TWO INSTANCES OF THE SATRAP STELA: TOKENS OF THE
GRAECO-EGYPTIAN LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL INTERRELATION
AT THE START OF THE HELLENISM?

by Ivan A. Ladynin
Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow, Russia

Though extensively studied for more than a century, the Satrap Stela (CM22182; Urk. II 11-22) still has much in store for the attentive observer. This is true first of all about a number of its fragments, which are puzzling as far as their historic interpretation is concerned. However, the historic content of this monument interest Hellenists more compared to Egyptologists: the former are apt to make use of the latter’s observations but are reluctant, if able, to make their own judgement of the text’s original, while the latter question the text from their experience and often outside the context. Indeed this would be impossible for a Classicist studying the early Hellenism. Therefore we should commence the present paper by delineating several major principles, which seem to be appropriate in the study of the Satrap Stela as a both historical and philological phenomenon belonging to the era of the making of Hellenistic Egypt. However trivial and unspecific for this text and period they might seem, these principles are better to be summed up now so as to give necessary guidance both to the author and to the readers.

Every text has its own laws, which are adhered to by the drafter, are governed by the specifics of its time and by its genre and are expected to be traced by any student wishing to understand it adequately. First of all, a text is compiled in a language of a specific era having its laws and peculiarities. Notwithstanding that to the best of our knowledge the language of the Satrap

---


Stela has never been analyzed separately, it is certainly the late Middle Egyptian of the second half of the first millennium B.C., many of its written features coming back to the New Kingdom and paving the way to the Ptolemaic system of writing. Second, every text should be treated as a whole, usually created by a single drafter employing a ‘personal writing guide’. In other words a writer is likely to maintain a standard of writings that he personally chose from a variety of possible options as the most appropriate and to adhere to this standard throughout his work. When he repeats a word he has used before, he would probably reproduce its preceding writing from its phonetic stem to the determinative. He would do the same or very nearly the same, when he finds himself in need to use the word the third time. In the case of the Satrap Stela, this means that its irregularities and dubious writings are to be explained by comparing it with its contemporary hieroglyphic texts, and not in the classical Middle Egyptian written standard; also by comparing it with the text of the Stela itself (analogies and words of the same category in its other passages) rather than with other texts. Third, the structure and the contents of any text are governed by logic depending on its genre and the message it is intended to convey.

The Satrap Stela is unique for being an official hieroglyphic text of 311 B.C. (Urk. II. 12.12: Year 7, tpy 3ḥt, of Alexander IV, son of Alexander and Roxane) highlighting a person of non-royal status – Satrap Ptolemy – in a manner appropriate to a Pharaoh. At the same time, it is intended to register a specific donation by the Satrap to the temples of Buto. Thus, the structure of the Stela – its falling in two parts, where the former contains an introductory definition of Ptolemy’s position in Egypt (id. 12.12-13.5), a panegyric to him (id. 13.7-14.6), and a history of his feats (id. 14.9-15.17), while the latter narrates the prehistory of the domain donated by Ptolemy to the temples and the very act of the donation (id. 16.5 sqq.) seems quite natural. However, it is clear enough that the narration of the Stela covers either strictly local events that were important for the region of Buto and likely to be found in the second part or Ptolemy’s commitments of all-Egyptian importance portraying him as a mighty and benevolent ruler to be found in the historical account of the first

3 See the most convenient summary of these features in the 4th century B.C. based on the Naples’ Stela and other contemporary texts: O. PERDU, Le monument de Samtoutefnakht à Naples (Première Partie), in: Revue d’égypitologie 36 (1985), p. 92-95; see them in the Satrap Stela: Urk.II 17.4, 19.16 21.14 im (im[w]); id. 16.13: mBB; id.14.3, 5, 18.8, 19.16, 20.14; for pri; id. 13.5, 15.16 Bkt for ‘Egypt’; besides one finds there a regular inversion of and explicable by Late Egyptian phonological changes: iw into r - id. 17.6, 18.10, 18.13; r into iw – id. 15.10, 16.10, 18.6, 20.10; cf. Wh. I 42.12; W. VYCICHL, Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue copte, Leuven, 1983, p. 37.

part. Whenever we come across the description of a military campaign (cf. id. 15.2-10, 12-17), we are to assume it cannot be an unimportant episode but a major enterprise resulting in notable gains; Classical historians have hardly overlooked it.

Finally, taking into account the period during which the Satrap Stela was drafted it is only natural that it reproduced in hieroglyphs a considerable number of names coming from foreign languages. Indeed, this easily became a trap for those working at its historical interpretation. Normally the students of the Stela (with the exception of the earliest ones, e.g. H. Brugsch) preferred to find to each of these names the best phonetically fitting parallel in other hieroglyphic texts. Although such course seemed philologically correct, it resulted in neglecting at least two important aspects. First, a proper name is a proper name and the manner in which it is reproduced (especially by means of a foreign language) is not always governed by strict linguistic rules. Second, the interpretation of a proper name to be found in a historic text should not only be consistent from the viewpoint of philology but of history as well. One should not hesitate to question again and again an interpretation of a name, however fitting philologically, when it disrupts in any way the logic of the text or when it gives ground to a grave anachronism.

