



Gods in the Gray Zone

Damien Agut-Labordere

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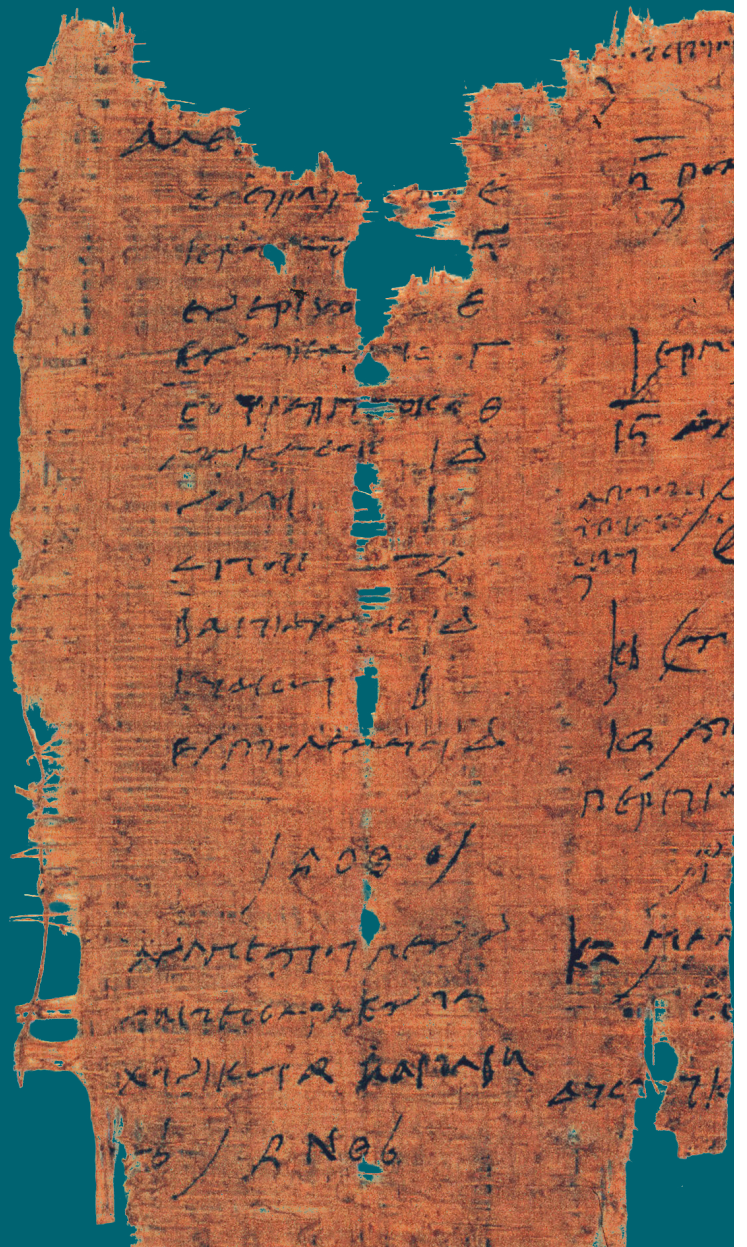
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TIMES OF TRANSITION

Judea in the Early Hellenistic Period

Edited by
Sylvie Honigman
Christophe Nihan
Oded Lipschits

MOSAICS 1



Times *of* Transition



TEL AVIV אוניברסיטת
UNIVERSITY תל אביב

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Edited by

SYLVIE HONIGMAN, CHRISTOPHE NIHAN AND ODED LIPSCHITS

With contributions by

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Abbreviations

<i>AJ</i>	Josephus, <i>Antiquitates Judaicae</i>	<i>CPJ</i>	Tcherikover, V.A., Fuks, A. and Stern, M., eds. 1957–64. <i>Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum</i> (3 vols.). Cambridge, MA and Jerusalem.
<i>ANET</i>	Pritchard, J.B., ed. 1969. <i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> (3rd ed.). Princeton, NJ.		
<i>AP</i>	Cowley, A.E., ed. 1923. <i>Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.</i> Oxford.	<i>DSS</i>	Dead Sea Scrolls
<i>Ar.</i>	Letter of Aristeas	<i>EH I</i>	Faucher, T., Meadows, A.R. and Lorber, C., eds. 2017. <i>Egyptian Hoards, I: Ptolemaic Hoards</i> . Cairo.
<i>BE</i>	The Babylonian Expedition of the University of Pennsylvania	<i>FGrHist</i>	Jacoby, F., ed. 1923. <i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> . Berlin.
<i>BGU</i>	<i>Aegyptische Urkunden aus den Königlichen (later Staatlichen) Museen zu Berlin, Griechische Urkunden</i> . Berlin, 1895–.	<i>IG XII</i>	Hallof, K. 2000. <i>Inscriptiones Chii et Sami cum Corassiis Icariaque, 1: Inscriptiones Sami insulae: Decreta, epistulae, sententiae, edicta imperatoria, leges, catalogi, tituli Atheniensium, tituli honorarii, tituli operum publicorum, inscriptiones ararum</i> . Berlin and New York.
<i>BJ</i>	Josephus, <i>Bellum Judaicum</i>		
<i>BM</i>	British Museum	<i>IGCH</i>	Thompson, M., Mørkholm, O. and Kraay, C.M., eds. 1973. <i>An Inventory of Greek Coin Hoards</i> . New York.
<i>C. Ap.</i>	Josephus, <i>Contra Apionem</i>		
<i>CBH</i>	Classical Biblical Hebrew	<i>I.Labraunda</i>	Crampa, J. 1969–72. <i>Labraunda: Swedish Excavation and Researches, III: The Greek Inscriptions</i> (2 vols.). Lund and Stockholm.
<i>CBS</i>	Collection of the Babylonian Section of the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania	<i>IM</i>	Israel Museum
<i>CH</i>	1975–2002. <i>Coin Hoards, I–VIII</i> . London.	<i>I.Magnesia</i>	Kern, O., ed. 1900. <i>Die Inschriften von Magnesia am Maeander</i> . Berlin. https://archive.org/details/dieinschriftenv00berlgoog .
<i>CIIP</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae. A multi-lingual corpus of the inscriptions from Alexander to Muhammad</i> . Berlin and Boston. 2010–.		
<i>C.Ord.Ptol.</i>	Lenger, M.-T., ed. 1964. <i>Corpus des Ordonnances des Ptolémées (C. Ord. Ptol.)</i> . Brussels.		

