

# Reimagining the Past

*The Formation of Greco-Egyptian identity through Cultural Memory*

Yngve Gerds



Masteroppgave i historie ved Institutt for arkeologi, historie,  
kultur- og religionsvitenskap – Det humanistiske fakultet

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# Sammendrag

I denne masteroppgaven drøfter jeg hvorvidt den helleniserte Egyptiske historikeren Manethos *the Leper Fragment* og *the Egyptian Tales* i *Aleksanderromansen* av pseudo-Kallisthenes var skrevet med en hensikt om å skape en gresk-egyptisk kulturell identitet I det hellenistiske Egypt. For å svar på dette foretar jeg en dyptgående analyse av begge tekstene hvor jeg benytter meg av Jan Assmanns model om kulturelt minne. Jeg plasserer de to tekstene i både en historisk og litterær kontekst; ser etter spor av gresk-egyptisk tverrkulturell interaksjon i tekstene; og vurderer hvordan Manetho og pseudo-Kallisthenes fremstiller fortiden i fortellingene deres.

Jeg konkluderer med at både Manetho og *Aleksanderromansen* er på hver sine måter produkter av en tverrkulturell interaksjon som tilpasset fortiden i et forsøk på å forandre fremtiden. Manethos fortelling forsøkte å bringe de to folkeslagene nærmere hverandre ved å overbevise Egypterne om å akseptere gresk styre, og samtidig lære grekerne om Egyptisk kultur. Den første delen av *the Egyptian Tales* forener tradisjoner fra begge kulturer for å gjøre Aleksander til en gresk-egyptisk konge. Den andre delen av de Egyptiske fortellingene er Ptolemaiernes forsøk på å forene grekere og egyptere ved å skape en felles kulturell identitet sentrert rundt Aleksandria. Begge tekstene forsøker altså skape en gresk-egyptisk identitet gjennom å forandre de to gruppenes kulturelle minner.



# Foreword

I want to start by thanking my mentor Evind Heldaas Seland for the guidance and advice he has given me in the writing of this thesis. I also want to thank the faculty members and my fellow students from the antiquity seminar for their valuable advice. Finally, I want to thank my friends and family for their kindness and moral support.

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Thesis Presentation

Conventional wisdom holds that history is written by the winners. It is curious then, that the first Egyptian narrative history - the *Aegyptiaka* - was written by an Egyptian priest named Manetho living under Ptolemaic rule. It would be tempting to assume that Manetho wrote the *Aegyptiaka* as a means to preserve Egyptian history in the face of foreign rule. The *Aegyptiaka*, however, was written entirely in the Greek language, and using a Greek form. The answer to what compelled Manetho to write the history of Egypt in Greek form may lie in the study of Greco-Egyptian relations.

The subject of this thesis is cross-cultural interactions between Greeks and Egyptians in Ptolemaic Egypt. This is a very complex field of study that necessitates an interdisciplinary approach drawing upon the fields of both Egyptology and classical antiquity. Many schools of thought have been formulated over the last hundred years, and there is still no consensus on how to precisely characterize the relationship between the two different cultures.

It might appear on a surface level that the social dynamic of the Greeks and the Egyptians of Ptolemaic Egypt can simply be boiled down to a society consisting of the *rulers* and the *ruled*. Indeed, if we were to analyze the relationship between Greeks and Egyptian with a primary focus on economy, law and social power structures then it would seem there was hardly any interaction between the two groups at all. The two would seem to us as cultural monoliths; completely separate from one another.

This would be a very reductionist approach. In order to fully gauge the relationship between the two cultures, we have to incorporate religion, art and literature in our analysis. Culture is a connective connective structure that that exists both physically and conceptually. Its fluid nature means that it cannot as easily be drawn along lines of economies, hierarchies and legal systems. In societies consisting of two different cultures with an asymmetrical power dynamic, social and cultural interaction can manifest itself in more subtle ways. Indeed, there are several examples of this in Ptolemaic Egypt: statues and iconography that combines Greek and Egyptian features; historical and literary figures that belong to both worlds; shared religious spaces and even Greco-Egyptian hybrid deities.

The most subtle and fascinating evidence of cultural interaction can be found in Ptolemaic

literature. The fact Manetho wrote the history of Egypt in both Greek language and style, is a strong indicator that it was intended to be read by the Greeks. This in turn suggests that they took an interest in Egyptian history and culture. There is certainly evidence that Egyptian literature gained traction among the Greeks. Examples of this are the *Dream of Nectanebo* and the *Myth of the Sun's Eye* – two Egyptian stories that were translated into Greek.<sup>1</sup>

The Greeks also embraced Egyptian cultural icons as their own. The legendary and mythical Pharaoh Sesostrius became Hellenized by the Greeks and the subject of several stories. These tales exist almost exclusively in Greek, with only one Demotic fragment being extant. One of the most fascinating examples of cross-cultural interaction, however is the *Alexander Romance* - a sprawling novel of mixed authorship about the life of Alexander. The Romance is partly a product of both Egyptian and Greek traditions coming together.

The examples listed above suggest that Greeks and Egyptians did not constitute two monoliths, and that their cultures were far from impenetrable. Indeed, they paint the pictures of two groups of people engaging one another in a cultural dialogue. This could suggest the existence of a Greco-Egyptian identity. By this, I do not mean a mixed culture, entirely Hellenized Egyptians, or individuals born from mixed marriages. No, Greco-Egyptian identity refers here to a state of cultural identity in which the Egyptians did not view the Greeks merely as temporary rulers, and the Greeks did not view Egypt simply as spear-won land and the Egyptians as their servants. A state of cultural identity in which the lines between the two cultures were blurred.

If Ptolemaic works of literature contain evidence of the existence of a Greco-Egyptian identity, is it possible that some of these works were actually designed to form such an identity? Literature has the potential to have a sizeable impact on a culture, as evident by works like the *Iliad* and the *Sorrows of Young Werther*. For something as conceptual as cultural identity, literature might be the ideal vehicle.

The research aim of this thesis is to determine if the Leper Fragment by Manetho and the Egyptian Tales of the Alexander Romance were designed to forge a Greco-Egyptian identity through cultural memory.

In order to achieve this, I will analyze the two texts through a lens of cultural memory, as defined by Jan Assmann. The reason I have chosen cultural memory as a theory is that both the Leper Fragment and the Egyptian stories that blend myth and history. They both invoke the past

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<sup>1</sup> Rutherford, 2013, 27

in order to shape the present. This makes the cultural memory the ideal theory with which to analyze these texts.

Leper Fragment and the Egyptian tales of the Alexander Romance have been chosen for this because I believe they are – in their own ways, the best examples we have of Greco-Egyptian cross-cultural interaction in literature. I believe they can provide us with unique insight into the relationship between the Greeks and Egyptians; particularly how their Ptolemaic co-existence affected the cultural memories of the two groups. The role that Manetho played as a Hellenized priest with close ties to the Ptolemies warrants studies on its own. The fact that he wrote the first Egyptian narrative history in Greek means that it would be impossible to omit him from any study of Greco-Egyptian relations in early Ptolemaic Kingdom. The Leper Fragment in particular was chosen because of its reference to the Second Persian Domination, its traditional apocalyptic form, and its similarity to the Nectanebo Romance.

The Egyptian Tales of the Alexander Romance are relevant because of the Egyptian origins of the first part of the Romance – known as the Nectanebo Romance. The explicit merger of Greek and native Egyptian literary traditions make this an obvious choice for analysis. This is also the case for the second part of the Egyptian Tales which I refer to as the *Foundation of Alexandria*, or simply the *Alexandria part*. The use of exclusively Greco-Egyptian and Hellenized demigods to tell a foundation myth makes it a perfect object of analysis; particularly in context of other Ptolemaic efforts to forge a Greco-Egyptian identity.

The second reason is that I believe they are texts that warrant further studies. In 2013, James Dillery wrote that the fact that the most acute analysis of Manetho was still *History and Romance in Graeco-Oriental Literature* by Martin Braun from 1938 was a commentary on the poor state of the study of non-Greek narratives written in Greek.<sup>2</sup> I believe that Manetho has been underutilized in the study of Greco-Egyptian relations; often receiving only brief mentions in regards to the Aegyptiaka and his role in the development of Sarapis.

The Alexander Romance has by contrast received considerable attention; partly because it spans so many fields. The Romance is a massive and complex work of literature, however, with different scholars focusing on different aspects of it. I believe that the Egyptian Tales - and the Nectanebo Romance in particular, warrants more attention. The Nectanebo Romance is an esoteric part of the Romance, the analysis of which requires a form of reconstruction through

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<sup>2</sup> Dillery, 2013, 38. He did not meant his as a slight on the work of Martin Braun

two short fragments – one of which was only discovered as recently as 2002. The importance of the work scholars like Ludwig Koenen and Kim Ryholt have done on this particular subject cannot be overstated. I believe that this work deserves more attention, which would hopefully lead to more scholars getting involved.

## 1.2 Structure

For this thesis, I have chosen a very simple structure. Since my main focus is the analysis of two texts, I have chosen to analyze them separately. My reason for this is that I believe it to be the most efficient method of analysis. This will help me avoid needless repetition, as well as make it easier for the reader to follow my analysis.

**In chapter one** I provide a definition of cultural memory that is primarily based upon the work of Jan Assmann, and provide a few examples of cultural memory in antiquity. I then give a profile of the cultural memory of ancient Egypt before providing a brief overview of the Ptolemaic efforts to bridge the cultural gap between Greeks and Egyptians.

**In chapter two** I analyze the Leper Fragment. I begin by providing a profile of Manetho in order to establish his role in society and his relationship with the Ptolemies. I then give a presentation of the Aegyptiaca and the Leper Fragment, and discuss his motivations for writing it. Next I provide a brief summary of the story, before analyzing its genre and placing it in a context of other traditional Egyptian literature such as the Prophecy of Neferty, the Oracle of the Lamb and the Prophecy of the Lamb.

Next I examine the two of the principal antagonists of the story, the Lepers and the Sheperds, and identify them as Jews and Hyksos respectively. I then analyze the connection between the conceptual connection between the Hyksos in the fragment and the Second Persian Domination, and how they are connected to the Greeks.

Finally, I conclude my analysis and provide a conclusion on the nature of the text and whether or not it was meant to influence the Egyptian cultural memory.

**In chapter three** I begin by providing a profile on the cultural memory of Alexander the Great. The reason I do this is because not only is he the main character of the Romance, but he is also the unifying figure that binds the two cultures together.

Next I present the Egyptian Tales of the Alexander Romance where I account for its nature as a literary work that is the culmination of the efforts of numerous authors over several centuries. I establish the parameters and the conditions under which I will analyze the text, before providing a short summary of the story.

I begin my analysis by establishing the literary context of the opening of the Romance. I do this by using the Dream of Nectanebo, its sequel fragment, the Prophecy of Neferty and the Romance itself in order to reconstruct what scholars refer to as the Nectanebo Romance. The purpose of this is to illustrate the Egyptian origins of the Alexander Romance. Next I move on to the Romance itself and identify the point in the story when the Greek influences have taken over the proverbial driving seat

I then analyze the role of the three fathers of Alexander: Nectanebo, Philip and Ammon, and determine how their roles are defined in a story that is indebted to two different traditions. From here, I move on to the next part of the Egyptian Tales when Alexander arrives in Egypt. Here I analyze Alexandria and the cultural significance of Ammon, Agathos Daimon, Sarapis and Sesostris to its foundation. In order to best achieve this, I will analyze this story in the light of the real life Sarapis and Agathos Daimon cults, as well as to establish the historical and cultural context of Sesostris.

After finishing my analysis, I provide a conclusion where I determine the significance of the text, and establish its role in Egyptian cultural memory.

**In part four** I provide a summary of my analysis of the two stories, before reflecting to how the stories compare to one another. I conclude the thesis by establishing the different roles the texts played in the development of a Greco-Egyptian identity.

