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Joachim Hengstl, Elizabeth Irwin,
Andrea Jördens, Torsten Mattern,
Robert Rollinger, Kai Ruffing, Orell Witthuhn

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Agnieszka Wojciechowska

From Amyrtaeus to Ptolemy
Egypt in the Fourth century B.C.

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Introduction

This book arises from a doctoral dissertation written under the supervision of Professor Krzysztof Nawotka at the University of Wrocław, Poland, and completed in 2008. Over these more than seven years since the public defense of my dissertation it has been re-written with some parts typical of a dissertation but not necessarily fit for a general reader eliminated and many new passages added.

The fourth c. B.C. was the age of great political instability in the Mediterranean with innumerable wars culminating in the conquests of Alexander the Great. In the history of Greece and the Western World in general, his reign is the traditional end of the classical age and the beginning the Hellenistic period. It was preceded by some sixty years of the resurgence of the Persian Empire whose kings, Artaxerxes II and Artaxerxes III reasserted their rule over provinces lost in the previous century, in that Egypt, once counted among the richest satrapies of the Achaemenid empire. For all failed attempts to reconquer Egypt over the period of two generations, Artaxerxes II and Artaxerxes III never gave up on restoring the ancestral borders of their empire. For Egypt the relations with the Achaemenid empire played the pivotal role from the end of the fifth c. B.C. when Egypt, newly independent under the energetic native pharaohs, became a thriving political hub of the Eastern Mediterranean frequently involved in assisting the enemies of Persia in the turbulent age of the first half of the fourth c. B.C. This period came to an end with the conquest of Artaxerxes III who turned Egypt anew into a Persian satrapy. The second Persian domination in Egypt was in turn terminated by Alexander the Great with whom begin three hundred years of Macedonian rule.

This book, as many others, stretches the meaning of the word “century” a little bit: its narrative begins in 404 B.C. rather than in 400 B.C. to end in 305 B.C., not in 300 B.C., for important if different reasons. 404 B.C. is the year when the first Persian rule in Egypt ended while 305 B.C. is the most probable date of the coronation of Ptolemy I and thus the symbolic beginning of the Ptolemaic dynasty and the end of the fiction of unity of the Macedonian empire of the dynasty of Alexander the Great. There is no reason to continue the narration past the year 305 B.C. as the history of Egypt under Ptolemy I and in the Ptolemaic age in general has received ample coverage in modern scholarly publications, quite unlike the preceding period of the history of Egypt in the fourth c. B.C.

Hence the focus here is on the last period of Egypt’s independence in the fourth c. B.C., both in terms of the foreign policy of the native pharaohs and their internal government. This book will try to gauge the strength of Egypt’s economy in this age, at least as much as can be assessed on the basis of monumental building projects, private documents surviving in papyri (sales deeds, marriage contracts etc.)

and coins issued by pharaohs. But of course a central issue is the Persian conquest of Egypt. An attempt will be made to identify the causes for Artaxerxes III finally succeeding after so many failed attempts to recover Egypt for the Achaemenid empire. Thus questions will be posed rather than answered as to the role of Greek mercenaries in this war, commonly extolled in classical authors. Even if the assessment of their role in the war in classical sources is over optimistic, the Greeks in fourth c. B.C. Egypt, not just Greek soldiers, need to be studied. Egypt of this age was not a homogeneous society. Apart from Greeks, also Jews of the Elephantine and Iranians, principally of Ayn Manawir in the Kharga Oasis, are attested and will be studied in this book.

It is a well-known fact that classical authors and modern scholars alike have painted a dim picture of the first Persian rule in Egypt. Here an effort will be made to analyse ancient accounts pertaining to the second Persian rule in Egypt to uncover to what extent the gruesome depiction of the rule of Artaxerxes III reflects historical reality and in what way it perpetuates topoi born in the Herodotean portrayal of madness and cruel tyranny of Cambyses. Clearly the conquest of Alexander the Great marks the new beginning both in the history of Egypt and in its representation in classical authors. Issues to be addressed here are the degree to which the early Macedonian kings of Egypt assumed the responsibilities of legitimate pharaohs and the perception of them among the local elite. Out of necessity the narrative will concentrate on Alexander the Great on the one hand and on Ptolemy (I) on the other. Ptolemy became Egypt's most prominent figure of his age long before assuming the royal title: he effectively ruled the country as satrap and this was de facto recognized in numerous papyri listing his name even under the last Argead kings.