<i>I.Mylasa</i>	Blümel, W. 1987–88. <i>Die Inschriften von Mylasa</i> . Bonn.	<i>P.Cair.Zen.</i>	Edgar, C.C., ed. 1925–40. <i>Zenon Papyri, Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire</i> (5 vols.). Cairo.
LBH	Late Biblical Hebrew	<i>P.Carlsberg</i>	Papyrus from the Carlsberg Papyrus Collection, University of Copenhagen
LCL	Loeb Classical Library	<i>P.dem.</i>	Maspero, G. (Gaston). 1911. <i>Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et à l'archéologie égyptiennes et assyriennes</i> 33: 117–126.
Lepsius, <i>Denkmäler</i>	Lepsius, K.R. 1849. <i>Denkmäler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien</i> . Berlin.	<i>Recueil 8</i>	
<i>Lev. Rab.</i>	Leviticus Rabbah	<i>P.dem.</i>	Zauzich, K.-T. 1968. <i>Die Schreibertradition in Aufbau, Sprache und Schrift der demotischen Kaufverträge aus ptolemäischer Zeit</i> (Ägyptologische Abhandlungen 19). Wiesbaden.
ML	Meiggs, R. and Lewis, D.M., eds. 1969. <i>A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions to the End of the Fifth Century B.C.</i> Oxford.	<i>P.Lond. 7</i>	Skeat, T.C. 1974. <i>Greek Papyri in the British Museum, 7: The Zenon Archive</i> . Nos. 1930–2193. London.
MoA	Mother of Apis Inscriptions (Sacred Animal Necropolis at North Saqqara)	PM	Porter, B. and Moss, R. 1927–1939. <i>Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Statues, Reliefs and Paintings</i> . Oxford.
NETS	New English Translation of the Septuagint project	<i>P.Oxy.</i>	<i>The Oxyrhynchus Papyri</i> . 1898–. Published by the Egypt Exploration Society in Graeco-Roman Memoirs. London.
<i>NH</i>	Pliny, <i>Naturalis Historia</i>	<i>P.Polit.Iud.</i>	Cowey, J.M.S. and Maresch, K., eds. 2001. <i>Urkunden des Politeuma der Juden von Herakleopolis (144/3–133/2 v. Chr.)</i> (Papyrologica Coloniensia 29). Wiesbaden: Nos. 1–20.
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version	<i>P.Ryl.</i>	<i>Catalogue of the Greek and Latin Papyri in the John Rylands Library, Manchester</i> . 1911–. Manchester.
<i>OGIS</i>	Dittenberger, W. 1903. <i>Orientis graeci inscriptiones selectae: Supplementum Sylloges inscriptionum graecarum</i> . Leipzig (republished: Hildesheim 1959–60).		
OID	Hagel, S. and Tomaschitz, K. 1998. <i>Repertorium der westkilikischen Inschriften nach den Scheden der Kleinasiatischen Kommission der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften</i> . Vienna.		
PBS	Publications of the Babylonian Section of the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania		
<i>P.Bud.</i>	Papyrus from the Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest		

REB	Revised English Bible	Stern 1974–84	Stern, M. <i>Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism</i> , 1: <i>From Herodotus to Plutarch</i> (1974); 2: <i>From Tacitus to Simplicius</i> (1980); 3: <i>Appendixes and Indexes</i> (1984). Jerusalem.
SB	<i>Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Aegypten</i> . 1913–.		
SEG	Chaniotis, A. and Corsten, T. 1923–. <i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</i> . Amsterdam and Leiden.		
SNG Copenhagen	<i>SNG Copenhagen Suppl. Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum: The Royal Collection of Coins and Medals, Danish National Museum. Supplement: Acquisitions 1942–1996</i> . Copenhagen. 2002.	TAD	Porten, B. and Yardeni, A., eds. 1986–99. <i>Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt. Newly Copied, Edited and Translated into English</i> (4 vols.). Jerusalem.
SNG [Spaer]	Spaer, A. with Houghton, A. and Lorber, C. 1998. <i>Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum, Israel, 1: The Arnold Spaer Collection of Seleucid of Seleucid Coins</i> . London.	TJC	Meshorer, Y. 2001. <i>A Treasury of Jewish Coins: From the Persian Period to Bar Kokhba</i> . Jerusalem and New York.
		UPZ	Wilcken, U. 1927. <i>Urkunden der Ptolemäerzeit (Ältere Funde)</i> . Erster Band: <i>Papyri aus Unterägypten</i> . Berlin and Leipzig.