## 1.3 Schools of Thought

The perspectives on the relationship between the Greeks and the Egyptians of Ptolemaic Egypt have undergone several changes over the years. The term Hellenism itself was first coined by the historian J. G. Droysen who envisioned a Mediterranean world united under Greek culture. Droysen saw Hellenism as a civilizing project which only faltered when the Greek rulers became compromised by local, less civilized cultures.<sup>3</sup> For Droysen, the decline of the Ptolemaic kingdom was a direct result of the Greek rulers adopting foreign traditions.<sup>4</sup> This became emblematic of Hellenistic scholarship from late 19th century and into the mid 20th century.<sup>5</sup> There were different perspectives, of course, but the running theme appears to have been this form of racial history.<sup>6</sup>

I think it is safe to say that this perspective was very much a product of its colonialist times. Droysen and his peers took a very dim view of the Near-Eastern cultures, and Hellenism as a civilizing project is eerily similar to the concept of 'white man's burden'. Indeed, Ian S. Moyer characterizes this school of thought as the history of the colonizer, because it focuses its perspective entirely on the Greeks and on Hellenism.<sup>7</sup>

In the decolonization of the post-war era, many scholars focused less on Hellenism, and more on Greeks and Egyptians as two distinct groups. This is called the separation model, where scholars such as Claire Préaux, Arnaldo Momigliano and Alan E. Samuel argued that the two cultures were entirely distinct from one another with very limited interaction.<sup>8</sup> Although many of these theories arose during the decolonization, they were often still very much indebted to colonialism. Not necessarily in terms of ideology. Scholars adhering to the same model of separation could still draw completely different ideological conclusions. Instead, colonialism provided an interpretive framework in which the Greeks and the Egyptians tended to be categorized as the oppressors and the oppressed, respectively. Egyptian perception of the Greeks was that of a loathed invader, and riots and revolts were characterized as nationalist resistance. Some good examples of this are Samuel K. Eddy and Peter Green – two scholars of the same generation, but writing at completely different times.

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<sup>3</sup> Moyer, 2011, 11-14

<sup>4</sup> Moyer, 2011, 11-14

<sup>5</sup> Moyer, 2011, 11-14

<sup>6</sup> Moyer, 2011, 13-23

<sup>7</sup> Moyer, 2011, 24-25

<sup>8</sup> Moyer, 2011, 24-29

Eddy wrote *The King is Dead* in 1961, where he characterized the Greco-Egyptian relationship as two groups completely at odds with one another. Neither culture showed much interest for the other, and the Egyptians resisted Greek rule in any way they could. He laments the Egyptians' propensity for resistance, stating that surely the benefits of Greek culture were worth the price of oppression.<sup>9</sup>

In 1990, Peter Green published *From Alexander to Actium*, where he took an opposite view. Like Samuel K. Eddy, and other proponents of the separation model, he asserts that there was minimal cultural interaction, with neither group taking any interest in the culture of the other. Unlike Eddy, however, Peter Green lambasts the Greeks for their tyrannical rule, and criticizes the idea of hellenism as civilizing. Peter Green also takes the interpretive framework much further, by explicitly comparing the Greeks to British colonial masters in India.<sup>10</sup>

In recent years, an increasing number of scholars such as Jean Bingen, Ian S. Moyer, Christelle Fischer-Bovet have questioned the separation model. Indeed, they are less convinced that the Greeks and the Egyptian cultures were hermetically sealed off from one another, and that the supposed two solitudes were far from impenetrable. This is sometimes referred to as the *integration* school of thought, and it offers a more nuanced perspective on the relationship between Greeks and Egyptians. Instead of arguing in favor of syncretism or two solitudes, it maintains that while there were two distinct cultures, cross-cultural interaction still occurred.

Jean Bingen wrote that the Greeks were not considered a loathsome invader, and that while Greeks and Egyptians constituted two autonomous cultures, there were numerous areas where they intersect. Christelle Fischer-Bovet made a compelling argument against the notion of Egyptian nationalist resistance in a 2015 paper. There, she attributed the majority of the riots, revolts and periods of unrest to socio-economic tensions and opportunism among the upper echelons of Ptolemaic Egypt.<sup>12</sup> Several scholars such as Erich Gruen,<sup>13</sup> Susan A. Stephens<sup>14</sup> and Ian Rutherford<sup>15</sup> also argue that several works of literature contain evidence of cultural interaction.

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<sup>9</sup> Eddy, 1961

<sup>10</sup> Green, 1990

<sup>11</sup> Shipley, 2000, 219

<sup>12</sup> Fischer-Bovet, 2015, 26-30

<sup>13</sup> Gruen, 2006

<sup>14</sup> Stephens, 2003

<sup>15</sup> Rutherford, 2013





## 1.4 Primary Sources

Since the purpose of my thesis is to analyze the Leper Fragment by Manetho and the Egyptian Tales of the Alexander Romance by Pseudo-Callisthenes, my main focus will be on these texts. I do, however, incorporate other primary sources as part of my analysis.

In my analysis of the Leper Fragment, I will naturally examine other fragments of Manetho that have been preserved by Josephus and other historians. I will also draw upon traditional Egyptian literature such as The Prophecy of Neferty, the Oracle of the Potter and the Prophecy of the Lamb in order to establish the genre of the Leper Fragment and to place it in a historical and cultural context. In my analysis of the Hyksos and their role in the Leper Fragment, I will be referencing historical inscriptions as part an effort to place them in a context of Egyptian cultural memory.

In my analysis of the Egyptian Tales of the Alexander Romance, I will be referencing other parts of the Romance, as well as make comparisons to other recensions. I will also analyze the Dream of Nectanebo along with its sequel fragment, the Prophecy of Neferty and the Romance itself in comprehensive process of reconstructing the Nectanebo Romance.

Since the Romance is about Alexander, I will be employing a number of Greek historians such as Arrian, Plutarch, Diodorus Siculus, Strabo and Herodotus. I will also be referencing the work of historians such as Hecataeus of Abdera and Megasthenes which is preserved by some of the aforementioned Greeks.

As a general rule, I try to reference primary sources whenever I can.

## 1.5 Cultural Memory

In the dystopian novel 1984 by George Orwell, the slogan of the totalitarian ruling party reads: *'who controls the past, controls the future: who controls the present controls the past'*.<sup>16</sup> The slogan is as bleak as it is striking, and it serves as a sobering reminder of how powerful the past can be. Images and stories of the past can be invoked to energize the present and mobilize

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<sup>16</sup> Orwell, 1949, 37

political forces. Simple references drawn from history can shape how we view and evaluate current affairs. It makes all the difference whether a peace treaty is framed as a *Peace of Westphalia* or a *Versailles Treaty*, because of the inherent implications of these references. The reason that these references of the past are so powerful is because they have been ingrained in our culture over long periods of time. The past provides us with the conceptual framework of the present. This is called cultural memory.

Cultural memory encompasses the forming of traditions, past reference and political identity and imagination.<sup>17</sup> The *memory* refers to an awareness of the past, and the *culture* refers to its nature as a social construct.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, cultural memory is entirely external since it cannot be transmitted biologically. Its development is therefore not a natural and organic one, but one that relies on active reproduction. As Jan Assmann writes: "*The past does not just emerge of its own accord; it is the result of a cultural process of construction and representation.*"<sup>19</sup> It has to be kept alive by repetition and transmitted through various external means such as texts, rituals, proverbs, art and laws.<sup>20</sup> This occurs through three distinct areas: *mimetic memory*, which refers to actions such as behavior; the *memory of things*, such as tools, buildings and artwork; and *communicative memory* which refers to language and writing.<sup>21</sup> These areas flow seamlessly into cultural memory when they take on meaning beyond their practical functions.<sup>22</sup> For example when *actions* become *rituals*; *things* become *symbols* and; *stories* become *sacred text*.

The transmission of cultural memory is perhaps best exemplified through the prism of religion. Religion is culture after all, and I believe that a religion such as Christianity represents cultural memory in a microcosm. Clifford Geertz, on the subject of religion as a cultural system, provided a definition of religion that is very similar to cultural memory. He wrote that religion was:

*"a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic."*<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Assmann, 2011, 9. Kindle Edition

<sup>18</sup> Assmann, 2011, 9. Kindle Edition

<sup>19</sup> Assmann, 2011, 71-72. Kindle Edition

<sup>20</sup> Assmann, 2011, 71-72. Kindle Edition

<sup>21</sup> Assmann, 2011, 3-6, Kindle Edition

<sup>22</sup> Assmann, 2011, 3-6. Kindle Edition

<sup>23</sup> Clifford, 1972, 97. Kindle Edition

Let us look at the basic means in which Christian cultural is transmitted. First, there is the Bible – this tells the story of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It likely began as various oral traditions that were eventually written down (communicative memory). These were later consolidated into the holy book we know as the Bible. Next, we have the cross – once a Roman tool designed for torture and executions (memory of things), now a symbol of the martyrdom of Christ and Christianity as a whole. Finally, we have the breaking of bread (mimetic memory) – a mundane activity that became the ritual we today know as Communion.

These areas must be analyzed in the context of one another, for in terms of cultural memory, they are different parts of a whole. The Bible becomes part of the rituals when its psalms are recited during ceremonies, or when its prayers are performed. Likewise, rituals such as communion are representations of stories from the Bible. During the Communion, the bread and wine ceases to be mere objects, and become symbols of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. These areas overlap and both inform and enhance one another. In other words, they flow seamlessly into cultural memory and forms a connective structure and a system of symbols.

## **Cultural identity**

An important event in Jewish history is the siege of Masada from 73 to 74 A.D, where the Jews defending the fortress chose death over surrender.<sup>24</sup> This has become a foundational story of the modern state of Israel.<sup>25</sup> Today, Masada is a holy site and the sacrifice made is commemorated when all recruits into the Israeli army swear their oath of allegiance in this very place.<sup>26</sup> This achieves multiple things: the first is that it strengthens the link between the ancient past and a modern state whose legitimacy is frequently called into question by its enemies. The second is that it uses this past to galvanize the Israeli soldiers against the modern enemies of Israel. Together, these two elements further strengthen Israeli cultural identity.

All groups – be they nations, religions or minorities – base their awareness of themselves on the past. In the words of Jan Assmann: «*Societies conceive images of themselves, and they*

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<sup>24</sup> Josephus. *Bella Judaicum*. VII. 7. = Thackeray

<sup>25</sup> Assmann. 2011, 58-59. Kindle Edition

<sup>26</sup> Assmann, 2011, 58-59. Kindle Edition.

*maintain their identity through the generations by fashioning a culture out of memory.»*<sup>27</sup>. This means that cultural identity is formed not just by *what* we remember, but *how* we remember it. This is usually a reflection of both the cultural memory and the current circumstances of the group

In *Against Apion*, the Jewish-Roman historian Josephus writes about an ancient group of people called the Hyksos, who ruled parts of Egypt from 1730 till 1633.<sup>28</sup> On a surface level it might seem strange that a Jewish historian living under Roman rule in the 1<sup>st</sup> century A. D. to be writing about an obscure group of people in Egypt. Josephus, however, was trying to prove the antiquity of the Jews.<sup>29</sup> Group identity becomes increasingly important and is often reinforced among peoples living under foreign rule. Since this collective identity is based on an idea of a shared history, they will look to the past in order to justify their identity; prove the distinctiveness of their culture; and often to rationalize their current predicament, one way or another. The past is invoked as a reflection of the present.