So far Egypt in the fourth c. B.C. has not been covered thoroughly in any monograph but of course chapters on this age abound in major syntheses of the history of Egypt, including Wilkinson 2011, Lloyd 2010, Schlögl 2006, Lloyd 2002, Grimal 1988. Lloyd 2010 covers the history of Egypt from its prehistory to Roman times and further into the early Islamic age, as well as the reception of Egyptian culture in Europe. The history of the fourth c. B.C. follows in this book the established lines, well known from much earlier works. Schlögl 2006 limits his coverage of the fourth c. B.C. to a handful of pages, summarizing the pharaohs of this age in a few sentences each. Grimal 1988 is not only concise in his coverage of the fourth c. B.C. but also quite selective, giving more than half of the space to foreign policy matters, barely mentioning economy or the contentious issues of Egyptian coinage of this age.

The fourth c. B.C. is of course also covered in older syntheses of Egypt: Petrie 1906, Daumas 1973, Drioton 1970, Gardiner 1966. Among them Gardiner 1966 offers the most thorough treatment, although again concentrated predominantly on foreign policy, mostly of the native pharaohs, with less attention devoted to the second Persian rule and to Alexander the Great and other early Macedonian kings of Egypt. The coverage of economy, coinage or art in Egypt of the fourth c. B.C. is in this and most other books superficial at best.

Two more specialized books, concerned with the seventh through fourth c. B.C. offer more thorough coverage of fourth c. B.C. Egypt: Gyles 1959 and Kienitz 1953. Gyles 1959, six years later than the work of Kienitz and making frequent use of this book, is somewhat disappointing. For the promising title *Pharaonic Policies and Administration, 663 to 323 B.C.* it is surprisingly casual in fourth c. B.C. matters, including the administration of Egypt. A reader has to face a confusing structure of the book, partly chronological, partly organized by a subject matter. Although Gyles refers to Kienitz, his treatment of the fourth c. history is superficial with a passing remark on Khababash and no precise reference to Artaxerxes III as the conqueror of Egypt. To make things worse, Artaxerxes III is in the index to this book conflated with Artaxerxes II which may convey the impression that the earlier of Artaxerxes retook Egypt for the Persian empire. And of course this 1959 book cannot make use of newly published and republished papyri and other artefacts, important for the administrative and economic history of Egypt. The book of Kienitz, older than that of Gyles, is in many respects superior, although again concentrated chiefly on foreign policy issues with much less attention paid to administration or art and with coinage and architecture related after now outdated works. Even if the fourth c. B.C. is but a part of this book, Kienitz 1953 is still a much usable book largely thanks to its clear structure and carefully quoted ancient evidence.

Egypt in the fourth c. B.C. is also a part of a major picture in monographs of the Persian empire, of Alexander the Great, of the Hellenistic age. Olmstead 1978 which shaped much of the discussion in the second half of the 20th c. paints a dim picture of the Persian rule in Egypt. His views of the Persian empire were in turn successfully challenged among other by Briant (1996 and 2003) and Wiesehöfer (1996). The most precise and best documented through written and archaeological evidence modern account of Egypt within the Persian empire is in Briant 1996. Ruzicka 2012 discusses the relationships of Egypt with Persia from the invasion of Cambyses to the conquest of Alexander the Great. Its focus is clearly the political situation of Egypt and wars waged by the native pharaohs and Persian kings in the fourth c. B.C.

