeyer 1987: 13. The *akinakes* was common to a Median (Western Iranian) costume, and the Median costume was worn by the military and the cavalry. Thus it is probable that Kambyzes was wearing this type of clothing while on the move. This lends some support to Herodotos' story.

¹¹ Professor M. Stolper, in a private communication of March 26, 1991.

¹² Von Voigtlander 1978: 55.

¹³ Parker/Dubberstein 1946: 12.

¹⁴ Von Voigtlander 1978: 55, l. 17.

and she comments that Josephus, *Ant. Jud.* 10.7.5, has a similar phrase (the Greek is ὅπως ἰδίῳ θανάτῳ πνιγὲς ἀποθάνῃ, "so that he might, suffocating, die his own death"¹⁵). The situation is that Jeremiah is lowered into a pit of mud so that he will suffocate. But there is a fundamental difference between accidentally stabbing oneself through no outside intervention, and being forced into a fatal encounter of this kind. It is also possible that ἰδίῳ here means something like 'a unique death made especially for him'¹⁶. In that case, this passage does not support the theory that this refers to an accidental death. The *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*, on the other hand, translates the phrase as "Cambyses killed himself", a translation which Stolper says carries no "real conviction"¹⁷.

The equivalent phrase in the Old Persian is *uvāmaršiyušamariyatā* [§11, line 43]¹⁸, which Kent translates as "died by his own hand", indicating that Kambyzes committed suicide¹⁹. Much of the debate centers on the Old Persian phrase rather than the Babylonian or Elamite versions (even though the Babylonian version may be older than the Old Persian)²⁰. Dandamaev has examined the Old Persian phrase and reached a number of conclusions:

- (1) The Babylonian phrase cannot refer to a natural death, as some scholars propose: the Babylonian phrase for dying a natural death is "died according to his destiny"²¹; since the Old Persian, Babylonian and Elamite phrases "correspond word-for-word"²², the Old Persian phrase also cannot refer to a natural death²³.
- (2) The phrases cannot refer to suicide: Akkadian (= Babylonian) inscriptions use a different type of wording for suicide, such as "with his own dagger he stabbed himself" or

¹⁵ Von Voigtlander 1978: 15. Professor Stolper has commented to me that this interpretation of von Voigtlander is based more on the influence of Herodotos than on philological grounds (private communication, March 26, 1991).

¹⁶ LSJ, s.v. ἰδίος, II.1.a and II.2.a. Under I.6.b, the LSJ lists ἑ. ἑαυτοῦτος = "one's own, i.e. a natural death"; however, Josephus does not seem to be using the phrase in that way, as the context of the passage indicates that it is the unusual nature of the punishment which is emphasized, rather than the fact that Jeremiah would die 'naturally'. It is also a stretch to imagine this type of death as a 'natural' one.

¹⁷ Professor Stolper, in a private communication of 26 March 1991.

¹⁸ Kent 1953: 117.

¹⁹ Kent 1953: 120.

²⁰ Von Voigtlander 1978: 2-3, 6-7; Professor Stolper, private communication of 26 March 1991; Esler 1987: 95-98.

²¹ Dandamaev 1976: 146.

²² Professor Stolper, private communication of 26 March 1991.

²³ Dandamaev 1976: 146-147.

"with his own hand or weapon"²⁴. Herzfeld's hypothesis, that the Elamite can only refer to suicide, is not correct, as the Elamite verb which he translates as "dying" can have an active meaning "to kill" and an intransitive meaning "to die"²⁵.

(3) The correspondence between the three phrases means that the Babylonian and Elamite phrases were taken from the Old Persian because those two languages had no idiomatic phrases which would mean the same as the Old Persian: had the phrase meant a natural death or suicide, the Babylonian version would have made use of the idiomatic phrase which existed in the Babylonian language²⁶.

Dandamaev thinks that the Old Persian phrase lightly emphasizes the fact that Kambyzes was punished for his crimes²⁷; he states that the Behistun Inscription shows Dareios' hostility towards Kambyzes, and he suggests the possibility that the *armv* may have killed Kambyzes when they learned of Smerdis/Bardiya's rebellion because Kambyzes had fought to limit the privileges of the aristocracy and centralize the empire²⁸.