Gods in the Gray Zone

A Political History of Egyptian Temples from Artaxerxes III to the End of the Argeadai (342–ca. 305 BCE)

Damien Agut-Labordère

In 343/342 BCE, after several unsuccessful attempts to reconquer Egypt, the Persian armies, led by Artaxerxes III Ochus, finally defeated the Egyptian troops of Nakhthorheb (Nektanebo II) in the eastern Delta.¹ The last king of the Thirtieth Dynasty was forced into exile and left Egypt for Nubia, while the Persian administration, headed by the satrap Pherendates, was reinstalled in Memphis (Matthey 2012: 114–218). According to the classical tradition, the second Persian domination was a time of oppression for the Egyptian temples. Diodorus Siculus (16.5.2) states that Ochus plundered the sanctuaries and blackmailed the priests. This outbreak of violence reached its peak with the murder of an Apis bull, reported in Aelianus' *Varia Historia* (cf. also Curtius 4.7.1). In contrast, Arrianus, in his depiction of Alexander's royal entry to Egypt, emphasizes the conqueror's piety toward the Egyptian gods and more particularly the Apis bull.²

These well-known texts need no further commentary in the context of this paper. Here I focus on their impact on modern historiography of the second Persian domination. Bracketed between two periods during which, according to the accepted view, the Egyptian

temples enjoyed the support of the rulers—the last native dynasty (380–342 BCE) and the rule of the Argeadai (332–305 BCE)—the second Persian domination is perceived by ancient and modern historians as a “dark age” in Egyptian history, albeit one of short duration. I question this dramatic view and, more generally, the notion that the transition from the second Persian domination to the early Macedonian period (i.e., the time of the Argeadai) was a shift from darkness to light. As demonstrated by the diachronic survey of building activity in the temples and of the royal support for the funerals of sacred animals—the main markers of royal religious policy—the contrast between Persian and Macedonian dominations was overstated by the classical authors. The chronology of the changes can be further refined to show both contrasts between kings within each period and a relatively smooth transition between the two periods. Finally, inquiry into the royal policy of access to the quarries of building stones suggests that the suspension of temple construction in Persian and early Macedonian times was not primarily due to technical circumstances, but was the outcome of the dire financial straits faced by the temples, as the result of a policy

initiated by Cambyses shortly after 526 BCE and of sharp cuts in royal donations to the temples.

The Construction of Temples and Burial of Sacred Bulls: The Ups and Downs of Royal Religious Policy

To investigate the royal policy toward the Egyptian religious institutions diachronically, two historical markers are particularly useful: the construction works carried out in the temple precincts, which can be dated via royal inscriptions, and inscriptions commemorating funerals of sacred animals—a typical feature of the first millennium BCE.

I begin with a survey of the construction activities documented from the rule of the last native pharaoh, Nakhthorheb (360–342 BCE), to Alexander IV (323–311 BCE).

As expected, during the second Persian domination, all building activity related to the temples was discontinued (Arnold 1999: 137). More surprising is the fact that the subsequent recovery under the Argeadai was only partial: in this period, the level of building activity, measured by the number of monuments proportional to the regnal years of each king, appears to have been one third lower than under Nakhthorheb (Table 12.1; Fig. 12.1).³

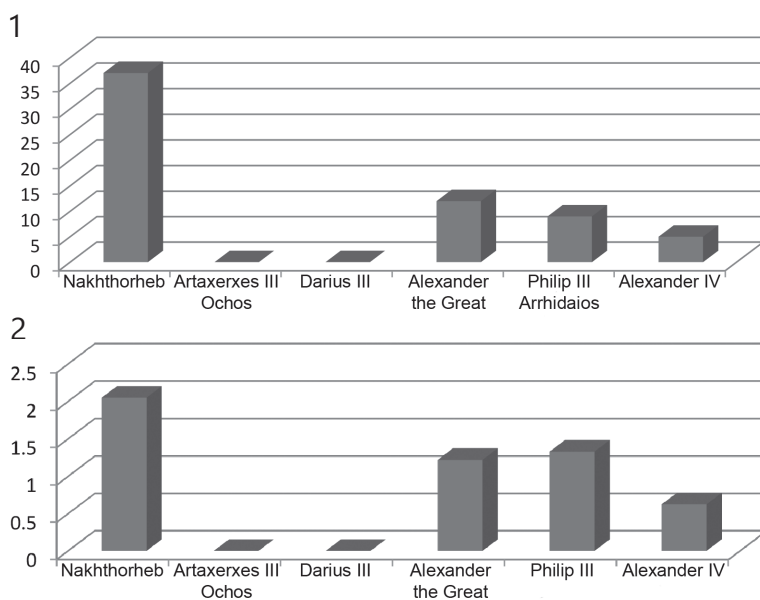


Fig. 12.1: Buildings and building components engraved with royal names from Nakhthorheb (360–342 BCE) to Alexander IV (323–311 BCE) (based on the number of temples and naoi in which a royal name is attested in a hieroglyphic inscription, irrespective of the scale of the works)
1) in absolute numbers
2) proportionate to regnal years