The aforementioned Hyksos whom Josephus considered the forebears of the Jews, were remembered quite differently by the Egyptians. Indeed, the Hyksos were remembered as vile invaders, and the period in which they ruled parts of Egypt considered a dark period during which all that was good disappeared from Egypt. The trauma of foreign rule had to be explained in Egyptian terms, and so the Hyksos was rationalized as a punishment from the gods.<sup>30</sup>

The Egyptian memory of the Hyksos is an example of when a historical event is transformed into myth. Cultural identity, however, does not have to be based on a historical past, as long as it is remembered as history. Indeed, myth and identity are closely linked together because they both answer fundamental questions such as who we are, where we come from and what our place in the universe is. The Exodus is a perfect example of this. Despite its lack of historicity, the Israelites' flight from Egypt is an important part of Jewish cultural identity. The story is recorded in the Torah and is commemorated each year in the form of Pessach. It matters not that the Exodus might never have happened, because it is remembered as part of their past, and has been ingrained into Jewish cultural memory over a period of two millennia.

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<sup>27</sup> Assmann, 2011, 4. Kindle Edition

<sup>28</sup> Josephus. *Contra Apionem*. Fr 42. = Waddell

<sup>29</sup> Dillery, 1999, 94

<sup>30</sup> See 2.5 in this thesis

Another example of this is the Iliad. The seminal epic by Homer is almost certainly entirely fictional, but it had a profound effect on the ancient Greeks. Indeed, according to Richard Miles “it gave them the conceptual framework with which to think of themselves and the societies they were creating.”<sup>31</sup> Achilles became an ideal of masculinity that all Greek men would aspire to.<sup>32</sup> Alexander the Great himself was so obsessed with the Iliad and so haunted by Achilles that he actively sought to emulate and even surpass his achievements. Even more extraordinary, however, is the pivotal role the Iliad played in the development of Greekness and panhellenism.<sup>33</sup>

## 1.6 Egyptian Cultural Memory & the Ptolemaic Kingdom.

Like many ancient civilizations, the Egyptians understood the world in terms of chaos versus order. The world had emerged from the primordial Nun ocean, and gradually the gods came into being. From chaos to order. The cosmos was cyclical, and some day the world would end and return to chaos, only to re-emerge from the primordial oceans. This did not mean that chaos was only present at the beginning and the end of times. Indeed, Egypt - and thus also the world, would alternate between the two. There would be periods where Ma'at - the deific manifestation of justice, order and balance, would be unseated and chaos would reign. Chaos could never be banished, it could only be subdued.<sup>34</sup> This was conceptualized by the sun-god Ra who travelled across the sky every day. As part of his journey, he descended into the underworld and had to fight and overcome Apep, an agent of chaos. This duality, as well as the role of humanity in it, was further reflected and conceptualized by the story of Horus and Seth.

Osiris was a god but also the king of the world. He was betrayed and murdered by his brother Seth, who sought to usurp him. Isis, the sister and wife of Osiris posthumously begat a child with him named Horus who would become his avenger. Horus was raised in secret and prepared for this epic battle, and eventually managed to banish Seth and his allies from Egypt. Osiris became the god of the underworld and Horus became the founder of Egypt and thus also its first king. This is the basic form of the story, but the conflict of Horus and Seth could take on many forms.<sup>35</sup> The conflict of Horus and Seth also became the mythical basis for Upper and

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<sup>31</sup> Miles, 2010, 95-96

<sup>32</sup> Miles, 2010, 114

<sup>33</sup> Assmann, 2011, 246-248. Kindle Edition

<sup>34</sup> Assmann, 2011, 147-148. Kindle Edition

<sup>35</sup> See Griffiths (1960)

Lower Egypt, and the land of Egypt itself became a symbol of the duality between order and chaos.<sup>36</sup> Egypt was a land of two halves that had to be made whole for Ma'at to flourish.<sup>37</sup> Order had to subdue and overtake chaos.

The story also became the foundation for the ideology of divine kingship. Seth was associated with chaos, confusion, foreigners, infertility and the red eastern desert. Horus represented order and justice and became the ideal that all Egyptian kings should aspire to. Not only did he banish chaos and restore Ma'at, but he also built temples and cities, which was expected of all Pharaohs. It also managed to lay down an ideological framework for succession: the dying king became Osiris, while the ascendant prince became Horus. Indeed, the goal of all Egyptians was to re-enact the days of the reign of Horus on earth.<sup>38</sup> Pharaohs should seek to emulate the first king of Horus. Failure to do this could result in losing the favor of the gods and Egypt descending into chaos. The Pharaoh was closely tied to Ma'at, and could risk unseating her by straying from their duties.

Herodotus described Egypt as the nation with the longest history. Indeed, he wrote that the history of the Egyptians stretched back 345 generations.<sup>39</sup> Yet very little of this history appears to have been documented. There was no narrative history, only king lists and annals; documents that chronicled the naked facts and little else.<sup>40</sup> The first Egyptian narrative history was written in Greek by the priest Manetho in the early years of the Ptolemaic period. This was because the Egyptians had a certain timeless view of history. They viewed it as a continuous stream where little of interest happened, only interrupted by periods where Ma'at became unseated and chaos and despair ruled.

The Egyptians did not look back at a particular point in history and yearn to return to such golden days. Instead, they looked back to the very beginning when the Gods lived on earth. These were the only stories worth telling, and the continuity from that time onwards was what mattered. That is why the Egyptian society was based upon re-enacting the days of Horus. In this sense, the very lives of the Egyptians became part of a much grander ritual. This is not to say that they did not produce stories rooted in history. There are numerous examples of this, but they tend to reside more in the realm of historical fiction. Stories of kings or invasions

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<sup>36</sup> Assmann, 2011, 147-148. Kindle Edition

<sup>37</sup> Assmann, 2011, 147-148. Kindle Edition

<sup>38</sup> Sørensen, 1992, 170

<sup>39</sup> Herodotus. II. 142-143. = Godley

<sup>40</sup> Assmann, 2011,

often manifested themselves as re tellings of religious myths; particularly those of Horus.

Kings were remembered for how they compared they compared to Horus. Many kings actively cultivated their association with Horus not only to secure their own rule, but also for the sake of posterity. Ramesses III erected monuments designed to portray him as a timeless, archetypal figure.<sup>41</sup> He was depicted as victorious not only against his own enemies, but against all the enemies of Egypt throughout history as well.<sup>42</sup> Thus, Ramesses III sought to use his position as Pharaoh to shape the future cultural memory of Egypt so that he would be remembered as something akin to a demigod, like the mythical Sesostris.<sup>43</sup>

The manner in which the Egyptians remembered the past was extremely ethnocentric. They believed that Egypt was the center of the world and that their culture was intrinsically linked to the cosmos. Should Egypt and her culture disappear, then surely the world would too. Through much of their history they harbored an enduring disdain for foreigners, and asiatics in particular. While the ancient Near East was, for the most part, a fairly open world characterized by cross-cultural interaction, the Egyptian rejected such notions.<sup>44</sup> This is a large part of the reason why ancient Egypt has this timeless quality. They resisted foreign influences, and managed to preserve their culture.

Egypt, however, were not entirely immune to change, nor impervious to innovations arriving from abroad. Yet they found a way to reconcile the idea of Egypt being the origins of all things with foreign influences. They simply re-wrote the past. Indeed, the Egyptians appear to have had few qualms about altering the past to claim the achievements of others for themselves. Agriculture, law, music, dance and the alphabet had all been invented by Egyptian gods, the Egyptians maintained.<sup>45</sup> During times of foreign rule, the Egyptians would also claim kinship with the rulers such as Cambyses<sup>46</sup> and Alexander<sup>47</sup> in order to, among other reasons, claim their conquests for their own.

In order for any foreign kings to rule Egypt successfully over a longer period of time, they had to adjust to the Egyptian cultural framework. The Macedonians had been welcomed as liberators when they cast the hated Persians out of Egypt, but foreign government cannot be

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<sup>41</sup> Grimal, 1994, 274-275

<sup>42</sup> Grimal, 1994, 274-275

<sup>43</sup> See chapter three

<sup>44</sup> Miles, 2010, 27

<sup>45</sup> Eddy, 1961, 272-274

<sup>46</sup> Herodotus. 3.1-2. = Godley

<sup>47</sup> See chapter 3

sustained on goodwill alone. Ptolemy I Soter appears to have understood that they had to rule in Egyptian terms. If the Ptolemaic dynasty was to have a future, it had to be viewed by the Egyptians as a continuation of the traditions that stretched all the way back to the golden age of Horus, rather than an interruption in this otherwise orderly stream. The Ptolemaic kings had to be remembered as the likes of Ramesess, Sesostris and Nectanebo, and not like Cambyses, Ataxerxes and Dareios. In order to achieve this, Ptolemy had to not only in accordance with the principles of Pharaonic kingship, but also to make the Egyptians reimagine a past that favored the Ptolemies.

Ptolemy I Soter was arguably the most successful of the Diadochi, partly because he appears to have been the one to learn most from the triumphs and mistakes of Alexander. He had observed how the natives had accepted Alexander into their hearts when he adopted their customs and ruled as a divine king. Yet he likely also recalled the horror with which many Macedonians reacted to his orientalism.<sup>48</sup> Ptolemy likely understood that he had to walk something of a tightrope in order to appease both groups and avoid hostilities.

Ptolemy started by legitimizing his rule in the eyes of both Greeks and the Egyptians. When Alexander died, he left no successor and the Diadochi began fighting for possession of his body. The reason for this was that the corpse of Alexander was no mere inanimate object – it was a symbol of power and kingship. Indeed, whomever possessed the body had the greatest claim to succession.<sup>49</sup> Ptolemy I Soter had the body kidnapped from Perdiccas, transported to Egypt and buried in Memphis. Ptolemy played his card particularly well here: he initially buried Alexander with the rites of a Hero, to avoid causing resentment among the Macedonians.<sup>50</sup> He later had Alexander deified, and established a cult devoted to him when his body was ready to be moved to Alexandria;<sup>51</sup> which probably appealed to the Egyptians.

The Ptolemies also appealed to the Egyptians by cultivating a close relationship with the survivors of the Sebennytyos dynasty. The Greeks sought to paint an image of themselves as the successors to the Sebennytyus dynasty. This is made evident by the the royal titlature employed by Alexander, which invoked the Horus-names of Nectanebo II, such as "*he who drives out foreigners*" and "*protector of Egypt*".<sup>52</sup> We also see examples of this in other surviving relics,

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<sup>48</sup> Arrian. Anab. 10-12. = Brunt

<sup>49</sup> Saunders, 2006, 34-35

<sup>50</sup> Saunders, 2006, 41

<sup>51</sup> Saunders, 2006, 41

<sup>52</sup> Hölbl, 2001, 79



such as portraiture. The statues and busts of the early Ptolemies appear to have been sculpted to resemble the idealized depictions of the last Pharaohs:<sup>53</sup> This portraiture thus took on new meaning. It became a symbol of continuity. That which was once lost has been restored.

The Egyptian priests, and the Memphite clergy in particular, assisted the Ptolemies in their efforts to appeal to the Egyptians. In 196 B.C., the priesthood of Memphis issued a bilingual decree in honor of the coronation of Ptolemy V Epiphanes. This is how it begins:

*"In the reign of the young one - who received the throne from his father - lord of crowns, glorious, the one who established Egypt, and pious towards the gods, superior to his opponents, the one who restored the life of men, lord of of the thirty-years' feast just as Hephaistos the great, king just as Helios the great king of the upper and lower regions, offspring of the Father-Loving*

*Gods, the one whom Hephaistos approved, to whom Helios gave the victory, living image of Zeus (son) n of Helios, Ptolemy Ever-Living, Beloved of Ptah"*<sup>54</sup>

We see here that the priests of Memphis portrayed Ptolemy V Epiphanes as a traditional Pharaoh. It would perhaps be tempting to assume that they did this by command of the Ptolemies. However, the decree was composed in Memphis away from the influence of Greek influencers, which gave the priests creative freedom.<sup>55</sup> In a 217 decree in honor of Ptolemy IV Philopator's military victory over Antiochus III at the Battle of Raphia, they even insisted that the stela feature an illustration that depicted Ptolemy VI Philopator on horseback defeating Antiochus III, which was meant to symbolize Horus and Seth.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Stanwick, 2002, 66-68

<sup>54</sup> OGIS 90 = Derow

<sup>55</sup> Bingen, 2007, 263-264

<sup>56</sup> Hölbl, 2001, 164

<sup>57</sup> Bingen, 2007, 263-264

<sup>58</sup> Hölbl, 2001, 164

The continuity of tradition was important to the Egyptians, and it was therefore vital that they be able to incorporate the Greeks into their conceptual framework. The Ptolemies were only happy to oblige, and the Greeks and the priests appear to have enjoyed a fruitful and successful collaboration in this regard. There were revolts and periods of unrest of course, but they were for the most part a result of socio-economic resentment and dynastic conflicts.<sup>59</sup>

## 2 The Leper Fragment

### 2.1 Manetho of Sebennytos

Manetho of Sebennytos was an Egyptian priest who lived during the reigns of Ptolemy I Soter and Ptolemy II Philadelphos and possibly into the beginning of Ptolemy III Eurgetes.<sup>60</sup> Though there is not a wealth of information about his life available to us, what little has survived appears to speak volumes. Manetho occupied a high-ranking position within the court of the Ptolemies, possibly due to his connection to the Sebennytos - the last native Egyptian dynasty.<sup>61</sup> As stated earlier in this thesis, the Ptolemies went to great lengths to honour the Sebennytos and cultivate their relationships with them..