The phrases describing Kambyzes' death are definitely unusual. Dandamaev makes some good points against taking the words to mean a natural death or suicide. But does this 'official' version agree with the tradition in the classical sources of the thigh wound? Possibly, but not definitely. If the Behistun Inscription phrase indicates, as Dandamaev suggests, that Kambyzes paid for his crimes, does this refer to retribution by the gods, or human intervention? If by the gods, one could look at a wound to the thigh as a punishment and means of death. If by human intervention, Kambyzes possibly was wounded or killed by someone, and Dareios chose to cover up the murder of an Achaemenid king (or possibly two, if he murdered Smerdis/Bardiya)²⁹.

²⁴ Dandamaev 1976: 147-148.

²⁵ Dandamaev 1976: 149.

²⁶ Dandamaev 1976: 149-150.

²⁷ This also seems to me to be based, to some extent, on the Herodotean concept of Kambyzes paying for his crimes. Boyce *AEZ* II 1982: 79 n.4, has misread Dandamaev 1976: 150.

²⁸ Dandamaev 1976: 150-157; Dandamaev has a good analysis of the philological aspects of the problem, but his political analysis seems somewhat idiosyncratic.

²⁹ Balcer 1987: 99-100.

It is also intriguing that nothing specific is said in the Behistun Inscription concerning how Kambyzes died, or about any tomb or ceremony for him. Ktesias, in fact, is the only source which mentions anything about this, stating that Izabates brought Kambyzes' body back to Persia [§13]. Nor does any completed tomb exist for Kambyzes, in contrast to the other Achaemenid kings. An unfinished structure (Takht-i Rustum) near Persepolis is generally believed to have been Kambyzes' tomb³⁰; the palace associated with the tomb, and the tomb itself, have been tentatively dated to before Dareios' reign, because of differences in the form of the column bases when compared to those at Persepolis³¹; as well, there are no toothed-chisel marks on the stones, which indicates a date before the building of Persepolis, since toothed marks begin to appear on buildings dated to Dareios' reign³². It is possible that this group of structures was a palace and tomb begun by Kambyzes and left unfinished at his death.

But what happened to his body? Did he ever receive proper burial in Persia? I doubt we will ever know, unless new evidence comes to light. The simple fact that there is no tomb for Kambyzes indicates that his burial (if any) was 'unofficial', and this too emphasizes Dareios' hostility. But Dareios does not come right out and overtly show this hostility in the Behistun Inscription, since the whole basis for his claim to the throne is that he rescued the Achaemenid kingship from a usurper [BI §12-13]. Can any conclusions be drawn from the evidence? It has been demonstrated as unlikely that Kambyzes committed suicide. The classical sources indicate 'death by misadventure', but the Behistun Inscription does not seem to support such a conclusion (and if Kambyzes *had* died an accidental death, why would Dareios hide it, when it could have been manipulated to his purposes as well?). Still, the tradition of a fatal leg wound came from somewhere, and perhaps it is connected with the idea of 'just punishment'. There is also the possibility of murder, that some faction (associated with Dareios?) killed Kambyzes, and while Dareios gave lip service to reclaiming the Achaemenid right to the throne, he was also indicating his hostility towards Kambyzes by not

³⁰ Tilia 1974: 200-204; Stronach 1964: 27; Kleiss 1980: 199-211; Root 1979: 298.

³¹ Tilia 1974: 202-203.

³² Stronach 1964: 27 + n.23.

honouring him as was fitting for an Achaemenid king. The evidence does not seem clear enough to definitely support the idea of murder; however, the classical sources do not receive much support from the Behistun Inscription for the idea of an accidental death, and thus the question of Kambyses' death remains somewhat of a mystery.