Table 12.1: Buildings and building components engraved with royal names from Nakhthorheb to Alexander IV¹

	Nakhthorheb	Artaxerxes III (in Egypt)	Darius III (in Egypt)	Alexander the Great (in Egypt)	Philip III	Alexander IV
Number of items	37	0	0	12	9	5
Number of items proportionate to regnal years	1.8	4	6	9	6	8
Weighted value	2.05	0	0	1.33	1.5	0.625

¹ The list is based on the outdated—albeit at the time accurate—list published by Kienitz (1954: 214–230), which surveyed the main sites in which the king's name is attested. Klotz (2011: 37) provides a recent bibliographical overview of temple construction and restoration by the kings of the Thirtieth Dynasty. A comprehensive and updated list of the building works carried out by the Argeadai was recently published by I. Ladynin (2014). As the inscription of the priests Ankhpakhered and Keefkhaimen on the northwestern wall of Luxor temple mentions both names of Alexander the Great and Philip Arrhidaeus (PM II 335 [212]; Abder-Raziq 1983), this inscription was counted twice.

A diachronic overview of the number of hieroglyphic inscriptions and demotic graffiti evidencing the extraction of hard stone by royal officials during the second Persian domination further confirms that building activities were interrupted during this period and, even more crucially, that the recovery that followed Alexander the Great's conquest was moderate (Table 12.2; Fig. 12.2).

Turning now to the inscriptions related to the cult of the sacred bulls—the Apis bulls and their mothers in Memphis and the Boukhis bulls in Armant—one notes a similar trend (Table 12.3; Fig. 12.3).

Contrary to what might be expected from reading the classical authors, the second Persian domination is not characterized by the complete absence of royal inscriptions and monuments relating to the burial of sacred bulls. Two items are documented: a sarcophagus bearing the name of the short-lived Egyptian Pharaoh Khababash

(PM III² 804), and—even more unexpectedly—an inscription found in the catacombs of the mother of Apis, in all likelihood mentioning Darius III.⁴ Conversely, the peak of data in the first decades of the Hellenistic period can be explained by the coincidental death of two sacred animals—the cow Taesis and a Boukhis bull—in the days of Alexander the Great (Bosch-Puche 2012: 256–262). Therefore, the evidence after his reign is more representative, and indeed, it parallels the trend observed regarding the scope of building activity: an average that is lower than during the period of independence.

The results of the diachronic study based on these two historical markers may be summarized as follows. While, as expected, the second Persian domination is characterized by the sudden and complete suspension of all building activity in the Egyptian temples, the burial of sacred bulls does not evince the same trend. These

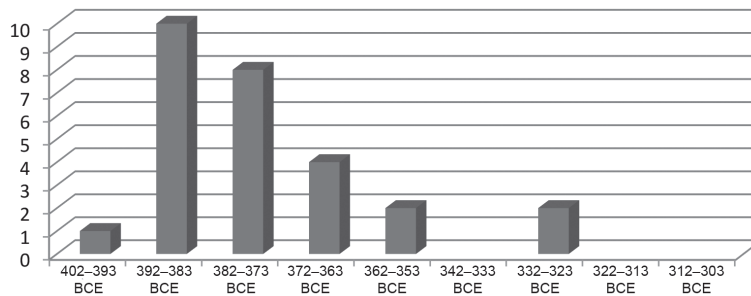


Fig. 12.2: The number of royal inscriptions from Egyptian quarries, 402–303 BCE

Table 12.2: Royal inscriptions in Egyptian quarries from 402 to 302 BCE

	402–393 BCE	392–383 BCE	382–373 BCE	372–363 BCE	362–353 BCE	332–323 BCE
Number of inscriptions	1	10	8	4	2	2
Demotic inscriptions	Tura and Masara (Spiegelberg 1905: 222 and 229, No. 4)	Tura and Masara (Lepsius, Denkmäler I: 223 [A]; 223 [B]; Spiegelberg 1905: 223 and 229, No. 13; 226 and 233, No. 33; 223 and 229, No. 14; Devauchelle 1983: 174, No. 83; 175, No. 48; Malek and Smith 1983: 46–47, No. 7; 46–47, No. 8)	Tura and Masara (Spiegelberg 1905: 224 and 229, No. 15; 224 and 230, No. 19; 224 and 231, No. 21; 225 and 231, No. 25) Wadi el-Nakhla (Spiegelberg 1904: 159, No. 29; 159, No. 31)	Wadi el-Nakhla (Clédat 1902: 69 and Pl. VI, No. 6; 69 and Pl. VI, No. 7; 69 and Pl. VI, No. 8; 69 and Pl. VII, No. 27)	Wadi Hammamat (Thissen 1979: 65, No. 2) Deir Abu Hennes (Depauw 2014: 14)	Tura and Masara (Toukh et-Karamous) (Spiegelberg 1905: 222 and 229, No. 4)
Hieroglyphic or hieratic inscriptions		Tura and Masara (Daressy 1911: 267)	Tura and Masara (Brugsch 1867: 91) Wadi Hammamat (Couyat and Montet 1912: 43, No. 26 and Pl. VIII)			Tura and Masara (Toukh et-Karamous) (Devauchelle 1983: 170, No. 1)