Ian S. Moyer believes that these connections between the Ptolemies and the Sebennytes were: "*part of a wider pattern of interactions and negotiations between Egypt's indigenous elites and the new ruling dynasty*". He believes that Manetho was part of an early elite who served to mediate between Greeks and Egyptians and help the Ptolemies cement and legitimize their rule.<sup>62</sup> Evidence of Manetho's privileged position comes in many forms; some more concrete than others. First, there is a letter included in the Book of Sothis, supposedly written by Manetho and addressed to Ptolemy II Philadelphos which states:

*"To the great King Ptolemy Philadelphus Augustus. Greeting to my lord Ptolemy from Manetho, high-priest and scribe of the sacred shrines of Egypt, born at Sebennytus and dwelling at Heliopolis. It is my duty, almighty king, to reflect upon all such matters as you may desire me to investigate. So, as you are making researches concerning the future of the universe, in*

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<sup>59</sup> Fischer-Bovet, 2015, 26-30

<sup>60</sup> Moyer, 2011, 85-86

<sup>61</sup> Moyer, 2011, 87

<sup>62</sup> Moyer, 2011, 89-90

*obedience to your command I shall place before you the Sacred Books which I have studied, written by your forefather, Hermes Trismegistus. Farewell, I pray, my lord king*"<sup>63</sup>

The veracity of this letter is contentious, however, and is often attributed to 'pseudo-Manetho', rather than the actual priest himself. W. G. Waddell, who translated all of the works attributed to Manetho, states not all of the details are genuine. However, he goes on to state that the description may have been borrowed from a good source. Waddell also believes that Manetho holding the rank of High Priest of Heliopolis is not unlikely, and indeed corresponds with sources naming him as one of the architects of the cult of Serapis<sup>64</sup>, which I will return to below.

A more concrete piece of contemporary evidence of Manetho's position is a letter addressed to an epistate of the Herakleopolite nome from a high-priest named *Petosiris* dated 241/40 B.C. He complains that a certain *Chesmenis* and his son *Semtheus* have stolen the official seal, which allows them to use it to make any letter they send appear official:

*"I made a previous statement to you in the month of Choiak about the seal of the temple, that it was abstracted by Chesmenis and his son Semtheus on the ninth of the month Arthur, which he did in order to (seal?) anything they may wish to write to Manetho and any other persons they please."*<sup>65</sup>

241/40 would have been quite late in Manetho's life, so it is not a hundred percent certain that it is the same person who wrote *Aegyptica*. Manetho was a very uncommon name, however, and the letter seems to infer that he was an important figure.<sup>66</sup> Indeed, the manner in which Manetho's name is invoked (the only hypothetical recipient of a fraudulent letter mentioned by name) implies that he was well known to both parties.<sup>67</sup> Moreover, the fact that *Petosiris* expresses a fear that *Chesmenis* and *Semtheus* may use the seal to send letters to Manetho falsely on behalf of the temple suggests that there would be something to be gained from doing so. Such a scenario seems unlikely unless Manetho held some form of power and authority. The authority in question could be the one inherent to Manetho's supposed position as a high-priest of Heliopolis. That, however, raises the question of why specifically Manetho's name was invoked. Was he at particular risk of being recipient of such fraudulent letters? At this stage in history, Heliopolis' power and influence had already been eclipsed by that of Memphis, which

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<sup>63</sup> Waddell, 1940, 211

<sup>64</sup> Waddell, 1940, 11

<sup>65</sup> P. Hib. I 72 = Greenfell & Hunt

<sup>66</sup> Moyer, 2011,

<sup>67</sup> Moyer, 2011,

was situated much closer to the Herakleopolite nome. It might then have made more sense to invoke the name of the high-priest of Ptah, rather than that of a fading city.

The mention of Manetho by name could suggest that he held a status that ranked above the high-priests. My own hypothesis is that his close relationship with the Ptolemies made him a well-known figure with a level of influence that far exceeded those vested in him as a high-priest. Ian S. Moyer has suggested that Manetho was a man living in two worlds - one of Alexandria, and the other of the other Egyptian priests. If the priests were the mediators between the Greeks and the native Egyptians, then Manetho may very well have served as a mediator between the Ptolemies and the clerical elite themselves

Further evidence of Manetho's relationship with the Ptolemies is provided by Plutarch in *On Isis and Osiris* where he claims that Manetho played a part in the conception of the Greco-Egyptian god Serapis' portraiture:

*“Ptolemy Soter dreamed that he saw the colossal statue of Pluto at Sinope, although he did not know what manner of shape it had, having never previously seen it; and that it bade him convey it with all possible speed to Alexandria. The king was at a loss and did not know where the statue stood; but he was describing the vision to his friends, there came forward a far-travelled man, by name Sosibius, who declared that at Sinope he had seen just such a colossus as the king had dreamt he saw. He therefore despatched Soteles and Dionysius, who after long time and with difficulty, though notun-aided by divine providence, stole away the statue. When it was brought to Egypt and exhibited there, Timotheus the exegetes (expounder or interpreter), Manetho of Sebennyus, and their colleagues, judging by the Cerberus and the serpent, came to the conclusion that it was a statue of Pluto; and they convinced Ptolemy that it represented no other god than Serapis. For it had not come bearing this name from its distant home, but after being conveyed to Alexandria, it acquired the Egyptian name for Pluto, namely Serapis”<sup>68</sup>*

Serapis was an ancient Egyptian deity which the Ptolemies appropriated as a hybrid god, seemingly with the purpose of bridging the gap between the Greek and Egyptian spheres. His account appears to be influenced by literary motifs, and the manner in which the king experiences a revelation in his dreams is particularly reminiscent of the literary convention known as *Königsnovelle*, which I will elaborate on below. This is not to say that it is wholly

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<sup>68</sup> Plut. *Isis and Osiris*. Fr. 79 = Waddell

inaccurate or that Manetho did not participate in the development of the cult of Serapis. He could, however, be basing his account on a narrative that has undergone several changes.

If Plutarch is correct in his assessment, then it speaks volumes not only of Manetho's relationship with the Ptolemies, but also of his role in the development of Greco-Egyptian cross-cultural interaction. If he advised the Ptolemies in the conception of Serapis' portraiture, then they may also have relied upon him in their development of the royal cult. Indeed, if he lived long enough into the reign of *Ptolemy III Eurgetes*, then he may even have participated in the synod that authored the *Decree of Canopus*. There is no evidence that suggests this, however, and we must be wary of ascribing Manetho too much importance based on conjecture.

## 2.2 Aegyptiaka

Manetho's most important contribution and legacy is the *Aegyptiaca* - a history of Egypt. Not only was it written Greek, but it was also the first *narrative history* of Egypt. Indeed, the *Aegyptiaca* combined a traditional kings-list with varying traditional narratives, ranging from prophecies to both royal and non-royal biographies<sup>69</sup>. This could be considered a watershed moment in Greek and Egyptian cross-cultural interactions.<sup>70</sup> That Manetho made the history of Egypt available to the Ptolemies was one thing, but his work was also influenced by the Greeks. Indeed, Manetho was probably inspired to write an Egyptian narrative history by the works of *Herodotus* and *Hecataeus*.<sup>71</sup> He was certainly well familiar with the works of Herodotus, having written a critique of the Greek historian's work.<sup>72</sup> The Greek influence on *Aegyptiaca* appears mainly to have been on the *form* of the content, while the style and the content itself seems to remain mostly Egyptian.

Unfortunately, Manetho's *Aegyptiaca* is not intact; it has only survived in fragments preserved in the works of other historians. This makes it difficult to reconstruct and interpret Manetho's writings, because we have to reckon with the various historians' agendas. The best example is the fragments that I will be covering in this analysis. They are preserved by the Roman-Jewish historian *Josephus* in *Against Apion*; a work written to counter the anti-semitic charges made by the titular *Appion*, and prove the '*antiquity of the Jewish people*'. Manetho's writing, then, is

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<sup>69</sup> Dillery, 1999, 93

<sup>70</sup> Moyer, 2011, 92

<sup>71</sup> Dillery, 1999, 93

<sup>72</sup> Waddell, 1940, 205-207

invoked not to tell the history of the Egyptians, but to tell the history of the Jewish people. Naturally, this complicates our reading. Investigating Greco-Egyptian cross cultural interactions is complicated enough, but it becomes exceedingly esoteric when we are forced to do so through a Jewish cultural lens. This is something we will have to be conscious of at all times, and it will be discussed at various points below.

The impetus for the writing of *Aegyptiaca* is not entirely clear to us. Manetho may have chosen to write it because he figured that Greek rule might last for generations, and he wanted to make sure that the Egyptian history, tradition and culture was preserved during this foreign rule. James Dillery has suggested that, based on who was reading it, the intended audience of the *Aegyptiaca* may have been Manetho's fellow priests.<sup>73</sup> This, however, begs the question of why he chose to write it in Greek rather than Demotic. This, to me, suggests that Manetho was aiming at a broader audience. Perhaps he wanted to make the history of Egypt available to the Greeks, and the Ptolemies in particular. Similarly to how Ptolemy I Soter tried to bridge the cultural gap between the Greeks and the Egyptians through the Sarapis cult, Manetho may have tried to do the same with the *Aegyptiaca*. If his relationship with the Ptolemies was as close as the sources suggest, then he was certainly in a position to do so. Indeed, his role as a mediator between the Greek and Egyptian world may have worked both ways. The *Aegyptiaca* may thus have served two purposes: to ensure the survival of the history of Egypt in the face of foreign rule, and also to help the Greeks understand Egyptian culture and tradition, and why it should be preserved.

It is also possible that it was commissioned by the Ptolemies, and that Manetho was happy to oblige. The Ptolemies' reasons for this could be multifold. They might have wished to learn more about the history of Egypt to better understand the people they ruled over. Peter Green has claimed that the Greeks took no interest in Egyptian culture. This, however, is demonstrably untrue, as the Greeks had long been fascinated by the Egyptians and their history. Furthermore, there were numerous pragmatic reasons for the Greeks to learn about Egyptian culture, as demonstrated above. A better understanding of Egyptian culture and history would likely make it easier to govern.

James Dillery, however, has speculated that a more immediate political objective may have influenced at least certain parts of the *Aegyptiaca*. Ptolemy I Soter elevated Ptolemy Philadelphos to co-regent as a way of ensuring his succession. Manetho spends a considerable

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<sup>73</sup> Dillery, 1999, 94

amount of time on the rulers of the 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty; particularly the first rulers, Amenemhet I and his son and co-regent Sesostris; the first attested example of co-regency in Egypt. The Ptolemies and Manetho may have used this as a way of justifying the Soter-Philadelphos co-regency, as well as conferring legitimacy upon the monarch.<sup>74</sup> There is no way to definitively know if this is the case, but it would not be surprising. We have already seen how the Greeks drew upon Egyptian traditions to forge a bond between the ancient pharaohs and the Ptolemies in the minds of the Egyptians. Manetho, having already assisted in creating a Greco-Egyptian cult, would likely have been more than happy to help the Ptolemies in this endeavor as well.