Conclusion

The classical sources for the reign of Kambyses cannot be studied in isolation; they provide important information on Kambyses and the period of his reign, and without them the evidence for his life and activities would be minimal. However, Herodotos and Ktesias are not infallible sources; the Egyptian and Near Eastern sources add valuable information, and even refute the classical authors in some areas (such as the supposed killing of the Apis bull). Thus even a well-respected source such as Herodotos must be carefully scrutinized. Not only do his stories become embellished with literary devices such as prophetic dreams and oracles, they also contain folk-tale elements which cannot be taken as strictly factual. Ktesias is an interesting source, but often has been disparaged; in fact, the confusion and inaccuracy in Ktesias actually may be the fault of the epitomator Photios. The Near Eastern and Egyptian sources also must be carefully examined; the Behistun Inscription is the oldest primary source for Kambyses, yet it was commissioned by Dareios, who was not unbiased in his attitude towards Kambyses, and had his own reasons for presenting his story as he did.

The evidence for Kambyses' activities in the years preceding his conquest of Egypt is scanty. The classical sources provide only bits and pieces, as do the Near Eastern sources. It seems that Kambyses campaigned with Kyros against Babylon in 539 BC, and he probably remained at Babylon for a time, since he is recorded as taking part in a ceremony in Babylon at the beginning of the year (March 538 BC). For the period 538-530 BC, Kambyses maintained some presence in the Babylon area, but there are no details regarding where he was or what he was doing. He succeeded to the throne upon the death of Kyros, and he may have spent some time in the northern area of the empire settling the situation. For the period of Kambyses' kingship before the Egyptian campaign, there is evidence that he married, that he began work on a palace and tomb, that he prepared for the Egyptian expedition, and that he was concerned with administrative and judicial matters when necessary.

However, the information is incomplete and insubstantial, and thus only the vague outlines of Kambyases' activities can be seen; it is evident, though, that he took an active role in the empire, both before and after he became king.

The marriages of Kambyases are an interesting problem. Herodotos is the only source to mention any marriages for Kambyases. The epitome of Ktesias does comment on a woman named Rhoxane, but no details are given other than that she bore a headless child (it is possible that she is the sister whom Kambyases is accused of killing). The Near Eastern sources are silent regarding Kambyases' marriages. Modern scholars have postulated a number of theories as to why Kambyases married his own sisters, since Herodotos says that this had not previously been customary. Similar practices exist in other cultures, such as those of Greece, Egypt, and Elam. However, most instances of close-kin unions are from the distant past, and could not have provided a direct example for Kambyases. But he may have known (through oral tradition?) of such marriages, and seen a way to limit access to the throne by such a means—marrying his own sisters would effectively cut out the possibility of a brother-in-law usurping the throne, of a noble family trying to gain access to the throne through marriage to his sisters, and of any child other than his own having a claim to the kingship. It may also be the case that Kambyases needed to look no further than the Zoroastrian religion to see examples of close-kin unions. If, as some scholars have postulated, Kambyases was a Zoroastrian, and if the practice of next-of-kin marriages had already been established in the religion, there is no need to look to other cultures for the inspiration behind his marriages (even if they were politically motivated). The study of Kambyases' marriages also highlights the need for further studies in the area of Iranian kinship groups, and how they affected society and politics.

There is substantially more evidence, both classical and Near Eastern, for the campaign against Egypt. Unfortunately, Photios' epitome of Ktesias does not provide much information, and those details it does provide are questionable; there is no mention of the 'madness' theme which Herodotos presents, and this *might* indicate that the concept did not exist in the Persian sources. Herodotos relates several traditions regarding the motivation for the attack, all of which are based on some relationship between an Egyptian princess (the daughter of Apries) and either Kyros or Kambyases.

Athenaios preserves a section of Ktesias which also gives a similar story. However, while it is possible that there was some alliance between Egypt and Persian, the idea that Kambyes' motivation was based on revenge is less likely than that it was based on political and military expansion.

Kambyes encountered little resistance in his conquest of Egypt. According to Herodotos, one of the reasons for this was the defection of the mercenary Phanes. It is interesting that both Herodotos and Ktesias mention that someone defects from the Egyptians to Kambyes (Phanes and Kombaphes, respectively); the Inscription of Udjahorresnet shows that he held important posts under both the Egyptians and the Persians, and he may have provided the basis for the stories about the defectors which were told to Herodotos and Ktesias.