Actually, the solutions to some puzzles of the Satrap Stela depend to a great extend exactly on the interpretation of two proper names; and it is the aim of this paper to approach its satisfactory version.

\[Hšryš(3) - ‘Xerxes’- ‘Artaxerxes’ (Urk. II. 17.3, 17.12, 18.4)\]

The first of these names appears in the second part of the Stela, in the story of the domain ‘Land-of-Uto’ (Urk. II. 16.7 et sq.: \(p³\ t³ n \ W\djt\)) and belongs to a foreign ruler who confiscated it from the Buto temples. In the text, his name is constantly preceded by the epithet ‘adversary’ (\(hfty\)) and appears in two slightly different variants: \(Hšryš (id. 17.3: \[\]
\[\]
\[\]) and \(Hšryš(3) (id. 17.12, 18.4: \[\]
\[\]
\[\])\). The domain confiscated by said ruler had originally been returned to the temples by the Pharaoh Chabbash, who occupied Egypt in a short interlude between Artaxerxes III and Darius III in the middle of 330s B.C. (id. 18.7-14).\(^5\) In due course, this act was reaffirmed by the Satrap Ptolemy (id. 19.3 ff.).

\(^5\) The reason to place the reign of Chabbash not before the mid-4th century B.C. and probably at the time of the Second Persian Domination is the Papyrus Libbey (=Toledo 1) of his Year 1 witnessed by a \(P³-di-hr-p³\)-\(R³\) son of \(P³-hr³\)-\(s\) attested in other documents from 330 to 324 B.C.; see W. SPIEGELBERG, Der Papyrus Libbey: Ein ägyptischer Heiratsvertrag (Schriften der wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft in Strassburg, 1), Strassburg, 1907, p. 2-6; Prosopographia Ptolemaica, III: Le clergé, le notariat, les tribunaux, Louvain, 1956, p. 286-287 (no. 7795); IX: Addenda et corrigenda au volume III (1956), Louvain, 1981, p. 269 (no. 7795); W. HUB, Der rätselhafte König Chababasch, in: Studi epigrafici e linguistici sul Vicino Oriente antico 11 (1994), p. 100-101 and note 26; D. DEVAUCHELLE, Réflexions sur les documents égyptiens datés de la Deuxième Domination perse, in: Transeuropatèine 10 (1995), p. 41-42 and note 37; M. DEPAUW, The
The students of Satrap Stela have extensively discussed the identity of the ruler. According to the two prevailing arguments, he has been equated to Xerxes I or to Artaxerxes III, the conqueror of Egypt in 343 B.C. The argument made by H. Goedicke that this ruler was Arses, who stayed at the Persian throne exactly between Artaxerxes III and Darius III, stands alone. Pursuant to his submission, to identify the ruler as Xerxes I seemed historically impossible and as Artaxerxes III phonetically impossible (see below). Therefore, the ruler ought to be a third person and Arses answered the description! However, his submission would appear to be both phonetically and historically impossible. First, the hieroglyphic Hšryš(3) and the Persian Arša cannot be equated because the order of the radicals š and r is inverse, while the original Persian name lacks a consonant or an aspiration that would turn into uvular h in Egyptian spelling. Second, it seems clear that the ruler came to Egypt personally shortly before Chabbash’s takeover: his atrocities were very vivid in the memory of Chabbash’s contemporaries from the region of Buto. Third, the phrase from the Stela about his recent expulsion from Egypt (with god’s will; Urk. II. 18.4-6) has probably to be taken quite literally. As for Arses, he must have been too busy with his domestic troubles to leave

---


8 H. Goedicke, *Comments on the Satrap Stela*, p. 39, 53-54. Note that although a historian of Graeco-Roman Egypt, who is rather a Classicist than an Egyptologist, is aware of different opinions on the identity of the ruler, he does not agree with either of them decisively: G. Hölbl, *Geschichte des Ptolemäerreiches*, p. 76.


10 The proponent of this identification himself admitted this weak point: H. Goedicke, *Comments on the Satrap Stela*, p. 54.
his metropolitan region, let alone to interfere with the estates of Buto temples. In conclusion, the argument advanced by H. Goedicke must be rejected.

Regarding the two other opinions, the major argument to identify the ‘adversary Ḥṣryš(ī)’ with Xerxes I was the writing of this name, which is comparable to both the Persian (xesayārša) and to the hieroglyphic (𓊏𓊾𓅓𓅮𓊩𓊙𓎒𓎲)12) equivalents of ‘Xerxes’. However, this identification was challenged by a reasonable argument that any damage to Egyptian temples caused by Xerxes I in the first half of the 5th century B.C. would have been restored by the Pharaohs of the 4th century long before Chabbash and Satrap Ptolemy.13 In addition nothing is known about the presence of Xerxes I in Egypt. As for another king of this name, Xerxes II, his reign was too short (several months around 424 B.C.) to equate him seriously with the ruler of the Stela.14 Thus, historically speaking, the best “candidate” for the role played by Ḥṣryš(ī) is Artaxerxes III. Last but not least, an argument in favour of this identification is the ingenious supposition made by U. Kaplony-Heckel in her translation of the Satrap Stela. A passage about the expulsion of the ruler from Egypt contained a phrase (Urk. II. 18.5-6: 𓊏𓊾𓅓𓅮𓊩𓊙𓎒𓎲), the order of signs reproduces strictly the original of the Stela and has been taken from photographs kindly provided by Prof. Dr. Erich Winter of Trier University, Germany), which was ineptly broken into lines in sethe’s transcription and eventually became void of sense in the translations of the Stela. The recent translation by R. Ritner reads: “(God Horus) expelled the enemy Xerxes from his (Egyptian) royal palace together with his eldest son; thus it is perceived in Sais of Neith today beside the God’s Mother”.15 This version leaves unanswered one question, which is by no means idle: why had the expulsion of Ḥṣryš(ī) from Egypt to be appreciated specifically in Sais, this appreciation being at the same time topical for the Stela’s drafters? We know for sure that the text we read comes from Buto, not even from the nome of Sais. Moreover, with due regard to the importance of this city in the first millennium B.C., an all-Egyptian sensation in the 4th century B.C. would be associated with the capital city of Memphis rather than with Sais or any other place. This meaningful inconsistency (found in other translations of the Stela as well) does not appear if one adopts the