As one might expect, there are differing opinions on Manetho and the *Aegyptiaca* among scholars. In many ways, scholarly reflections on this enigmatic priest serve as a microcosmos of the academic debate on Hellenism itself. Indeed, the view that scholars take on Manetho tends to correspond with their views on the nature of Hellenism - particularly in regards to cross-cultural interaction between Greeks and Egyptians. Ian S. Moyer, for example, believes that Manetho, along with the likes of *Djedhor of Tanis*, the aforementioned *Petosiris of Hermopolis* and *Senu of Coptos*, played an important role as mediators between the Ptolemaic government and the political and cultural traditions of Egypt:

*"Manetho's work was not the result of Greek colonization of Egyptian historical consciousness. It was an indiginous attempt both to make explicit the proper historical role of the Egyptian pharaoh, and also to teach the Ptolemies and other Greeks at court to read Egyptian history in an Egyptian fashion."*<sup>75</sup>

Amélie Kuhrt expresses a similar sentiment in an article about *Berosus* - Manetho's Babylonian counterpart - where she concludes that:

*"Hecataeus and Manetho in Egypt, on the one hand, and Berosus in Babylonia, on the other, helped to make accessible the local ideological repertoires and historical precedents for adaptation by the Macedonian dynasties, which resulted in the formation and definition of the distinctive political-cultural entities of Ptolemaic Egypt and the Seleucid empire"*<sup>76</sup>

Peter Green, however, disagrees, characterizing Manetho as a compliant priest doing the bidding of his overlords.<sup>77</sup> He also takes particular issue with the claims made by Amélie Kuhrt,

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<sup>74</sup> Dillery, 1999, 111-112

<sup>75</sup> Moyer, 2011, 140-141

<sup>76</sup> Kuhrt, 1987, 56

<sup>77</sup> Green, 1990, 325

dismissing the first part of Kuhrt's claim as a "*euphemism for sedulous imperial bootlicking*" and claiming that the second part of the quote is a "*wild exaggeration*".<sup>78</sup> Green's dismissive attitude to Manetho is not at all surprising, and is very much in keeping with his post-colonial approach. In a chapter concerning the spread of Hellenism from his monumental work *From Alexander to Actium*, Green criticizes the notion of Hellenism as a civilizing project as a "*self-serving myth, propogated by power-hungry imperialists*". Indeed, Peter Green spends much of this chapter chastising the Greeks for their xenophobic attitudes and comparing them to British colonial masters.<sup>79</sup>

Samuel K. Eddy takes an interesting view on the subject of Manetho. He believes that the priest from Sennebytos assisted Ptolemy I Soter in establishing the worship of Sarapis, and that he wrote *Aegyptiaca* with the purpose of explaining Egypt's history and customs to his Greco-Macedonian masters.<sup>80</sup> In this regard, his views appear to align with those of Ian S. Moyer and Amélie Kuhrt. However, Eddy also states that Manetho did harbour a certain dislike for the Greeks, which he may have expressed in his writings. He points out that Manetho used the same negative epithet for the '*polluted people*' who corrupted Egypt in his account of king Amenophis (This will be covered in-depth below) as the author of the *Demotic Chronicle* did for the *Ionians*.<sup>81</sup> Thus, Eddy suggests that Manetho held the Greeks in the same regard as the '*polluted people*'.

## 2.3 The Story of Amenophis

The Egyptian pharaoh *Amenophis* wished to behold the gods, and expressed this desire to his namesake *Amenophis the Seer* (who will be referred to as '*the Seer*' to avoid confusion). *The Seer* told the pharaoh that if he would be able to behold the gods if he cleansed Egypt of lepers and '*polluted people*'. Ecstatic, *Amenophis* rounded up all the sickly subjects and sent them to toil in the stone-quarries; segregated from the rest of the populace. *The Seer*, however, began to fear that their actions would incur the wrath of the gods, and he wrote down a prophecy that

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<sup>78</sup> Green, 1990, 326

<sup>79</sup> Green, 1990, 312-326

<sup>80</sup> Eddy, 1961, 295

<sup>81</sup> Eddy, 1961, 296



stated that the polluted people would rule Egypt with the assistance of certain allies for thirteen years. After writing down the prophecy, the Seer took his own life.<sup>82</sup>

After toiling and suffering for some time, the polluted people pleaded with the pharaoh to grant them the city of *Avaris* - a city long associated with *Seth*, to which Amenophis agreed. They then elected a priest from Heliopolis named *Osarseph* - he would later change his name to '*Moses*' - as their leader, who laid down several laws anathema to those of Egypt, including ones prohibiting them from worshipping the gods of Egypt or procreating with outsiders. He also stated that the sacred animals of Egypt should not be worshipped, but rather slaughtered and consumed. He then ordered his people to prepare for war against Amenophis, and sent an envoy to the *Shepherds* in Jerusalem who had previously occupied Egypt; inviting them to join him. The Shepherds eagerly accepted, and before long, 200.000 of their forces were closing in on Avaris.<sup>83</sup>

Amenophis responded to the news of the invasion by marshalling 300.000 of his finest warriors to fight the invaders. However, during the march, he changes his mind; deciding that he "*must not fight against the gods*". Instead, he gathered his people and as many sacred animals as he could before fleeing south to Ethiopia where he is welcomed as a friend by the Ethiopian king. Meanwhile, things are not going well in Egypt. The Shepherds and the polluted people are burning villages, desecrating temples, butchering the sacred animals and mutilating the images of the gods. The state of Egypt during this time was apparently so terrible that the previous occupation by the Shepherds was considered a 'golden age' by comparison. After the prophesized thirteen years had passed, Amenophis and his son *Rampses* returned to Egypt and expelled the Shepherds and the polluted people.<sup>84</sup>

So what are to make of this fantastical story by Manetho? It is clear that the story is offering very little in terms of historicity, and Josephus himself illustrates the nonsensical nature of the text.<sup>85</sup> Indeed, after recounting Manetho's words verbatim, he offers a scathing critique; explaining in detail why the Egyptian priest's story is false. His criticism ranges from identifying discrepancies in Manetho's chronology, to questioning the rationality of the characters in the story. At times, he comes across as a critic identifying contrivances or plot holes in a movie. Josephus concludes that Manetho, while otherwise truthful, must have based

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<sup>82</sup> Josephus. *Contra Apionem*. Fr 54 = Waddell

<sup>83</sup> Josephus. *Contra Apionem*. Fr 54 = Waddell

<sup>84</sup> Josephus. *Contra Apionem*. Fr 54 = Waddell

<sup>85</sup> Josephus. *Contra Apionem*. Fr 54 = Waddell

this particular story on unauthorized legends or prejudiced informants, rather than the sacred records.

Josephus is not wrong to question the historicity of Manetho's story. There was a pharaoh named Amenophis<sup>86</sup> and a Seer with the same name, but that is where the historical accuracy ends. There is no evidence of an Asiatic invasion, a native uprising or a thirteen years long occupation. On the contrary, Nicolas Grimal writes that Amenophis III's reign was a peaceful one with only one act of war – a preventive campaign, no less. Far from being invaded by Asiatics, Egypt actually increased its influence in Asia and the Mediterranean region.<sup>87</sup> Amenophis can, at best, be considered an amalgamation of various pharaohs, and should be considered a literary figure rather than a historical one. Indeed, the Leper Fragment offers little in traditional terms of historicity. That does not mean it is without historical value, however. On the contrary, the Fragment can offer us insight to how the Egyptians perceived themselves, their history and the world. More importantly for this dissertation, however, is that it can provide us insight to the state of affairs in Ptolemaic Egypt at the time of writing; particularly regarding the Egyptians' relationship with the Greeks.

In order to analyze the Leper Fragment, we have to delve into the more incredulous elements. The impetus for the story is of course that Amenophis wishes to '*behold the gods*' or experience '*ultimate reality*', just as his predecessor *Or* did. Josephus responds to this particular aspect of the story with incredulity:

*“If he means the gods established by their ordinances, - bull, goat, crocodiles and dog-faced baboons, - he had them before his eyes; and as for the gods of heaven, how could he see them? And why did he conceive this eager desire? Because, by Zeus, before his time another king had seen them!”*<sup>88</sup>

Josephus displays here an inability to comprehend Amenophis' goal. This lack of understanding might stem from a lack of knowledge not only of Egyptian religion, but also of Egyptian history and self-understanding. Indeed, according to Jørgen Podemann Sørensen, such apocalyptic themes were hardly uncommon at the time, and is a feature in numerous pieces of Egyptian literature. The desire for '*ultimate reality*' likely represents the 'primeval conditions' – *the way*

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<sup>86</sup> Egyptian name Amenhotep III

<sup>87</sup> Grimal, 1993, 222-225

<sup>88</sup> Josephus. *Contra Apionem*. Fr 54 = Waddell

*things were in the beginning*, which the Egyptians traditionally tried to reenact.<sup>89</sup> This may sound strange, but it makes sense when we consider that Amenophis: “*conceived a desire to behold the gods, as Or, one of his predecessors on the throne, had done*”. There was a king named Or, according to Manetho’s king-list. It is believed, however, that ‘Or’ is instead a reference to the god *Horus*.<sup>90</sup> This would certainly correspond to the notion of the ‘*primeval condition*’. Horus is regarded as the primeval king and the founder of Egypt – he is the ideal that all kings should aspire to.

Amenophis, then, desires to live up to the ideal of Horus. He lives in a time when the gods are absent from Egypt, and he seeks to restore the cosmic order and have them return. Dillery states, however, that Amenophis fails in his initial quest, because Egypt is “*destined to experience years of suffering before it can again know prosperity and stability*”. According to Dillery, this is not an uncommon theme in Egyptian literature<sup>91</sup>, and it does make a certain amount of sense in this context. It would certainly explain why the *Seer* prophesized that lepers and foreigners would rule and violate Egypt for thirteen years. It also explains why Amenophis elects not to fight the invaders, as he cannot “*fight against the gods*”. The Shepherds, then, can be interpreted as the wrath of the gods, and Manetho hints at this in an earlier account of their initial occupation.<sup>92</sup> In the end, the initial prophecy is fulfilled, in a roundabout way, as the polluted people are expelled along with the Shepherds.

## 2.4 Königsnovelle & Chaosbeschreibung

Königsnovelle is an ancient Egyptian literary tradition chronicling an episode in a historical or fictional king’s life. The stories usually feature the Pharaoh undertaking specific actions to deal with a particular situation. The Pharaoh is often faced with a dire situation – such as a foreign invasion, and the story emphasizes the actions he takes to overcome the crisis. The success of his actions is often measured in terms of his adherence to the traditional principles of Egyptian kingship. The king will sometime be the recipient of a prophetic dream or oracles which inform and motivates his actions. There are sever examples of this, such as the sphinx-stele of

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<sup>89</sup> Sørensen, 1992, 168-170

<sup>90</sup> See Dillery, 199, 107-108 & Sørensen, 1992, 168

<sup>91</sup> Dillery, 1999, 107-108

<sup>92</sup> Josephus. *Contra Apionem* Fr 42 = Waddell

Thutmosis IV<sup>93</sup> and the dream-stele of Tanutamun.<sup>94</sup> The prophecy or oracle may also be delivered to the king via a medium, such as a wise man or a high priest.<sup>95</sup> The Königsnovelle was not simply a story glorifying the Pharaoh, however, as it often had a normative purpose as well. Similarly to the Demotic Oracle, the Königsnovelle functioned as an instruction to kings. The actions undertaken by the Pharaoh were usually of the kind that defined a good king. Thus, the Pharaohs in the stories lived up to the ideal of divine kingship.