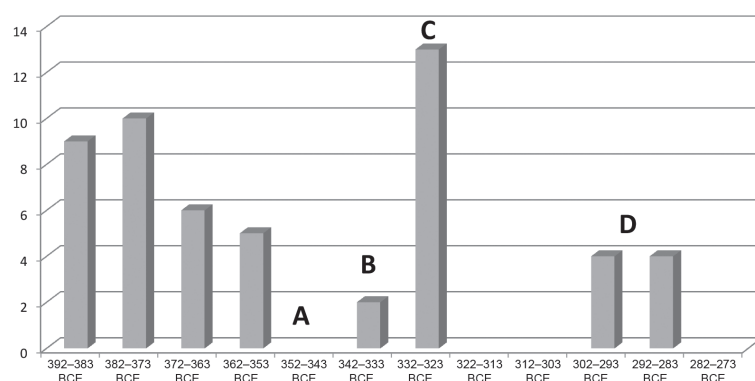


Fig. 12.3: Evidence pertaining to the burials of the Apis and Boukhis bulls

Table 12.3: Stelae, funerary material (e.g., sarcophagi and inscribed vases) and quarrymen's graffiti in the catacombs of Apis bulls and mother of Apis in northern Saqqara

	382–373 BCE	372–363 BCE	362–353 BCE	342–333 BCE	332–323 BCE	312–303 BCE
Number	7	6	8	2	12	3
References	Devauchelle 1994: 106 (Berlin Inv. 2127); 106 (Louvre IM 3337); Smith, Andrews and Davies 2011: 6–11	Smith, Andrews and Davies 2011: 12; 18 and 19; 136–137; Emery 1967: 143 and Pl. 22.2	Devauchelle 1994: 107 (Louvre IM 3372); 107 (Louvre IM 17); 107 (Louvre SN 7); 107 (Louvre IM 67); 107 (Louvre IM 4199); Smith, Andrews and Davies 2011: 16 and 17; 54	Smith, Andrews and Davies 2011: 48; PM III ² 804	Smith, Andrews and Davies 2011: 21–30; 133; Bosch-Puche 2012: 256–262 (BM EA 1697/1719); Andrews 2002: 28 (BM EA 35635)	Smith, Andrews and Davies 2011: 31–34

exhibit relatively smooth continuity between the second Persian domination and the early Macedonian period. Conversely, the data pertaining to building activity does not support the claim of classical sources that the early Macedonian period was a good time for the Egyptian temples. Altogether, the royal donations to the temples and the sacred animals under the Argeadai appear to be modest in comparison with the Thirtieth Dynasty.

Questioning the Supposed Contrast between the Second Persian Domination and the Time of the Argeadai

The above quantitative study of the data pertaining to the relations between kings and temples supports the conclusion that overall, the transition from the second Persian period to the early Macedonian one was smooth. Further refinement of this analysis suggests, on the one hand, that the rule of Darius III in Egypt was less harsh

than that of Artaxerxes III before him and on the other hand, that the favorable attitude of Alexander the Great toward the Egyptian temples was short-lived.

In his thorough study of Alexander the Great's attitude towards the cult of the sacred animals, Bosch-Puche (2012) convincingly argues that the cult of the Boukhis bull at Armant was suspended entirely under Artaxerxes III (342–338 BCE), but resumed with the reign of Darius III (336–332 BCE).⁵ To some extent, Darius III's policy can be seen as resuming the accommodating policy toward a selection of Egyptian religious institutions that had been adopted by Cambyses in 526 BCE and followed by Darius I—a policy sometimes misinterpreted as being an effect of the supposed “Persian religious tolerance.”

If the data pertaining to Darius III's reign, therefore, contradicts the judgment of the ancient classical authors on the second Persian domination, does Artaxerxes III's tough policy attested by the two markers that concern us here—the building activity in temples and the burial of sacred animals—justify such a judgment? If one takes the broader

diachronic view advocated here, the answer must be in the affirmative. In this perspective, the policy of Artaxerxes III was no different from the policy initiated by Xerxes and continued by the Great Kings down to Artaxerxes II. During these nine decades (from 486 BCE to ca. 400 BCE), there is no evidence of building activity in any temple anywhere in Egypt or of any graffiti in the quarries, and there is, moreover, a gap in the chronological list of the Apis bulls.⁶ Furthermore, given the reappearance of commemorative stelae and inscriptions at the very beginning of the period of independence (ca. 400 BCE to 343/342 BCE), it is unlikely that this gap is merely the outcome of the coincidental distribution of the extant evidence.

Rather, with Artaxerxes III's reconquest in 342 BCE, the Egyptian temples returned to the situation that had existed throughout most of the 5th century BCE. Consequently, the suspension of all building activity and the scarcity of commemorative inscriptions during the second Persian domination should be viewed not as a collective punishment meted out by the Persian authorities to Egyptian priests, but as the resumption of the policy that had been the rule during the first Achaemenid domination of Egypt.