Among the plethora of new books on Alexander the Great, I have followed most often Nawotka 2010, certainly the best documented modern biography of Alexander. Ptolemy I and his dynasty have been receiving modern scholarship's constant attention, to mention only the classic book of Bouché-Leclercq (1903), known for its penchant for political issues and more balanced modern works: Ellis 1994, Hölbl 2000, Huß 2001. Fourth c. B.C. features in specialized monographs of the Hellenistic age in Egypt: on Alexandria (Fraser 1972), Memphis (Thompson 1988), on Greeks (Mallet 1922, Barns 1973) and on Jews in Egypt (Mélèze-Modrzejewski 2000). I owe much to the lucid presentation of the social history of Egypt in Trigger, Kemp, O'Connor, Lloyd 1992.

A much discussed issue of history of Egypt is coins and coinage, with most attention going to the coins Ptolemy I as king in the fourth and third c. B.C., and much more rarely to the issues and hoards dated to the Argead kings. For coinage

the most important are: Von Reden 2007, Duyrat, Picard 2005, Le Rider 2003, Hazard 1995, Howgego 1995, Mørkholm 1991, while every numismatist will find Thompson, Mørkholm, Kraay 1973 indispensable in its complete coverage of coin hoards found in Egypt or related to Egypt. Coin series of Egypt have been discussed profusely among others in Barclay Head 1886, Jungfleisch 1935, Jongkees 1950, Buttrey 1982, Lipiński 1982, Van Alfen 2002, Duyrat 2005, Hardwick 2006, while some important papers are concerned with particular coins as well: of Artaxerxes III (Mørkholm 1974, Vleeming 2001), of Nectanebo II (Bolshakow 1992), of Alexander the Great (Nash 1974, Nicolet–Pierre 1979) and coin dies (Jongkees 1950, Buttrey 1982, Meadows 2011). But for this wealth of numismatic publications, no complete coverage of Egypt's coinage in the fourth c. B.C. exists, with a very important book of Duyrat, Picard 2005 being in fact a collection of papers rather than a comprehensive narrative. To complete this overview one needs to mention books devoted to economy and religion of Egypt in this age (Łukaszewicz 2006, Manning 2003, Stambauch 1972).

Architecture, especially the temples of Egypt, have always attracted the enormous interest of scholarship (e.g. Favard-Meeks 2003) and publications frequently result from archaeological excavations (Jenni 1998, Niederberger 1999). In most cases, fourth c. B.C. architecture is a part of a more comprehensive account, e.g. in Ross 1931, Wolf 1957, Westendorf 1968, Smith 1981, Schäfer 1986, Romano 1989, Gay 2000. The architecture of the fourth c. as a topic of an academic book is still quite rare (e.g. Manassa 2005); more often it is embedded into an account of the art of the Late Period and the Hellenistic age (Brady 1935, Josephson 1997, Josephson, O'Rourke 2005, Tomoum 2005). Single structures, their fragments, inscriptions, reliefs and other artefacts of the fourth c. B.C. have been discussed in innumerable papers, to mention only Lefebvre 1924, Gunn 1926, Jelinková–Reymond 1956, Bakry 1964, Gabra 1981, Devouchelle 1982, Moussa 1985, Perdu 1985, Jasnow 1994, Defernez 2004. The XXX dynasty has generated most academic interest, in part due to a large number of attested buildings and artefacts dated to the long reign of Nectanebo I and Nectanebo II. Two important works (Spalinger 1978, Burstein 2000) deal with a remarkable piece of evidence for the late fourth c. B.C., the Satrap Stele, in conjunction with other sources associated with the pharaohs of the second half of the fourth c. B.C.

Archaeological reports are a real trove of evidence indispensable for any serious study of Egypt of the Late Period. In the first place one needs to list those published by the venerable *Egypt Exploration Society* in the series begun in the late 19th c. in which each volume covers either a site or a part of a large building complex and which counts among its authors many of the leading authorities on the archaeology of Egypt, among them W.M.F. Petrie, R. Mond, O.H. Myers, E.A. Gardner, E. Naville, H.S. Smith, S. Davies. For the purpose of this book the papers published in *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* devoted to the cult of the Apis Bull in Saqqara have been very useful. The excavations in Ayn Manawir in Kharga Oasis, published in the *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo*,

document, among other things, the thriving Iranian diaspora in Egypt, active not only during the First Persian Rule but much longer, under Artaxerxes III and later kings. This in a way parallels the archaeological data attesting the Greek presence in Egypt before Alexander, principally in Naucratis.