The Leper Fragment fulfills many of these criteria. Amenophis receives a prophecy predicting that the polluted people will rule Egypt. He also takes specific actions that are all in accordance with the ideology of divine kingship in his efforts to deal with the troubling situation: when the Shepherds invade, the Pharaoh safeguards the sacred animals and as many Egyptians as possible, leading them to safety in Ethiopia. After thirteen years, he returns to banish the enemies, thus restoring order in Egypt. This is all fine and well, but the story does not conform entirely to a Königsnovelle. The reason for this is that there are both minor and major details that distinguish it from the literary convention. The most important one being that Egypt is subjugated, ravaged and subjected to sacrilege on the king's watch. The calamitous events the Pharaohs of these stories usually prevent become reality. A Königsnovelle is typically a story about the actions a Pharaoh takes to succeed. In the Leper Fragment, however, Amenophis both fails *and* succeeds, almost as if we are talking about two different narratives. The reason for this is that Manetho has merged two different literary conventions into a single narrative.

Prophetic stories where great calamity befalls Egypt were relatively common in Egyptian literature. These stories often begin with a king receiving a prophecy that predicts a dark future for the Two Lands. The suffering of Egypt was usually due to an '*absence of divinity*', precipitated by an imbalance to the cosmic order. This upsetting of *Ma'at* was often caused by an immoral pharaoh or the presence of a foreign enemy in Egypt. The stories also tend to feature a messianic element, where a figure – sometimes a king from the past, will drive out the enemies and restore *Ma'at* to her throne. This form of literature is often referred to as *Chaosbeschreibung*, and as the name suggests, it describes the chaos and despair that befalls Egypt in the prophesized crisis-period.<sup>96</sup> In a sense, this literary convention can be interpreted

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<sup>93</sup> Moyer, 2011, 172

<sup>94</sup> Koenen, 1985, 186-187

<sup>95</sup> Koenen, 1985, 187-188

<sup>96</sup> Dillery, 2013, 48-49

as a re-imagining of the conflict between Horus and Seth. They are both stories about chaos versus order, and Seth was traditionally associated with foreigners. The *Chaosbeschreibung* also focuses on two kings, which might be a reference to Osiris and Horus. The future king, of course, is predicted to cast out the foreigners as Horus banished Seth.

In many ways it is similar to a *Königsvelle*, and Ludwig Koenen even appears to classify stories that are traditionally considered *Chaosbeschreibung* as *Königsnovelle*.<sup>97</sup> I would argue that *Chaosbeschreibung* is a *form* of *Königsnovelle*, due to its focus on the actions of kings. It might be more useful to consider the former a sub-genre of the latter. *Königsnovelle* is a fairly broad convention, given that the actions of the king can range from building a temple to defending Egypt from the barbarians. *Chaosbeschreibung*. The latter is simply a more specific, and rigid variation of the former. This is not to say that they should be considered the same, but rather that they should not be considered contradictory to one another. I do think we should still employ the different terminology so that we are better equipped to analyze these forms of literature.

Regardless of terminology, the most prominent and oldest example of what is referred to as *Chaosbeschreibung* is the *Prophecies of Neferty* from the 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty. The story, however, is set in the 4<sup>th</sup> dynasty, and the prophecy is purported to have been delivered to *Snefru*, the pharaoh of that time. It states that:

*“In what (dread state) is this land? The sun is obscured / and gives no light that men may see. Men cannot live when stormclouds hover, and all are stunned in its absence.”*<sup>98</sup>

The sun has abandoned Egypt, which means that the gods are absent. The reason for this is that the cosmic order has been upset, probably by foreigners as the text states that *“the land is plunged into anguish by those voracious Asiatics who rove throughout the land”*.<sup>99</sup> All is not lost, though, for the prophecy states that a king named *Ameny* will arise from the south to bring order back to Egypt:

*“The Asiatics will fall before his sword, the Libyans will fall before his fire; Rebels will fall before his wrath, and enemies will fall through / awe of him, for the uraeus on his brow will subdue his enemies for him. He will found Inbu-Hequa, so that never will Asiatics be permitted*

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<sup>97</sup> Koenen, 1985, 171-194. Examples: Oracle of the Potter & The Prophecy of the Lamb.

<sup>98</sup> PH. 1116B = Tobin

<sup>99</sup> Simpson, 2003, 217

*to come down to Egypt. They will seek water in the manner of beggars, so that their herd may drink. Then Ma'at will return to her throne, and Chaos will be driven off.*"<sup>100</sup>

There are glaring similarities between the Prophecy of Neferty and the story of Amenophis. Ameny is believed to represent Amenemhet I, during whose reign the text was likely authored.<sup>101</sup> Indeed, the Prophecies of Neferty is believed to be, in part, a piece of propaganda conceived to justify him seizing the throne from the *Mentuhotep* family.<sup>102</sup> Although it should probably be considered literature first, and propaganda second. This means that both texts are fictional accounts of historical figures. The two kings even play similar, messianic roles in that they both drive Asiatic enemies out and become saviors of Egypt. The calamitous situation Egypt finds itself in is also very similar in both stories: foreigners invade Egypt and defiles it, upsetting not only the social order but the cosmic one as well. An interesting difference in this respect, though, is that Manetho's story takes place within a seemingly short span of time, and that Amenophis is both the recipient of the prophecy *and* the savior of Egypt. Thus, Manetho's pharaoh plays the parts of both Snefru and Ameny. The reason for this is that Manetho has married the main principles of two different literary conventions – *Königsnovelle* and *Chaosbeschreibung*. This fusion is often referred to as a 'prophetic Königsnovelle'.<sup>103</sup>

The reason I have delved so deeply into the Prophecy of Neferty is both to provide a concrete example of *Chaosbeschreibung*, and to demonstrate that Manetho's Leper Fragment is part of a literary tradition stretching back to the Middle Kingdom. Indeed, Jørgen Podemann Sørensen believes that Manetho's story is a variation on a classical theme<sup>104</sup>. It might be tempting to assume that Manetho based his story specifically on that of Neferty, but he was probably inspired by a variety of different stories of the same ilk. The Prophecy of the Lamb might be one of these stories. In this story, the titular Lamb – an emissary of Khnum, prophesizes 900 years of misery for Egypt, during which she will suffer chaos, indignity and disarray under a succession of foreign rulers: Syrians, Persians and Greeks. During the Greek period, a false savior will rule for two years before a 'national founder' will rule for fifty-five years under the control of the Lamb itself. After having delivered its prophecies, the Lamb dies and is given a burial befitting a god.

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<sup>100</sup> PH. 1116B = Tobin

<sup>101</sup> Simpson, 2003, 214

<sup>102</sup> Simpson, 2003, 214

<sup>103</sup> Dillery, 2013, 47-49; Koenen, 1985, 188-194

<sup>104</sup> Sørensen, 1992, 168

There are obvious parallels and similarities between the Prophecy of the Lamb, Neferty and the Leper Fragment. The version of the Lamb that has survived to us is dated to the Roman period, but there are strong indications that it is based on an older prophecy. In a fragment of the *Aegyptiaca*, preserved by Syncellus, Manetho writes:

*“The Twenty-fourth Dynasty.*

*Bochchoris of Saïs, for 6 years: in his reign a lamb spoke... 990 years.”*<sup>105</sup>

Bochchoris is the Greek name of Bakenrenef, the Pharaoh in the Prophecy of the Lamb. This, along with the 990 years and the speaking lamb is compelling evidence that it is in some way related to the prophecy. It is also worth pointing out that there are some parallels between the historical pharaoh and the one in the story. In the Prophecy, the Lamb states that Egypt will be ruled by Syrians, Persians and Greeks, and that this will occur during the Pharaoh’s reign. Bakenrenef was indeed violently removed from the throne, and according to Manetho, he was even burned alive.<sup>106</sup> However, he was not usurped by the Assyrians, but rather by a Kushite king named Shabaka, the first Nubian king to control all of Egypt.<sup>107</sup> They faced increasing aggression from Assyria at this point, which culminated in several invasions and finally the complete conquest of Egypt in 664 B.C.<sup>108</sup> Although Egypt was never ruled by the Assyrian empire, their conquest was likely devastating to the Egyptian national pride. This may have been part of the reason that the Assyrians were added to the list of foreign rulers in the Prophecy of the Lamb. Perhaps it was the result of a traumatizing period being adapted to the narrative.

That there is a close connection between Manetho’s short fragment and the Prophecy of the Lamb is clear. Indeed, there is consensus amongst the scholars on that<sup>109</sup> Less clear is the exact nature of the text. Manetho’s version is badly preserved, and there are some essential words missing – the actual words of the lamb.<sup>110</sup> It seems likely that it would have featured a similar oracular message to that of the Prophecy. The extant version of the Lamb features some elements that strongly suggests that it was composed well after Manetho’s time. Indeed, it has been suggested that the two-year long reign of the false savior and the fifty-five year-long reign of the native founder could be a reference to the rebel king Harsiese and Ptolemy VIII Eurgetes

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<sup>105</sup> Syncellus. Frg. 64. = Waddell

<sup>106</sup> Syncellus. Frg. 66 . = Waddell

<sup>107</sup> Grimal, 1993, 341-343

<sup>108</sup> Lloyd, 2014, 20

<sup>109</sup> Moyer, 2011, 133-134; Fraser, 1974, 509 & 684; Ritner, 2003, 445-446; Waddell, 1940, 164-165

<sup>110</sup> Waddell, 1940, 165

II, respectively.<sup>111</sup> The duration of their reigns are almost identical, with Harsiese having ruled for two years before his rebellion was quashed, and Ptolemy VIII Eurgetes having ruled for a total of fifty-four years. If that is the case then this version may originally have been conceived sometime after the reign of the latter. There is also the possibility that these references are simply small addendums that were made later.

Regardless of the time of its composition, it certainly seems very clear that the Prophecy of the Lamb was based upon the same legend that Manetho alludes to in his account of Bakenrenef; or even directly upon the writing of Manetho'. Heinz-Josef Thissen believes the latter to be the case, writing that the Prophecy of the Lamb was an expansion upon Manetho's account.<sup>112</sup> Based upon the sources available to us, this seems to be the logical conclusion, as Manetho is the oldest account we have of this prophecy. The true origin of the story is not entirely clear to us, as we do not know if the fragment was based on the Sacred Texts, or if it was an invention by the Egyptian priest.

The Oracle of the Potter, a similarly apocalyptic text, references the oracular Lamb as well as the fifty-five year long reign.<sup>113</sup> The Potter survives in three different Greek papyri dated to the Roman period, but the narrative is believed to have been conceived around 130 B.C.<sup>114</sup> This does not, however, exclude the possibility that certain elements have been added at a later date,<sup>115</sup> which is a point I will return to later. In the story, a Pharaoh named Amenophis is the recipient of a prophecy from the titular potter. Similarly to Neferty and the Lamb, the potter prophesizes a dark and godless future. Egypt suffer at the hands of foreigners: an invasion by a king from Syria, and the rule of an unholy king from Ethiopia. However, it is the Greeks - referred to as the typhonians, who receive the majority of attention in the Oracle. Their rule is described as catastrophic, but one day the Macedonians will turn upon each other and ultimately destroy themselves. Agathos Daimon, the patron deity of Alexandria will abandon the city and take up residence in Memphis instead. Order will gradually be restored during the fifty-five year long reign of a native king. After delivering the prophecy, the potter dies. King Amenophis writes down the potter's words, and has him buried in Heliopolis.