Herodotos, in the section on the Egyptian campaign, portrays Kambyes as increasingly sacrilegious and insane, citing his behaviour as evidence for his madness—Kambyes is accused of violating the mummy of the former Pharaoh (Amasis), of sending a force against the Ammonians, of not preparing for his expedition into Nubia and forcing his men to the straits of cannibalism, of killing the Apis bull, murdering his brother and one of his sisters, and destroying temples. Yet the Egyptian evidence tends to contradict Herodotos. The Inscription of Udjahorresnet shows that Kambyes went to some lengths to play the part of Pharaoh, even taking a proper Pharaonic name (in much the same spirit as Kyros and Kambyes played the role of king in Babylon). He restored temples which had been vandalized, as well as performing the required ceremonies. The three 'doomed' campaigns seem more literary than factual, and are part of the build-up of the madness theme. As for the Apis bull, the burial inscriptions reveal that the bull which died during Kambyes' reign was buried with due pomp and ceremony by order of Kambyes; it is unlikely that this would be the case if he had killed the bull as is related in Herodotos. There is no other evidence concerning the charges of Kambyes' hostile actions against Persian nobles, or of his murdering his sister and the son of Prexaspes. However, given the folk-tale nature of the stories, it is unlikely that they occurred as Herodotos relates, if at all. Much of Herodotos' information on Kambyes' conquest of Egypt comes from Egyptian sources; these sources may have passed on a tradition hostile to Kambyes because of his economic sanctions against some Egyptian temples. And it is in the

Egyptian tales that the idea of Kambyases' insanity predominates. Yet the Egyptian evidence casts doubt on this interpretation, and indicates that, as good a source as Herodotos is, he still must be used cautiously. It may well be that Kambyases does not deserve the label of 'madman' which has been attached to him by Herodotos.

The murder of Kambyases' brother Smerdis/Bardiya and the usurpation by the magos Smerdis/Gaumata have been much debated by scholars. The classical sources (Herodotos, Ktesias and Justin) and the Behistun Inscription all say that Kambyases was responsible for his brother's death; the details, such as who the murderer was, where and how Smerdis/Bardiya died, and when the murder took place, differ from source to source. A magos-usurper (Smerdis/Gaumata) is said to have taken over the Persian throne; again, the details (who he was, when he took over the kingship, his role in the murder of Smerdis/Bardiya, whether or not he had a brother who impersonated the son of Kyros) are not consistent. In fact, the only consistent element in the various and varied versions is that Kambyases is said to have killed his brother. This accusation seems to stem from the Behistun Inscription, or at least from a tradition based on the Inscription; and it must be kept in mind that the Inscription recorded the version of events which Dareios chose to relate. The contradictory nature of the evidence, when considered in this light, suggests that there is more to the death of Smerdis/Bardiya than is found in the 'official' version. While it is possible that Kambyases killed his brother, it is equally (if not more) possible that it was Dareios who killed the son of Kyros and usurped the Persian throne.

There are also difficulties in the area of Kambyases' death. The classical sources agree that he died from a wound to the thigh (the details of where Kambyases was, and what he was doing vary); Herodotos and Trogus both mention that his death was in retribution for his sacrileges. The Behistun Inscription does not provide any details, but has caused much controversy among scholars because of the unusual nature of the phrase used to describe Kambyases' death. It can not mean that he committed suicide, but the precise meaning is unclear. Was it an accident? Divine retribution? Was he murdered by some hostile faction? The evidence for any conclusion is circumstantial at best, and the manner of and reason for Kambyases' death is still inconclusive.

Kambyzes is an important figure in Persian history, but he is often overshadowed by Kyros and Dareios. Yet he maintained Kyros' legacy and enlarged the empire himself with the acquisition of Egypt; and the rise of Dareios can not be contemplated or explored without taking Kambyzes and his reign into account.

The use of sources from different disciplines is a necessity in Achaemenid studies: without it, only a partial picture emerges, as can be seen in the case of Kambyzes—the classical sources, especially Herodotos, give a particular view of Kambyzes, a Greek view, while the Near Eastern and Egyptian sources each give different views again. It is only by combining the various views that one can see a more complete panorama. Fortunately, this is happening in the field of Achaemenid history.