Not only should the judgment of the classical (and modern) authors on the second Persian domination be reappraised, but Alexander's policy towards the Egyptian temples should be reassessed. As seen above, in the early Macedonian period the building activities in the temples resumed, but at a lower rate than under the Thirtieth Dynasty. This conclusion is in keeping with Chauveau and Thiers' remarks in their important study (2006) on the construction activities and iconographic programs carried out in the Theban temples under the reigns of Alexander the Great and Philip III Arrhidaïos. As they point out, these activities were part of a program devised by the Theban priests themselves. While the period was evidently propitious to such initiatives, this program was a response to strictly local cultural needs.⁷ Consequently, as stated by Chauveau and Thiers (2006: 399): "the Egyptian material remains of the Macedonian period must be seen as tokens of the piety of priests towards their local deities. The alleged clues that have been taken to hint at the Macedonian kings using royal, pharaonic powers to build new cultic places are not compelling."⁸

However, Chauveau and Thiers' view was recently questioned by Bosch-Puche. Based on the evidence relating to the cults of the Apis bull, of the mother of Apis and of the Boukhis bull under Alexander the Great, Bosch-Puche (2012) contends that Alexander took a genuine interest in the Egyptian cults and more specifically in the cults of sacred animals, as well as in royal Egyptian tradition. In Bosch-Puche's view, this conclusion is further supported by the care given in the development of Alexander's pharaonic names (2013; 2014).

A closer look suggests that the disparity between the interpretation of Chauveau and Thiers and that of Bosch-Puche may be explained by the nature of the evidence. Whereas the building activities in the temples were not necessarily carried out in response to specific circumstances, the stelae and inscriptions related to the cult of the sacred animal were obviously prompted by the death of one of these animals. Consequently, the number of texts related to sacred animals issued in any given period of time was perforce primarily determined by accidental factors. The high number of documents from the days of Alexander the Great may be accounted for by the coincidental deaths of two sacred cows in Memphis and Armant in those years; therefore, this number does not, in and of itself, point to Alexander's personal devotion to the sacred animals (Fig. 12.3 and Table 12.3). Conversely, given that the inscriptions documenting royal building activities in temples are less subject to fortuitous circumstances, they offer more reliable clues for the identification of changes in the policies of individual kings and dynasties towards the temples. In addition, it should be emphasized that given the high cost of "construction in stone" (see below), building or restoring a temple was far more expensive to the royal treasury than ensuring a worthy burial for sacred cows. Therefore, while the high number of stelae and archaeological items relating to sacred animals under the Argeadai attests that the temples were able to conduct their activities on a regular basis during this period, this evidence *per se* falls short of fostering the conclusion that the Argeadai provided outstanding political and financial support to the Egyptian temples. From a political standpoint, the allocation of funds to the cults of the sacred animals allowed the royal power to gain the support of the Egyptian population at large at little cost, whereas the building and restoration of temples was primarily, if not exclusively, a response to the

expectations of the priests and came at a far greater cost. The ratio between political benefit and financial cost explains why royal support went primarily to the cults of the sacred animals.

The Reasons for Suspension of Building Activities in the Temples: The Evidence from the Quarries

Most of the markers allowing the investigation of political life in ancient Egypt—building stone blocks, granite sarcophagi and stelae—are closely connected to the practical conditions of stone extraction and transportation. Therefore, before proceeding further, it is necessary to rule out the possibility that the variations noted in the graphs above were purely the result of the royal policy of either keeping the quarries in operation or closing them.

While nothing is known of the legal requirements relating to mining and quarrying activities during the Saite and Persian periods, the graffiti and *depinti* of Ptolemaic times attest that access to quarries required the official agreement of the *strategos*.⁹ Consequently, one might assume that the royal administration used the supply of hard stone as an easy means to control the building activities of the temples. By this logic, the complete interruption of building activities during the second Persian domination—and indeed, during most of the first domination as well—could be interpreted as a consequence of the satrap's explicit prohibition on using the quarries of Egypt for the building needs of the temples.¹⁰

This hypothesis, however, is unlikely for three reasons. First, on the assumption that the extraction and transportation of the blocks were carried out by teams of workers provided by the temples themselves, the king could maintain the quarries open at no cost. It is, therefore, highly unlikely that all the quarries of Egypt were kept closed by the Persian kings from Xerxes (486–465 BCE) to Amyrteus (ca. 404–399 BCE)—that is, during the time-span of nine decades during which no building activity is documented in any temple. Second, this hypothesis has no impact on the second marker of royal religious policy in Egypt—the burial of sacred animals. It therefore leaves unexplained why no Apis bull burial was documented during the same years that lacked any building activity.