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<sup>111</sup> Ritner, 2003, 445

<sup>112</sup> Thissen, 2002, 184-188

<sup>113</sup> Austin, 2003, 569-571

<sup>114</sup> Lloyd, 1982, 51

<sup>115</sup> Lloyd, 1982, 51



The Oracle of the Potter is deeply anti-Greek text that appears to harbor particular animosity towards Alexandria. There are several elements that help us place it in a historical and political context. The Syrian king who will invade Egypt is most likely a reference to Antiochus IV who invaded Egypt in 170 and conquered all but Alexandria. There can be little doubt that the unholy one from Ethiopia can be a reference to anyone but the Ethiopian rebel king Harsiesis, whose revolt lasted two years. Indeed, this is likely the background in which the Oracle of the Potter was conceived.<sup>116</sup> The fifty-five years are more difficult to explain. Although it has been speculated that it is a reference to Ptolemy VIII Eurgetes II, it does not make sense for an anti-Greek text to refer to a Ptolemaic king as the one who will restore order. This is a conundrum that merits a thesis of its own, and thus sadly a discussion that I cannot indulge in this particular analysis.

The similarities between the Potter and the Lamb are obvious. Not only do the mediums die after delivering their prophecies in both stories, but they are also thematically related. The Lamb is of course an emissary of the god Khnum, and although the Potter acts as a messenger of Thoth, he is also closely associated with Khnum. Indeed, the Potter fashions pots the way Khnum fashions life.

My hypothesis is that the Oracle of the Potter owes much of its inspiration to the original Prophecy of the Lamb. The iterations we are left with, however, are both dated to the Roman period, and the two versions may have influenced each other. The Oracle of the Potter also appears to have been influenced by Manetho's Leper Fragment, as it uses Amenophis as a character. Ivan A. Ladynin is certain that the Amenophis in the Oracle of the Potter is the same hero as the one in Manetho's Leper Fragment.<sup>117</sup> The account of Cheremon, along with the aforementioned ostracon from the third century B.C.<sup>118</sup> might suggest that not only was Amenophis an established literary character, but also that he was popularized – or even created, by Manetho.

More striking, however, is an account by Cheremon of Alexandria (1<sup>st</sup> century A.D.), which has also been preserved by Josephus. Cheremon relates a story that is extremely similar to the Leper Fragment. It features king Amenophis receiving a dream in which Isis admonishes him for the destruction of her temple in the war. A sacred scribe named Phritiphantes advises

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<sup>116</sup> Ladynin, 2016, 163

<sup>117</sup> Ladynin, 2016, 163

<sup>118</sup> Fraser, 1972, 684-685

Amenophis that he can be free of such apparitions if he purges Egypt of polluted people. Amenophis complies, and 250.000 diseased people are cast out Egypt. After being expelled, the polluted people encountered Moses and Joseph, formed an alliance with them, and subsequently invaded Egypt. Amenophis was unable to repel there attacks, and thus fled to Ethiopia, leaving behind his pregnant wife, who later gave birth to their son in a cave. When the son, Messene, became a grown man, he drove the diseased people out of Egypt and into the Syrian desert. He then travelled to Ethiopia to retrieve his father Amenophis.

The story of Cheremon appears to be a variation on the story in Manetho's Leper Fragment, with only minor differences. Indeed, they are so strikingly similar that there can only be two possibilities: that both Cheremon and Manetho based their stories on a third legend that predates both of them, or that Cheremon's story is largely a retelling of Manetho's work. As there are no versions of the Amenophis extant that predates the Leper Fragment, I am inclined to believe the latter.

The reason I have delved into the Prophecy of the Lamb, the Oracle of the Potter and Cheremon of Alexandria is to demonstrate that their similarities to the Leper Fragment, and to emphasize the role Manetho has played in the conception in these texts. This serves as an indication of his cultural importance to both Egyptians and Greeks. It is important to remember that although the Oracle of the Potter was originally written in Demotic, it only survives in Greek. That it is dated to the Roman period does not exclude the possibility that earlier translations were made in the Ptolemaic period that has since been lost along with the Demotic original. If this is the case, then it could suggest that such apocalyptic literature found an audience among the Greeks. Ian Rutherford appears to believe so, citing oracular literature as one of several genres that existed in both Greek and Egyptian.<sup>119</sup>

There are certainly precedents for this. Until very recently, the only version we had of the Dream of Nectanebos was a Greek translation, courtesy of Apollonios. The mythical Pharaoh Sesostris was considered a national hero to the Egyptians, yet he appears to have gained considerable traction with the Greeks as well. Indeed, Sesostris became the subject of his very own Romance, of which only the Greek versions are extant. He was also invoked as an ideal for conquerors to aspire to, and as a precursor to Alexander in both the *Argonautica* by

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<sup>119</sup> Rutherford, 2013, 27-28

Apollonius of Rhodes<sup>120</sup> and the Alexander Romance by Pseudo-Callisthenes.<sup>121</sup> P.M. Fraser writes that Manetho was one of the channels through which native Egyptian literature was transmitted to the Greeks, suggesting that he may even have been the main channel.<sup>122</sup> This would certainly be in keeping with what we already know about the Egyptian priest and his status and role with the Greeks. It also strongly supports Ian S. Moyer and Amélié Kuhrt's assessments of Manetho as a mediator between the two cultures who made the historical, ideological and religious world accessible to the Ptolemies. This could mean that the Leper Fragment gained popularity among the Greeks. It may even have served as a gateway story to other works of oracular literature.

Considering my assessment of the Leper Fragment as an important and influential work of literature, I would be remiss if I did not address the motive of Manetho for writing it. As mentioned above, the Prophecy of Neferty was written to legitimize Amenemhet's rule, and probably reveals that his reign was not entirely secure at the time of composition. The Oracle of the Potter was written in an age of revolt and was conceived as a deeply anti-Greek and anti-Alexandrian polemic. The Prophecy of the Lamb is more ambiguous, and I hesitate to offer an assessment in this thesis. So what of the Leper Fragment? In order to determine whether there are any political or religious motivations behind Manetho's work, we have to analyze the antagonists of the story – The Shepherds and the Lepers.

## 2.5 Shepherds & Lepers

The Shepherds are actually the *Hyksos* ('*ruler of foreign lands*) - an asiatic people who ruled most of Egypt from 1630 to 1550, and are by Josephus considered the ancestors of the Jews. Indeed, this is the reason that this fragment along with the other fragments featuring the Hyksos have been so meticulously preserved by Josephus, for he sought to prove the '*antiquity of the Jews*'. The Hyksos had an exceptionally bad reputation in Egypt. The *Kamose texts* chronicles

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<sup>120</sup> Apollonius Rhodius. 4. 271-276. = Race; Stephens, 2003, 176-178

<sup>121</sup> AR. 1.33-34. = Haight

<sup>122</sup> Fraser, 1972, 509

the Theban pharaoh's conflict with the Hyksos in detail, and consistently addresses them as '*O miserable Asiatic*'. This is how he describes the situation:

*"To what effect do I perceive it, my might, while a ruler is in Avaris and another in Kush, I sitting with an Asiatic and a Nubian, each man having his (own) portion of this Egypt, sharing the land with me. There is no passing him as far as Memphis, the water of Egypt. <sup>123</sup>He has possession of Hermopolis, and no man can rest, being deprived by the levies of the Setiu. I shall engage in battle with him and slit his body, for my intention is to save Egypt, striking the Asiatics."*

Manetho on his part writes about the Hyksos' conquest of Egypt in the 42nd fragment like this:

*"Tutimaesus. In his reign, for what cause I know not, a blast from God smote us; and unexpectedly, from the regions of the East, invaders of obscure race marched in confidence of victory against our land. By main force they easily seized it without striking a blow; and having overpowered the rulers of the land, they then burned our cities ruthlessly, razed to the ground the temples of the gods, and treated all the natives with hostility, massacring some and leading into slavery the wives and children of others"<sup>124</sup>*

The invasion of the Hyksos is described as a calamity, and their actions are of a similar nature to those supposedly committed during their later thirteen years-long reign. It is important to note Manetho referring to the Hyksos as "*invaders of obscure race*". This gives the impression that Manetho does not know the ethnicity or the specific origins of these invaders. Donald B. Redford, however, believes that there has been a mistake in the translation, and that the word interpreted as 'obscure' actually means 'vile' or 'ignoble'.<sup>125</sup> If Redford is correct, then Manetho's feelings on the Hyksos are made clear from the very beginning. It could also suggest that Hyksos was a catch-all term for invaders from the East.

The opening of the fragment is even more interesting, however. Manetho writes that a "*blast from God smote us*"; possibly suggesting that the coming of the Hyksos considered some form of divine intervention. Ian S. Moyer translates this differently, stating that it should be "*a god raged against us*" or, more literally, "*a god blew against us*". He writes that the Greek verb was often "*used in a strict meteorological sense of winds clashing in a storm or a whirlwind*". He

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<sup>123</sup> Simpson, 2003, 346

<sup>124</sup> Josephus. *Contra Apionem* 1.14 = Waddell

<sup>125</sup> Redford, 1992, 98-100

goes on to point out the significance of windstorms as manifestations of divine wrath, which, in turn, was considered synonymous with the upheaval of social and religious norm in certain demotic teachings.<sup>126</sup>

If Moyer is correct in his assessments, then the Hyksos become something of an existential enemy in Manetho's narrative, and that the true disaster of their conquest is not so much the physical impact of the conquest itself, but rather the upheaval it caused to the Ma'at. It should be noted that windstorms are also ubiquitously associated with Seth, the god of chaos, disorder, foreigners, storms and the desert. The Hyksos also settled in Avaris - a city associated with Seth, and are believed to have incorporated him into their own pantheon. Moyer also highlights the so-called *Tempest Stele*, from the reign of Ahmose I, which gives an account of a calamitous storm suffered by Egypt. He suggests that the storm in question is actually a metaphor for the Hyksos.<sup>127</sup> This would certainly be in keeping with the Egyptian tradition of associating foreigners with the evils of Seth.

The Hyksos represent the ultimate enemy to Manetho and the Egyptians. Their foul reputation, however, appears to be wholly undeserved. The Hyksos did not arrive out of nowhere to conquer Egypt, as Manetho claims. Instead, they had settled peacefully in the Eastern Delta in the latter part of the Twelfth Dynasty upon the encouragement of the Egyptians themselves.<sup>128</sup> They eventually established their own state in Avaris, and then later began subjugating other parts of Egypt.<sup>129</sup> Their reign was not the existential disaster described by Manetho. Instead, the Hyksos respected native traditions and made numerous contributions to Egypt upon which the success of The New Kingdom was built on.<sup>130</sup> Avaris, the city associated with the hated Seth, became a relay station between the eastern religions and Egypt.<sup>131</sup> Indeed, Joseph Meleze Modrzejewski has characterized the reign of the Hyksos as "*politically sound and fruitful*"<sup>132</sup> while Alan B. Lloyd believes that it was the most influential period in Egyptian history.<sup>133</sup>

In presenting the Hyksos and their invasions in this manner, Manetho – whether intentional or not, offers us insight into the Egyptians' idea of themselves, their country and their history. The prospect of an Asiatic invasion was not alien to the Egyptians, as the Prophecy of Neferty

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<sup>126</sup> Moyer, 2011, 118-120

<sup>127</sup> Moyer, 2011, 120

<sup>128</sup> Lloyd, 2010, 13

<sup>129</sup> Lloyd, 2010, 13

<sup>130</sup> Grimal, 1993, 185-187

<sup>131</sup> Modrzejewski, 1995, 8

<sup>132</sup> Modrzejewski, 1995, 7

<sup>133</sup> Lloyd, 2010, 14

illustrates, but the Hyksos domination appear to have traumatized them. In their effort to make sense of this period, the Hyksos were incorporated into the Egyptian continuum; albeit not in a positive way. Through cultural memory, the Hyksos transformed from a people who ruled parts of Egypt for a while into quintessential agents of chaos. They acquired a timeless quality in this sense, becoming a shorthand for Seth.

Manetho's negative characterization of the Hyksos does not seem to have bothered Josephus too much. He appears to be horrified, however, by the way the Egyptian priest identify the polluted people as Jews. Indeed, while the Hyksos were historically believed to be the progenitors of Josephus and his people, it is the Lepers who are most closely identified as the Jews in this story. The Hyksos seem here to be cast primarily in the role of the '*hated invader*', while the role of the Jews seems to be reserved for the Lepers. Manetho presents here his own hostile version of the Exodus, as evident by his identifying the biblical Moses as the *Lord of the Lepers*.