---

13 W. Spiegelberg, Der Papyrus Libbey, p. 5; F. K. Kienitz, Die politische Geschichte Ägyptens..., p. 186; H. Goedicke, Comments on the Satrap Stela, p. 53.
15 W.K. Simpson et al., eds., The Literature of Ancient Egypt, p. 395.
approach of U. Kaplony-Heckel that the signs consti\textbullet\textsuperscript{t}ute an integrate writing of the personal name \(Wr-\text{si}\text{\textbeta}\text{-s}\), \textit{i.e.} the son of Artaxerxes III Arses.\textsuperscript{16}

A possible objection to this interpretation is the lack of the determinative \textsuperscript{2} at the end of this writing. However, one should check the doubtless writings of the name \(H\text{\textfrak{r}}\text{\textfrak{y}}\text{\textfrak{s}}\text{(t)}\) to get assured of its absence there as well (see above; the final \textsuperscript{2} in these writings conveys rather the strong pejorative association of this name, so the absence of \textsuperscript{2} at the end of inimical names might be considered a regularity for the Satrap Stela). The difference between the writing \(Wr-\text{si}\text{\textbeta}\text{-s}\) and the alleged name of Arses on a fragmentary seal’s offprint (\textsuperscript{17}) does not deflate the idea of U. Kaplony-Heckel due to the extreme uncertainty of this piece’s attribution.\textsuperscript{18} At the same time, the interpretation of \(Wr-\text{si}\text{\textbeta}\text{-s}\) as “Arses” allows the following translation of the whole passage: “(God Horus,) he has driven away the adversary \(H\text{\textfrak{r}}\text{\textfrak{y}}\text{\textfrak{s}}\text{(t)}\) to his royal palace together with his son \(Wr-\text{si}\text{\textbeta}\text{-s}\) from Sais, the city of Neith on that day, beside the Mother of God”. We will not explain our reasoning for every detail of the proposed translation, as this has been done elsewhere.\textsuperscript{19} Suffice to note that there are no perplexities about the role of Sais in this context (the city seems to be simply the last station of the Persians before their expulsion from Egypt). As for “the Mother of God”, it might easily be Isis of Buto: considering that the foreign enemies were expelled by Horus of this city, this action was likely to be performed beside his mother. With this interpretation of \textit{Urk.} II 18. 4-6, to identify ‘the adversary \(H\text{\textfrak{r}}\text{\textfrak{y}}\text{\textfrak{s}}\text{(t)}\)’ as Artaxerxes III, the real father of Arses, is strongly supported from the direct evidence of the Stela.

However, this final proof has not yet solved the enigma of the name used in the Stela to denote Artaxerxes III. Its discrepancy with the hieroglyphic attestations (\textsuperscript{20}) and the Persian form \(\text{\textit{Artax\textca\textsmile\textfrak{s}}\text{\textfrak{a}}\text{\textca\textsmile\textfrak{ca}}}\) of this name and, at the same time, its strong similarity to the name ‘Xerxes’ are still obvious and demand an explanation. W. Spiegelberg has once remarked that in Classical sources the substitution of the name ‘Xerxes’ (\(\Sigma\text{\textepsilon}\text{\textomicr{\textfrak{r}}}\text{\textomicr{\textfrak{e}}}\text{\textomicr{\textfrak{p}}}\text{\textomicr{\textfrak{g}}}\text{\textomicr{\textfrak{y}}}\text{\textfrak{s}}\)) in the place of ‘Artaxerxes’ (’\(\Lambda\text{\textomicr{\textgreek{r}}}{\text{\textomicr{\textfrak{a}}}\text{\textomicr{\textfrak{x}}}\text{\textomicr{\textfrak{z}}}\text{\textomicr{\textfrak{e}}}\text{\textomicr{\textfrak{p}}}\text{\textomicr{\textfrak{g}}}\text{\textomicr{\textfrak{p}}}\text{\textomicr{\textfrak{y}}}\text{\textfrak{s}}}\)’ was sometimes attested. In fact, Xerxes I was the last of the Achaemenids, whom the Greeks remembered well because of his