Finally, the hypothesis that the quarries were closed by the Persians fails to explain why building activity was resumed only at a low pace under the Argeadai. While the building programs attested in Thebes and Hermopolis in the early Macedonian period offer positive evidence that no prohibition on using the quarries was enforced at that time, the number and scale of construction sites during this period, as noted above, remained well beneath their level under the Thirtieth Dynasty.¹¹

Consequently, while we cannot completely rule out the possibility that the satraps of Egypt kept the quarries out of use during significant parts of the First and Second Persian periods, when it comes to accounting for the modest level of construction work under the Argeadai, one definitely needs to seek an explanation elsewhere. The simplest explanation may be that while the royal administration did not formally prevent access to the quarries, the temples were not given sufficient financial support to bear the cost either of the construction works and decoration of the new buildings or of the stone extraction and transportation from the remote locations of the quarries situated at the fringe of the Egyptian deserts.¹² Although extraction costs could be lowered by using the quarries located on the Nile banks instead, significant financial means were still needed in order to transport the stone to the building sites (Shaw 1998; 2013; Adams 2001). Few temples had fleets of large boats, and the requisition of work animals from their land estates to ensure transportation would have impacted their agricultural incomes. Under such conditions, the temples could afford to finance the digging of underground galleries—as we see in Memphis and Armant—by their own means, whereas they had to renounce building new edifices or designing hard-stone items, such as *naoi* and sarcophagi.

Under the rule of the Argeadai, the Egyptian temples appear to have been in dire straits. It must have become very difficult for them to finance construction activity from their own resources, and the priests were probably too poor to organize any substantial local fund raising.¹³ However, it is unlikely that this situation was a legacy specifically of the second Persian domination. Rather, the difficult financial situation of the temples was primarily the result of the protracted Persian policy toward the Egyptian temples. From Cambyses in the last

decades of the 6th century BCE, the Great Kings promoted a policy of limited royal donations to the temples, aimed at preserving the resources of the Persian royal treasury at the expense of the temples. Moreover, it is noteworthy that the pharaohs of the period of independence in the 4th century BCE continued a similar policy, because the threat of a full-scale Persian invasion incurred heavy expenses in strengthening the country's defense (Agut-Labordère 2011).

The Economic Weakness of the Egyptian Temples under the Argeadai as the Consequence of a Protracted Trend

The Persian conquest of Egypt in 526 BCE was immediately followed by the promulgation of Cambyses' decree that drastically reformed the grants to the temples. The regular royal grants in timber, textile, poultry, seeds and silver were cancelled outright, while the grants in cattle were diminished by half. Consequently, the temples were forced to buy these raw materials at high cost in order to preserve the priests' economic production and hence their incomes (Agut-Labordère 2005). At the same time, the royal (and private) donation stelae advertising gifts of land made to the temples disappeared, a hint that a general prohibition of donations to the temples was promulgated by Cambyses at the outset of the conquest (Meeks 1979). Through these steps, the Persian power aimed to preserve the royal income by halting the transfer of goods from the king's estates to that of the temples.

As far as we can tell, donation stelae did not reappear with the return of native kings at the beginning of the 4th century, suggesting that the Persian policy was upheld by the kings of the Twenty-Eighth through the Thirtieth Dynasties. Moreover, the two extant versions of Cambyses' decree postdate the second Persian domination, a clear indication that this text was still relevant at the time. The decree included a list of privileged temples that continued to receive the same grants as before Cambyses' reform, and this list must be the reason why the decree continued to be copied. Although the independent pharaohs of the 4th century BCE reopened the stone quarries and (probably) subsidized the construction of several sacred buildings,

they maintained the harsh restrictions on donations to the temples that had been imposed by Cambyses and were so profitable to the royal treasury.

The royal greed at the expense of the temples was manifest particularly clearly at the very end of the independence period in the 4th century BCE. As shown convincingly by Meyrat, the Apis that died in 351 BCE—year 10 of King Nakhthorheb—received a very poor burial. Its sarcophagus was small and was laid in a slightly enlarged passage, not under a vault of its own. According to Meyrat, the fact that this bull died during a campaign waged by Nakhthorheb and Artaxerxes Ochus against one another could explain this cheap funeral, as “war efforts were too high at the time to allow for a lavish burial” (Meyrat 2014: 306–309).

It is evident that far from marking a sharp change, the ten years of the second Persian domination, during which royal subsidies to the temples were almost entirely suspended, followed a century and a half of financial restrictions. This long-term trend could easily explain why building activities in the temples of Egypt were resumed only at a modest level in the aftermath of the Macedonian conquest: in the absence of any substantial royal subsidies, the Egyptian temples were unable to procure the hard stone necessary to engage in large-scale construction works. Even if the political situation of the Egyptian priests improved with the Macedonian conquest, the treasuries of the temples remained empty.

Conclusion: The Temples Remained in the Gray Zone Even after Alexander's Conquest

Despite Alexander's generosity toward the Egyptian cults, the Argead period at the very end of the 4th century BCE continued the long-term trend, initiated by Cambyses in the late 6th century BCE, whereby the royal power gradually appropriated the temples' economic assets.¹⁴ By either drastically reducing or completely suspending their economic support to the temples, the kings both increased their wealth and led the temples to progressive, albeit unavoidable, economic decline. As shown by the above diachronic survey of the building activities and cultic commemorative inscriptions, this trend continued at least

until the accession of Ptolemy I in 305 BCE and probably throughout his reign. The real turning point came later. As demonstrated by G. Gorre (this volume), the reforms led by Ptolemy II (283–246 BCE) began a new chapter in the royal policy toward the Egyptian religious institutions. Before his reign, the Persian, Egyptian and first Macedonian kings endorsed, in varying degrees, the tough budgetary policy initiated by Cambyses, because it was so beneficial to the royal finances.