No ancient history work, and this book is no exception to this rule, can do without electronic resources. I would like to acknowledge here the excellent data bases of the Packard Humanities Institute: TLG and epigraphic and papyrological data base (PHI #7). The web site www.trismegistos.org, created in Leuven and Cologne by a dedicated group of scholars with participation of M. Depauw contains plethora of data (papyri, ostraca, Egyptian stelae) with dates and useful information about their standard editions.

In this book (outside of the introduction) all dates are B.C., unless stated otherwise. The names of classical authors and titles of their works are abbreviated after *Oxford Latin Dictionary* oraz Liddel, Scott, Jones, *Greek-English Lexicon*. The titles of scholarly journals are listed in the system of *L'Année Philologique*. I have tried to approach the perennial problem of the rendition of ancient names, Egyptian in particular, by following the established *usus* wherever possible. Otherwise, I use the form of an Egyptian name which appears in a source edition. In the case of names which are transliterated only in source editions, I leave them as they are, not attempting to translate into a modern rendition. This would have been too risky on account of the consonant-only nature of the Egyptian writing which makes supplementing vowels very risky in little-known names.

I have a very pleasant duty to acknowledge the assistance of many people and institution which I enjoyed over the long process of writing, first the doctoral dissertation and then the book which springs up from it. My doctoral studies and related research were founded by the University of Wrocław in Poland through a scholarship and two research grants which allowed me to visit Cairo and London. Then I spent ten very profitable months in Cairo thanks to a scholarship of the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology of the University of Warsaw. A scholarship of the De Brzezie Lanckoroński Foundation allowed me to conduct research in Oxford. Later my research was supported by a grant from the National Science Centre. Over the course of my doctoral study I made use of a number of libraries and museums, everywhere greeted by friendly staff and scholars established in these places of research. Apart from the libraries of my home university in Wrocław, I would like to acknowledge the amicable services of the libraries of the University of Warsaw and in particular the libraries of the Departments of Papyrology and Assyriology (Egyptian section). I have fond memories of the excellent Oxford libraries (Sackler, Bodleian, Oriental Institute, Ashmolean), of the British Museum, Petrie Museum and the British Library in London, of the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge. While in Cairo, I could always rely on the friendly assistance of the colleagues from the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology who put their library resources at my disposal. I am particularly indebted to its Director Dr. Zbigniew Szafranski who, while on Deir el-Bahari

excavations, patiently introduced me to the archaeologist's field work. A large part of my research was conducted in the Egyptian Museum, in the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, in the Institut Français d'Archéologie Oriental, in the American Research Center in Egypt, all in Cairo, and in the Graeco-Roman Museum in Alexandria. During these ten months in Egypt I was afforded the opportunity to see most of the places about which I write in this book and the hands-on experience in topography of Egypt proved very helpful during the course of my mostly library-based research.

On all stages of my work I could count on the advice and friendly criticism of many experts on ancient Egypt, classical sources and Greek history. I would like to acknowledge the endless hours which Prof. Adam Łukaszewicz, Prof. Andrzej Niwiński, Prof. Włodzimierz Godlewski, Prof. Wiktor Daszewski, Prof. Gościwit Malinowski, Dr. Neal Spencer, Dr. Julie Renee Anderson spent discussing the fourth c. B.C. Egypt with me. I experienced enormous support and amiable encouragement from Dr. Małgorzata Moźdzynska-Nawotka. My greatest thanks go to Prof. Krzysztof Nawotka, my dissertation supervisor, and now my friend and colleague at the University of Wrocław for his patience, inspirational efforts and tremendous assistance on all stages of writing and revising this book.