\textsuperscript{16} Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testament, I, p. 617 and commentary 11b.
\textsuperscript{17} W. M. F. Petrie, Scarabs and Cylinders with Names, Illustrated by the Egyptian Collection in University College, London, 1917, p. 33, 40, pl. 57, No 31, 2.
\textsuperscript{18} D. Devauchelle, Réflexions sur les documents égyptiens..., p. 40.
\textsuperscript{19} I. A. Ladynin, “Adversary \(H\text{\textfrak{r}}\text{\textfrak{y}}\text{\textfrak{s}}\text{(t)}\)’’: His Name and Deeds According to the Satrap Stela, in: Chronique d’Égypte 80 (2005), 89 and 92-98, commentaries ‘i-p’ with bibliography.
\textsuperscript{20} J. von Beckerath, Handbuch der ägyptischen Königsnamen, loc.cit. (for Artaxerxes I; the names of Artaxerxes II and III are not registered hieroglyphically, and in demotic papyri the name is also written \(\text{\textomicr{\textfrak{r}}}\text{\textomicr{\textfrak{h}}}\text{\textomicr{\textfrak{s}}}\text{\textomicr{\textfrak{s}}}\) or \(\text{\textomicr{\textfrak{r}}}\text{\textomicr{\textfrak{h}}}\text{\textomicr{\textfrak{s}}}\text{\textomicr{\textfrak{h}}}\)): e.g. P.dem. Lille 27 C, l. 6; D, l. 10, which must probably be attributed to Artaxerxes II: H. Sottas, Papyrus démotiques de Lille, Paris, 1921, I, p. 54, pl. XIV, cf. p. 2-3, 8, 54-55; D. Devauchelle, Réflexions sur les documents égyptiens..., p. 40).
invasion. In contradistinction, the later Persian kings were for the Greeks just impersonal βασιλείας, and the better known name of Xerxes was likely to be substituted for that of Artaxerxes, which bore much less vivid associations.21 A similar, but at the same time a much weaker, argument was submitted by P. Briant and recently joined by R. Ritner: the French scholar suggested that the name of Xerxes had been chosen by the Satrap Stela’s drafters as a terme générique for Persian kings, and the account of Ḥṣryš(š) episode in the Stela is rather a “repeating motive” that relates to the past rather than evidence of a real event.22 We strongly disagree with the latter point. First, as has already been argued, everything in the account of Ḥṣryš(š)’s confiscations from the temples of Buto points to the direction that it reproduces a vivid reminiscence of a true and rather recent episode. Second, the use of the name of Xerxes as a terme générique for Persian kings means that this name could have been applied by the Egyptians to those foreign rulers much like the name of Caesar was applied by the Romans and their subjects to the rulers of the Empire. It is unlikely that such thing was possible at all (no analogy of the sort can be thought of for any other era of foreign domination in Egyptian history) and still more unlikely that the Egyptians would have chosen the name of Xerxes for this purpose. In conclusion, the explanation of the onomastic substitution we find in the Satrap Stela is probably less general and better connected to the specifics of the text.

Incidentally, one should think about a necessary condition for using the name ‘Xerxes’ instead of ‘Artaxerxes’ in Classical tradition, which was overlooked by W. Spiegelberg probably for being too obvious. This substitution was possible only in Greek where these two names have a false common root -ξέρξης; no common component in them is found either in Persian or in Egyptian. Hence, the Greek transmission of the Persian royal names seems to be the only onomastic phenomenon, which might have influenced the denotation of Artaxerxes III in the Satrap Stela. Was such influence possible for this text? Its being drafted in the early Hellenistic period and the long Greek presence in Egypt still before this time – and throughout the Persian dominations – tends to show that it was by no means impossible. But were we to accept this explanation we would have to admit that the Stela’s drafters, i.e. Egyptian people of education in a rather provincial temple centre of Buto, were so currently in contact with Greeks, that they kept well in minds not only the language of those newcomers but also their knowledge of the past.

‘The boundary of Ir-mr-3/Mr-mr-3’ and its ‘army’ (Urk. II. 15.12-15)

The second fragment of the Satrap Stela to be looked at in the present paper is an account of the successful Egyptian expedition against a hostile region (Urk. II. 15.12-17; cf. the

21 W. SPIEGELBERG, Der Papyrus Libbey, p. 5 and note 4.
name in id. 12). First of all, one should postulate the exact reading of this hieroglyphic name, which was controversial.\(^{23}\) To begin with, there was a dispute if the last phonetic sign of the writing had to be taken for Gardiner’s G\(_1\) \(\text{ ro}\) (\(\beta\)) or G\(_4\) \(\text{ tyw}\). The photos of the Stela incline to adhere to the former view, due to comparing the sign in question with doubtless G\(_1\) in the article \(n\) (\(\text{UrK. II. 15.4: } p\,\text{ t}\,\text{ n}\,\text{ Htw}\); id. 20.4: \(\text{ n}\,\text{ tyw}\)) and G\(_1\) incorporated in G\(_3\) in \(\text{smtyw}\) (id. 18.17). The reading of the sign N\(_{36}\) as \(\text{mr}\) seems doubtless, though other suggestions were made.\(^{24}\) Most scholars did not hesitate that \(\text{mr}\), the first phonetic sign of the writing, had its regular value \(\text{ir}.\)\(^{25}\) However, it was again U. Kaplony-Heckel, who gave a rather good motivation to an old idea by H. Brugsch\(^{26}\) that it might be read \(\text{mr}.\)\(^{27}\) Such reading is founded on the Late Egyptian (still pre-Ptolemaic!) form of the word ‘eye’ (\(\text{Wb I. 107: } \text{mr}\); connected to the eventual Coptic \(\text{bal, be}\)\(^{28}\)), it is attested in Ptolemaic texts\(^{29}\) and, still more importantly, in the texts of Petosiris’ tomb at Tuna el-Gebel, which are almost contemporary to the Satrap Stela.\(^{30}\) The resulting reading of the name must be \(\text{Ir-mr-}\) or \(\text{Mr-mr-}\), the latter variant being quite plausible.