From a methodological standpoint, this conclusion highlights the need for modern scholars to consider all available documents—not only the classical authors—and to cross-check the data they offer. Furthermore, the relevance of each category of evidence must be precisely defined. For instance, the number and size of temples built in hard stone in ancient Egypt at any given period is a reliable marker of the relations between kings and temples, because the extraction of stone in the desert fringes and its transport to the Nile Valley required the

active support of the king. By minimizing psychological factors—such as the supposed piety or impiety of certain kings—this comprehensive approach may allow us to reach a less naïve understanding of the political history of ancient Egypt. Reliable information pertaining to the personalities of Cambyses, Darius I, Artaxerxes III and Alexander the Great is too scarce to shed any light on how they personally perceived Egyptian religion. In contrast, we have plenty of evidence allowing us to trace the evolution in power relations between kings and temples. In this respect, the Macedonian conquest of Egypt did not offer a radical departure from the supposed “Persian impiety” instituted by Cambyses and endorsed by the independent kings of the 4th century BCE. Like Cambyses and Darius I, it appears that the (modest) benevolence of Alexander towards Egyptian gods and priests was primarily motivated by the political situation prevailing in his time, rather than by his personal love for the gods of Egypt.

NOTES

1. Regarding the sources on the invasion of 343–342 BCE, see, most recently, the bibliography in Meyrat 2014: 303–304.
2. On these texts, see Ladynin 2005: 103–13. On Alexander’s entry, see Briant 2003: 173–186.
3. Nakhthorheb’s enthusiasm for building temples is echoed in the literature of Hellenistic Egypt. The tale known as the *Dream of Nectanebo* (see *UPZ* 1.81 for the Greek version and *P.Carlsberg* 424, 499, 559 and 562 for demotic fragments) narrates how Peteise, the best sculptor in the country, was hired to complete the carving of the hieroglyphic texts on the wall of a temple in Sebennytos. See Hoffmann and Quack 2007: 162–165.
4. *MoA* 71/22 H5–2884 [5267] = No. 48. This inscription refers to the burial of the cow Taesis: see Smith, Davies and Frazer 2006: 37, n. 18, 121, n. 85; Davies 2006: 23, n. 33, 49, n. 44; Smith, Andrews and Davies 2011: 145–146, with Fig. 13 (No. 48), Pl. 62.
5. Ladynin (2005) identified the king *Hšꜣꜣꜣꜣ* mentioned in the so-called Satrap Stela with Artaxerxes III. If this assumption is correct, it implies that the temple of Buto was despoiled of part of its estates by Ochos, and not Darius III.
6. For the list of bulls, see Vittmann 2011: 414–415. The complete absence of any documents in stone over a period of nine decades could perhaps be taken to mean that during this period, the Apis funerary items were made in perishable materials, such as wood, as indeed, was the case during the New Kingdom. See Mariette 1887: 13.
7. “Cette reconstruction s’inscrit dans un programme des clergés thébains qui, s’ils ont bénéficié, à l’évidence, d’une période propice à ces réalisations, ne l’ont fait que dans un cadre pratique et culturel strictement local” (Chauveau and Thiers 2006: 398–399).
8. “La documentation égyptienne de l’époque macédonienne doit être étudiée pour ce qu’elle est le plus souvent: le témoignage de la ferveur de clergés envers une divinité locale. Les indices d’un usage des prérogatives royales pharaoniques dans la mise en place de lieux cultuels ne sont pas probants” (Chauveau and Thiers 2006: 399).
9. As evidenced in Graff. 133, ll. 6 and 12 from Gebel Teir, dated to late Ptolemaic times; see Cruz-Urbe 1995: 54–56. See probably also in Graff. Gebel el-Sheikh el-Haridi: Spiegelberg 1913 (Psais son of Palal who opens the quarry is also *strategos* of the Panopolite).
10. A rock inscription in the limestone quarry of Nagaa Al-Ghabat (in the south of Abydos), dated to year 5 of Nakhtnebef, explicitly indicates that the king could prohibit stone extraction; Meeks 1991.
11. On Thebes and Hermopolis, I rely upon the convincing study by Ladynin (2014). However, even in Thebes, Ladynin points out that “the Theban building of the Argeadai seems to be the natural continuation of the program launched still under Dynasty XXX” (2014: 235).
12. The fact that the agreement to extract stone was not accompanied by adequate support was a departure from the pharaonic tradition, in which the building of a *mnw* “monument” by the kings was systematically supported by endowments (Taufik 1971). Hieroglyph carvers could be paid by the temples’ administrators (dem. *mr-šn*), as shown by *P.Bud.* E51.2172A (Clarysse and Luft 2012: Text 1, 321–322). See also *P.Carlsberg* 409 (Schentuleit 2006: 487 [Index]). On the exploitation costs of the stone quarries in the eastern desert, see Maxfield 2001.
13. Thiers 2009: 241–243. An example of construction funded through a collection from private donors in Roman times is found in Klotz 2009. In the Greek world, see Davies 2001; Chankowski 2014: esp. p. 44 on public offerings.
14. For a more detailed discussion of this trend, see Agut-Labordère and Gorre 2014.

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