The interpretation of the name by different students of the Stela was even more controversial than its reading\(^{31}\). The first of them, H. Brugsch, suggested that the name corresponded to the Classical \(\text{Marmarica}:\) in his opinion, the account of the Stela narrated about the suppression of the anti-Ptolemaic sedition at the city of Cyrene in 312 B.C. known from the Classical sources. This view was shared by a number of subsequent students, both Egyptologists and Classicists.\(^{32}\)


\(^{24}\) \(\text{mr}\) according to P. Kaplon, \textit{Bemerkungen zum ägyptischen Königstum vor allem in der Spätzeit}, in: \textit{Chronique d’Egypte} 46 (1971), p. 257 and note 1 and \(\text{mr}\) according to H. Goedicke, \textit{Comments on the Satrap Stela}, p. 34. Cf. Fr. Daumas et al., \textit{Valeurs phonétiques des signes hiéroglyphiques d’époque gréco-romaine}, III, Montpellier, 1990, p. 468, signs N\(_{596}\) and N\(_{597}\), though I can see no reason to ascribe to this sign one of those Ptolemaic values and, therefore, to dispute its regular value.

\(^{25}\) J.K. Winnciki, \textit{Militäroperationen von Ptolemaios I., loc.cit.}


\(^{29}\) Fr. Daumas et al., \textit{Valeurs phonétiques des signes hiéroglyphiques...}, III, Montpellier, 1988, p. 148, sign D\(_{83}\).

\(^{30}\) G. Lefebvre, \textit{Le tombeau de Petosiris. 3ème partie: Vocabulaire et planches}, Cairo, 1923, p. 32 (‘\(\text{mr}\) yeux d’un dieu’), 43 (‘\(\text{mr}\) épithète d’Horus “aux deux yeux”’).

\(^{31}\) Cf. J.K. Winnciki, \textit{Militäroperationen von Ptolemaios I., loc.cit.}

However, when the Egyptologists started scanning the hieroglyphic texts for the parallel of this name, they did not fail to find it in the name of the country of *Irm* (most currently or located in Upper Nubia between the Shendi reach, the northern Butana, and the Atbara. It is interesting to note that a specialist in hieroglyphic and hieratic African toponymy, K. Zibelius-Chen, did not comment on the name found in the Stela, when dealing with *Irm* in her compendious study; nevertheless this name was identified with *Irm* by a number of scholars. Among them, P. Kaplony and, recently, R. Ritner advocated a very much the same view that the name of *Irm* can be assigned to the Meroitic kingdom; hence, in the Stela it denotes this state in its totality and the expedition sent by Satrap Ptolemy might have been an encounter with Meroe at its border with Egypt, somewhere in Lower Nubia. There are objections to this interpretation as regards the expected place of the described episode in the concept and structure of the Satrap Stela. However, it must be said that the idea about *Irm* is hardly tenable even on formal grounds. The stelae of Harsiotef and Nastasen, which both belong to the 4th century B.C. and so ought to be taken into account by the students of the Satrap Stela whenever any Meroitic allusion is suspected, use for the Meroitic kingdom quite different denotations: \( \text{\textit{pA tA NHcy}; Urk. III. 116, 118} \) in the Horsiotef Stela, and \( \text{\textit{pA tA sty}; with variants and erroneous writings; \textit{id. 144, 146, 147-149}} \) in the Nastasen Stela. At the same time, the name of the city of Meroe, as the metropolis of this state, has a specific writing quite different from that of *Irm* (or in the Nastasen Stela – \textit{id. 142, 147-148}; in the Egyptian texts compare especially the list of Nubian ‘nomes’ from Philae belonging to the time of Ptolemy II Philadelphus and giving for the second southernmost ‘nome’: \textit{Urk. II. 120}). Incidentally, on account of the last known undisputed mention of *Irm* under the Meroitic king Irike-Amanote it must be treated as

---


an entity other than the kernel or the totality of his kingdom.\textsuperscript{36} Based on the above, it would be strange to expect that the name of Irm, unknown otherwise in this meaning, would be used in a 4th century B.C. text in the place of the better-attested contemporary denotations of the Meroitic kingdom.

Finally, in the 1970s and 1980s some Egyptologists became enthusiastic in placing the region in question in Asia, due to the alleged affinities between some of its peoples’ names and the one found in the Stela: R. Giveon suggested identifying the name with that of Arabs,\textsuperscript{37} H. Goedicke with that of Arameans\textsuperscript{38} and H.-J. Thissen with that of Amorites.\textsuperscript{39} Thus, one might conclude that many different locations outside Egypt have been proposed as the target of the Satrap Ptolemy’s expedition.

Before choosing among these mutually exclusive versions, one ought to make a careful summary of what is known about the notorious region and the expedition against it from the Stela. To begin with, the Stela applies to the region the specific term \textit{tš} (\textit{WB} V. 328; \textit{cf. id.} 235: \textit{tš}), which is correctly translated as ‘border, boundary’. J.K. Winnicki once suggested that the Middle Egyptian language of the Satrap Stela could have been influenced by the contemporary spoken Demotic.\textsuperscript{40} Were this argument to hold, it would be reasonable to compare \textit{tš} of the Stela with the use of this word in Demotic versions of the Ptolemaic trilinguas, where it can simply mean “country, region”.\textsuperscript{41} However, the only argument of Winnicki in favour of the alleged Demotic influence on the Satrap Stela (the frequent use of the article \textit{p3}) seems rather weak. On the other hand, the drafters of the Stela probably kept well in mind a distinction between the Middle Egyptian words \textit{tš} and \textit{tβ} (“country”): in one fragment \textit{tš} is applied exactly to the territorial borders of the domain ‘Land-of-Uto’ (\textit{Urk.} II. 20.3, 8), while in the account of Ptolemy’s Asiatic campaign its target is defined as \textit{p3 tβ n3 Hírw (id.} 15.4: ‘the country of the Kharu [people]’). It should be noted that the latter combination of words has a precise parallel in Demotic texts and in the hieroglyphic Satrap Stela is quite clear. For these reasons \textit{p3 tš n’Ir- mr-β/Mr-mr-β} of the Satrap Stela must really be a region at the border of Egypt. Incidentally, this conclusion avoids the direct identification of this region with the Upper Nubian


\textsuperscript{38} H. Goedicke, \textit{Comments on the Satrap Stela}, p. 34.

\textsuperscript{39} Personal statement, according to J.K. Winnicki, \textit{Militäroperationen von Ptolemaios I...}, p. 181.

\textsuperscript{40} J.K. Winnicki, \textit{ibid}, p. 166-167 and note 54.

\textsuperscript{41} \textit{Cf.} J.K. Winnicki, \textit{ibid}, p. 168-169 and notes 66-67, with references to the decrees of Canopus and Raphia.

\textsuperscript{42} See the discussion by J.K. Winnicki, \textit{supra} note 40.
Irm (let alone the silence of Classical narratives about Ptolemy’s engagement so far in Africa), while for the aforementioned reasons one cannot but question seriously whether it refers to the entire Meroitic kingdom.

Another thing we come to know about the ‘boundary of Irm-Mr’ is that Ptolemy’s expedition was a reprisal: “He (the Satrap Ptolemy) brought [away] the[ir] people (lit. ‘army’; see the interpretation below) as men [and] women, together with their god, as a reward for what they (the residents of the region) have done (lit.: ‘[of] their doing’) against Egypt” (Urk. II. 15. 14-15: ）。H. Goedicke elaborated a theory that this fragment describes the arrival of those residents of Irm-Mr to Egypt ‘as mercenaries joining his (Ptolemy’s) service’. Needless to say, this idea could be true only if one neglected the phrase preceding this fragment (Urk. II. 15.13) and describing the ‘seizure’ of the region and its residents by Ptolemy. Indeed, this context, contrary to Goedicke’s idea, gives to the words m-isw ir.sn a definite meaning of revenge and reprisal, and not mercenary payment, on behalf of Ptolemy. Goedicke’s interpretation is also incorrect philologically: nothing enabled him to coordinate the adverbial phrase r Bikt with the verbal form in.f as the destination, where the alleged mercenaries were brought by Ptolemy. These two combinations of words are separated from one another by a long sequence of words; no doubt, the adverbial phrase r Bikt is connected with ir.sn immediately preceding it and indicates the direction of the action.

One more thing to be observed in the account of the expedition against the ‘boundary of Irm-Mr’ is not said openly, but rather implied in its context. The historical part of the Satrap Stela (Urk. II. 14.9-15.17) tells about the most significant events of Ptolemy’s rule. These events seem to be grouped according to their decreasing importance for Ptolemy’s image in the eyes of his Egyptian subjects: the return of the cult objects from Egypt, as a benefaction to gods, is ranked first (id. 14.9-11); the foundation of a new capital in Alexandria follows suit (id.14.13-16); and finally comes the description of two military enterprises, the most important campaign in Asia culminating in the battle of Gaza (id. 15.2-10), and the expedition against the ‘boundary of Irm-Mr’.

Chronologically these events closely precede the date of Stela’s compilation, i.e. 311 B.C.: both the Asiatic campaign and the return of cult images in its course must fall in the year 312. Moreover, the numismatic evidence strongly suggests that the transfer of the capital to Alexandria could be dated

43 H. GOEDICKE, Comments on the Satrap Stela, p. 34-35.
to the same period. From this evidence two conclusions could be reached. First, the expedition against the ‘boundary of Ir-mr-3/Mr-mr-3’ must have taken place in the same year(s). Second, this event was notable enough to speak about it together with other deeds of outstanding importance. This seems to exclude the possibility of identifying the region in question with a minor Asiatic or Nubian entity at the Egyptian borders: an encounter with it would have been too unimportant to be mentioned in this context, while a more impressive event at the same frontiers would have probably been recounted in Classical texts.

By not localizing the ‘boundary of Ir-mr-3/Mr-mr-3’ in Nubia or Asia, we are entitled to reconsider its initial identification with the Libyan region of Cyrene. The Classical evidence tells that Cyrene was attached to Ptolemy’s possessions, when the satrapies were distributed among the _diadochoi_ at Babylon in 323 and at Triparadeisos in 320. On the basis of such evidence, its region could be described as an Egyptian ‘boundary’. The people of Cyrene revolted against Ptolemy in 313 (Diod. XIX. 79. 1-3): Diodorus tells about Ptolemy’s fury at the news of the Cyreneans murdering his envoys, which could well have been the evil-doing ‘rewarded’ according to the Satrap Stela. Another thing coinciding in the accounts of Diodorus and of the Stela is the dispatch of prisoners to Egypt. An expedition sent by Ptolemy brought Cyrene again his dominion in 312. Naturally, a text of Egyptian tradition would have easily ascribed this victory to him personally.

___

45 According to O. MORKHOLM, *Early Hellenistic Coinage: From the Accession of Alexander the Great to the Peace of Apamea (336-188 B.C.)*, Cambridge, 1991, p. 64, fig. 92, in mid- or late 310s B.C. Ptolemy introduced a new type of his coinage: _av._ head of Alexander with horns, elephant scalp and diadem on his head, _rev._ standing Athena and a smaller eagle on thunderbolt (first appearance of this Ptolemaic emblem!) instead of earlier seated Zeus, legend ΛΕΩΝΑΠΕΙΟΝ ΙΠΟΛΕΜΑΙΟΥ (‘Ptolemy’s [coin] of Alexandria’ or ‘Ptolemy’s [coin] of Alexander’). In our opinion, it is definitely the former, due to the parallel from Ptolemy’s Cyrenean coinage ΚΥΠΑΝΑΙΟΝ ΙΠΟΛΕΜΑΙΟΥ (O. MORKHOLM, _ibid._, p. 64, fig. 110). The legend shows that this type could hardly have been launched before the transfer of the capital to Alexandria. Indeed if the matter been simply about the introduction of a new coin, it would have hardly been so emphasized in the legend. However, the imaging type of the coinage fully coincides with that of Ptolemy’s Sydonian series dated to Year 22 of Abdalonym of Sydon = 312; see O. MORKHOLM, _ibid._, p. 65, fig. 94; B. KUSCHEL, *Die neuen Münzbilder des Ptolemaios Soter_, in: *Jahrbuch für Numismatik und Geldgeschichte* 11 (1961), p. 13-14. Thus, the transfer of the capital to Alexandria could be dated at the same year (or, to say the least, at the years immediately preceding it) with a degree of accuracy. This submission runs contrary to the view advanced by P.M. FRASER, who thought it possible to date this event to early 310s B.C., due to his dating of Ptolemy’s Asiatic campaign in the Stela; see _supra_ note 44.

46 The argument advanced by J.K. WINNICKI, *Militäroperationen von Ptolemaios I._..., p. 181ff. that this expedition must have been a part of Ptolemy’s alleged assistance to Seleukos in the course of his campaign which resulted in the treaty with the Nabataeans and, consequently, must have taken place at Sinai (or elsewhere in Asia) is hardly tenable for the following reasons. First, the fact that this action was undertaken by Ptolemy requires a better proof than a mere supposition. Second, such action, especially if launched under Seleukos’ auspices, would have still been too minor to place it in the list of Ptolemy’s most remarkable deeds. Third, and most importantly, such interpretation leaves the repressive character of the expedition, which is well stated in the Stela, without any explanation.

Thus, the identity of the events known from the two accounts is quite plausible. As for the denotation of the Cyrenean region as Ir-mr-3/Mr-mr-3 it is certainly wrong to derive it from the Latin name Marmarica, which appeared too late. However, this name, in its turn, came back to the name of the people of Marmaridai, which was present in the neighbourhood of Cyrene, according to Pseudo-Skylax’ Periplus maris interni (chapter 108), as early as in the mid-4th century B.C. Were the reading Mr-mr-3 for the name of the region be accepted, it would have derived from the name of this people.

The identification of this region with the Cyrenean territory is a necessary, though very lengthy, step to another observation at the text of the Stela. The drafters of the Stela made it very clear that in the quoted fragment (Urk. II. 15. 14-15) the word mšr meant not just ‘army’ but, more widely, ‘people’: this meaning was emphasized by the following words m ʿfyw ḥmwt (‘as men [and] women’) saying expressly that the collective spoken about had a feminine component. Similar meaning of the word mšr (WB II. 155.18; also in the term wsšt-mšr, ‘the court of multitude, the court of people’, i.e. the forecourt in temples: WB I. 366.11) is registered in a number of Ptolemaic hieroglyphic texts. However, the Satrap Stela tells that Ptolemies not only imprisoned some residents of Ir-mr-3/Mr-mr-3 but deported its entire people. The fact that nothing, not even its ancient cult-places, was left in its place is emphasized by saying that it was brought to Egypt ‘together with their god’.


49 For the original see C. Müller, Geographi Graeci minores, I, Paris, 1855, p. 90-95.

50 Dr. Dan’el Kahn of the Haifa University, Israel, kindly attracted my attention to a fragment of the Stela of Piankhy, where a defeated army and its members are compared to, or even said to be turned into, women (line 15: EventListener [EventListener, 157-158: EventListener]), and suggested to consider if the semantic of the Stela’s mšr ʿfyw ḥmwt might be the same. I found such consideration necessary but its result negative: WB V. 345.4 gives for ʿfyw ḥmwt a definite translation ‘Männer und Frauen’ with an important Greek parallel (ἐνδρας καὶ γυναίκας), which is sure to be taken from the Canopus’ decree of 238 B.C. (Urk. II. 151. 10: EventListener [EventListener, 151-158: EventListener]). This is certainly the case of the Satrap Stela, preceding the decree closely enough.

Compared to the statement of Diodorus, who said that Ptolemy’s general imprisoned only the leaders of the rebellion, the picture of the Stela is a deliberate exaggeration; but its background is remarkable. In the first millennium B.C. Egypt suffered a number of foreign conquests, which were sometimes followed by deportations: for the time of the Satrap Stela the most recent of them took place during the Second Persian Domination. According to the *Suida Lexicon* (s.v. ἀσατο), Artaxerxes III deported a vast number of Egyptians; Diodorus adds that after Artaxerxes’ conquest the Persians took sacred texts from the Egyptian temples which were later sold back by Bagoas (DIOD. XVI. 51.2).\(^{52}\) Significantly, the account about Chabbash in the Satrap Stela brought to mind the atrocities of Artaxerxes. These reminiscences were also implied in the statement about the return of cult objects and, among them, sacred texts (*bꜣw R*) by Satrap Ptolemy from Asia (Urk. II. 14.9-11). According to Diodorus, the aim of the Persians when seizing the sacred texts was not just a material gain: these texts must have had no value for those not practicing the Egyptian religion. The Persian seizures of cult objects are well attested during suppressing seditions or waging wars (in Babylonia or in Greece).\(^{53}\) In all cases they aimed at depriving the inimical peoples of ritual mediators in their relations to gods.\(^{54}\) This practice was in fact not just Persian but common for the ancient Near East. However, it remained totally alien for the Egyptians throughout the Pharaonic period. So, the statement about the deportation of the Cyreneans with their ‘god’ (definitely a cult image), however fictitious, reveals an obvious Near Eastern influence. This influence could be stimulated by the Macedonian propaganda of Ptolemy’s returning the sacred objects from Asia to Egyptian temples but also by the reminiscences of the Second Persian Domination, still vivid in the Stela. Thus, one cannot be sure if the drafters introduced in it this motive under the official inspiration or as their own invention.

Another feature of this account which deserves to be considered is the use of the word *mśꜣ*. It is tempting to say that the Ptolemaic shift of its meaning from ‘army’ to ‘people’, still unexplained by some Egyptologists who paid special attention to it,\(^ {55}\) might be better understood exactly from this fragment of the Stela. One should not forget that the text probably deals with a campaign against the Greek city-state (*polis*) of Cyrene. A typically Hellenic integration and solidarity of its people (citizenry) seems to be stressed in the account of being deported as an indivisible entity. Denoting this unity exactly with the word *mśꜣ* seems quite natural, as in a Greek city-state the army comprised all male citizens, at least those capable of bearing weapons. Moreover, women could have had their own duties in the event of a severe war. To that effect, they

---


\(^{55}\) See supra note 51.
could also be considered a part of the armed citizenry. On the contrary, the situation in Egypt was quite different: the army was organized by the state and not by the people. Thus, the meaning of the word *mšr* as ‘people’ seems to be alien to the Egyptian social conditions and at the same time offers a rather accurate description of the Greek civil and military organization. The natives of Egypt had a good chance to get acquainted with it still before the 4th century B.C. but especially during it. Could one conclude the new Ptolemaic meaning of the word *mšr* appeared under the influence of this interrelation with the Greek language and notions? The suspected use of this word in the Satrap Stela in respect of a city-state’s citizenry seems to give an argument in favour of this possibility.

**Final remarks**

The proposed interpretations of the Satrap Stela’s phenomena are certainly not beyond dispute. However, were they to be true, the degree of Greek influence on the text shown in the instances discussed above must have been quite strong. But this brings a student to the following question: could the text of the Stela be directly influenced by people whose mother-tongue was Greek, *i.e.* Ptolemaic administrators. When considering it, one should bear in mind that the Stela is a *provincial* Egyptian monument. The restitution of the domain ‘Land-of-Uto’ after the temples of Buto was a huge gain for them but a very small matter within the whole scope of the tasks that Satrap Ptolemy faced at that time. Registering this act was a *raison d’être* of the Satrap Stela, which presumed it to be loyal to the Macedonian government and to reflect to a certain extend ideas generated by it. Yet there is no reason to believe this ideological trend was followed in the Stela under any sort of pressure. As for the language and the exact wording of the document, such things were surely completely up to its drafters. Were our interpretations to hold, these drafters appear to have been not just Greek-speaking but also acquainted with features of the Hellenic mentality closely enough to have confused in their minds the names ‘Xerxes’ and ‘Artaxerxes’ in their Greek forms and to suggest an adequate Egyptian equivalent for the notion of *polis*. Actually, this should not be a great surprise, as the Hellenic education in the 4th century B.C. included not just learning a language but also an acquaintance with Classical literature and the ideas developed in it.\(^{56}\) But in this case we have to conclude that the contacts with Greece opened such option for the Egyptians of

---

\(^{56}\) One might recall the statement by *JOSEPHUS FLAVIUS*, *Contra Apionem* I. 14. 73, about the Hellenic education of Manetho. An idea by the Russian scholar V. STRUWE, *Manefon i ego vremya* (*Manetho and His Time*), St.Petersburg, 2003, p. 99, that Manetho must have acquired it still under the last Pharaohs seems not so ill-founded. The heyday of his activities, which coincided with his participation in the introduction of Sarapis’ cult (*PLUTARCHUS*, *De Iside et Osiride* 28), must be placed at the border of the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C. (W. HUSS, *Ägypten in der hellenistischer Zeit*, p. 244); so he must have been born at least four decades before it and to get his learning around 330s or 320s B.C., when the Macedonian presence in the country was, if any, at its very start. The fact that Manetho wrote a variety of Greek books intended for the Greek readers proves this his education definitely fitted the Classical model of the 4th century B.C. that we described.
elite quite well in advance of the Macedonian conquest of the country; otherwise its fruits would not have manifested themselves in such accomplished form already by the time of the Satrap Stela. Thus, the alleged Graeco-Egyptian interaction in the language of this text seems to be a natural process, which must have had a pre-Macedonian background and no direct impact from the new rulers of the country.