This part of the story was likely based upon or inspired by an older tradition. There were numerous versions of the Exodus extant in the ancient world. The aforementioned The oldest non-Jewish version we know is one by Hecataeus of Abdera, which has survived in the works of Diodorus Siculus. In this account, Egypt suffers from a plague, and the people come to the conclusion that they are being punished by the gods. A decision is made to expel all foreigners due to their strange religious practices. The most famous leaders, Danaus and Cadmus settle in Greece, while the majority settle in the land now known as Judea, under the leadership of Moses. Here they founded Jerusalem, and Moses laid down several new rules and laws.<sup>134</sup>

This version predates the Leper Fragment, and Manetho probably based his story on the same tradition that Hecataeus did. The Greek historian's account is considerably less hostile than that of his Egyptian colleague. In fact, if Hecataeus bore any animosity towards the Jews, it has been remarkably well concealed or overlooked entirely by Diodorus Siculus. This could suggest that the seemingly anti-semitic element was conceived by Manetho. The laws which Moses lays down could be a reflection of contemporary religious dissent; particularly the ones regarding the sacred animals.<sup>135</sup> Perhaps Manetho sought to make common cause with the Greeks against the Jews, or perhaps convince the Ptolemies to act against them. The latter might be more likely. In a Jewish version of the Alexander Romance, the titular conqueror refuses to be acknowledge

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<sup>134</sup> Diod. Sic. 40.3. = Walton

<sup>135</sup> Sørensen, 1992, 166

Nectanebo as his father. If this was meant as a jab against the Egyptians, then perhaps the two groups of people were competing for the favor of their Greek masters.

The anti-semitic element represents to me one of the fragment's largest conundrums: Manetho's story, as it is re-told by Josephus, is a very esoteric text, with so many different influences that it becomes difficult to understand what the text is actually about. Conversely, the anti-semitic element of the story appears to be crystal clear. Indeed, if there is a political message to be gleaned from the text – this would be it. The execution bothers me, however. It seems out of place with the rest of the narrative; like it was shoehorned into the story. It is possible that Josephus amplified this particular element, but this seems unlikely, as he claims to provide a word-for-word re-telling.

Another possibility is that parts of the context has been lost, due to Josephus only providing brief summaries of both the beginning and the ending of the story. Martin Braun has suggested that the identification of Jews with the Lepers might be a result of a later alteration made to the story by Egyptian anti-semites.<sup>136</sup> We know that there are works attributed to 'pseudo-Manetho' due the veracity of their authorship being dubious<sup>137</sup>. Thus, the Jewish-Leper connection could have been *added* to a story authored by Manetho, and then attributed to him in order to lend the anti-semitic narrative legitimacy. An interesting point, in this regard, is that Moses is identified as a Leper Priest from *Heliopolis*. It seems curious that Manetho would associate the vile and blasphemous leader of sickly traitors with that of his own clergy. This might be an indication that the story of Amenophis was the result of a mixed authorship. Russell E. Gmirkin has posited a different theory, however. In his book *Berosus and Genesis, Manetho and Exodus*, Gmirkin writes that the story is not meant as a polemic against Jews, but rather against the Cult of Seth in Egypt.<sup>138</sup> This would certainly explain the confusing element that Moses and his followers are native Egyptians who suddenly become Jewish and then call upon the Shepherds in Jerusalem – a city founded by the Isrealites. It gives the impression that little thought was given to this particular part of the narrative, which suggests that the story is not primarily meant as a polemic against the Jews.

It is here worth returning to Amenophis himself and the actual causality of the story. The way Josephus recounts the tale is a little confusing, and this might be a result of him only

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<sup>136</sup> Braun, 1938, 26-27

<sup>137</sup> See the above letter to Ptolemy II Philadelphos

<sup>138</sup> Gmirkin, 2002, 202-203

paraphrasing this particular part of the story. The way it is presented to us, however, Amenophis is himself the architect of his own misfortune. The entire ordeal arises from his own desire to behold the gods. The Lepers would not have turned against him and invited the Shepherds to invade Egypt had he not exiled them into the quarries. His trusted Seer confirms this himself in the prophecy he writes before he kills himself. Is it possible that there is an element of hubris here? In the Prophecy of Neferty, restoring Ma'at to her throne simply meant restoring peace and order. The implications of Ma'at changed over time, however, and by the time of the Ptolemies it had come to be synonymous with utopia; a golden age like that of the days of Horus. This is one of the ways in which the Prophecy of Neferty and the Oracle of the Potter differ: the former invokes the past in order to legitimize the present, while the latter invokes the past to change the present. The two texts truly represents how the concept changed. In the Leper Fragment, Amenophis tries to restore this golden age, but his ultimately punished for it. He is able to correct his mistake, but he does not achieve his goal of beholding the gods. Perhaps Manetho was trying to send a message to his fellow Egyptians: do not try to restore a mythical golden age – it will only backfire on you. Indeed, the Leper Fragment may have been an attempt to dissuade the Egyptians from national resistance.

The potential anti-Semitic element is difficult to make sense of, but I believe that Manetho did not intend his narrative as polemic against the Jews. This is because of the confusing nature of the Lepers and the Shepherds. If Manetho wanted to attack the Jews, then all he would have to do was portray the Lepers as descendants of the Shepherds. Instead, he presents them as native Egyptians, with their leader Moses being *a member of his own priesthood*. Instead, I think he was partly inspired by earlier traditions and agree I with Gmirkin that he cast them as a means to parallel the *Ritual for the Expulsion of Seth and his Confederates*.<sup>139</sup> Indeed, my hypothesis is that Manetho intended this part of the story as warning against hubris, and that he simply chose the Jews out of convenience. However, this does not mean that I am absolving Manetho of charges of antisemitism. Far from it, I think the story does betray a certain hostility towards Jews that was inherent in the Egyptian culture at the time. However, I do not believe that the story was conceived as a polemic against the Jews.

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<sup>139</sup> Gmirkin, 2006, 202-203



## 2.6 Persians & Greeks

If the Hyksos primarily play the part of the foreign invaders, they could politically represent someone else in the story. This would not necessarily be an unprecedented case, as we have seen with the *Prophecies of Neferty*. There are also later examples, such as the *Famine Stele*, authored by the priests of Khnum. The stele details a story about king *Djoser* of the 3<sup>rd</sup> dynasty. However, the stele was erected during the reign of Ptolemy V Epiphanes. It is also believed that the text is not really about *Djoser*, but is actually a response to Ptolemaic policy.<sup>140</sup> Thanks to the letter from *Hor*, we also know that there were priests of Khnum involved in the Great Revolt.<sup>141</sup> There is also a distinct possibility that the seemingly anti-Greek *The Oracle of the Potter* was authored by the priesthood of Khnum.<sup>142</sup> If these assessments are correct, then there is an argument to be made that the Famine Stele can be placed in a wider pattern of resistance in the Elephantine region of Upper Egypt.

It is possible that the Shepherds in this story represent the Greeks. Donald B. Redford believes that *Hyksos – ruler of foreign lands*, represents a common designation, and that it refers to the *regime* rather than the *people*.<sup>143</sup> This could suggest that Manetho is specifically targeting the Ptolemies. It would, however, have been an exceptionally bold move by Manetho to include a veiled jab at the Greeks in a work written in their own language. Even though Samuel. K. Eddy believes this to be the case, it may be more complicated than that. One peculiar aspect of the prophecies made by the *Seer*, is that the polluted people would rule Egypt alongside the foreigners for *thirteen years*. Prophecies foretelling that Egypt will suffer for a specific amount of time is not in itself unusual. *The Prophecy of the Lamb*, for instance, prophesizes nine hundred years of misery for Egypt. By comparison, the thirteen years foretold by the *Seer* seems rather mild. However, Martin Braun has suggested that the story of Amenophis could be based on that of Nectanebo II and the invasion of Artaxerxes III. The thirteen years long rule would then correspond to the duration of the Second Persian Domination. Manetho's statement that the '*current*' reign of the Shepherds and Lepers made the previous occupation by the Shepherds seem like a golden age by comparison, then, is not a reference to the previous Hyksos period, but rather to the *First Persian Domination*.<sup>144</sup> Indeed, there are some striking similarities.

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<sup>140</sup> Pierce, 1996, 607-612

<sup>141</sup> Pierce, 1996, 596-600

<sup>142</sup> Eddy, 1961, 315-317

<sup>143</sup> Redford, 1992, 100

<sup>144</sup> Braun, 1938, 19-22

Let us start with the more concrete historical evidence. For example, there are parallels between Artaxerxes III's invasion of Egypt and the destruction and sacrilege wrought by the Hyksos in Manetho's story. *Diodorus Siculus* describes the Achaemenids as demolishing the walls of the greatest cities, plundering shrines and holding inscriptions from the temples ransom.<sup>145</sup> Diodorus does not paint quite as draconian a picture of the Persians as Manetho does of the Hyksos and the polluted people. Their actions, however, will likely have gravely wounded the Egyptians' sense of national pride. It is important to remember the fact that the original Hyksos rule was recorded as a national humiliation and something akin to an existential disaster. With this in mind, it does not seem unlikely that the transgressions of the Persians may have been embellished in the Egyptian re-telling; the proverbial fish growing in size with each telling. Manetho's account may thus be the culmination of this re-telling; the one seared into the Egyptians' collective minds.

Diodorus Siculus provides another important piece of evidence relevant to this analysis. According to the Greek historian, an important part of the Persians' success in their invasion of Egypt was the betrayal of several of Nectanebo II's key allies; among them *Tennes of Sidon* and *Mentor of Rhodes*. In addition to the defection of these figures, several Egyptian cities chose to surrender in fear of the Persians, which was considered treason by Nectanebo II.<sup>146</sup> This in itself might not seem too interesting, but Ian S. Moyer has suggested that the polluted people may in part be an allusion to the Egyptians in the eastern Delta who sided with the Persians.<sup>147</sup> If he is correct, then we have to re-evaluate our perspectives on the story. It could mean that the harshness with which the polluted people were treated in the narrative was motivated by a resentment of collaborators. It is, in fact, reminiscent of a much older piece of source material. The Kamose text, mentioned above, features a section in which the Theban pharaoh chronicles his war against the Hyksos:

*"My intention (?) is to control Avaris between the two rivers. I will leave them laid waste without people there. I destroyed their towns, I burned their abodes, being made into desolate mounds forever because of the destruction which they made within (this part of) Egypt, for they set themselves to hearken to the summons of the Asiatics, having betrayed Egypt, their mistress"*<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Diod. Sic. 16.51.2-3 = Sherman

<sup>146</sup> Diod. Sic. 16.49.7-16.50.6 = Sherman

<sup>147</sup> Moyer, 2011, 136

<sup>148</sup> Simpson, 2003, 348-349

Kamose appears here to declare his intentions of enacting something reminiscent of a scorched earth policy. Such is the hatred of the Hyksos, that their influence must be burned off the face of the earth. The most interesting part, however, is that it appears to be directed not just at the Hyksos, but also at Egyptians themselves. These natives had, according to the Kamose text, betrayed Egypt and now answered the call of the Hyksos. The parallel to the story of Amenophis is difficult to ignore, and it is possible that this part of the Kamose texts served as an influence on Manetho. This does not exclude the possibility that the Amenophis story was modeled on the Second Persian Domination. Indeed, if Amenophis himself was an amalgamation of several different pharaohs, then the events of the story may have been appropriated from a variety of different sources. This certainly complicates the analysis of the text, and it does not become any simpler as we examine the principle actors of both the story and the Persian invasion.

Initially, Manetho's Amenophis and Nectanebo II appear to share few similarities, aside from both pharaohs electing retreat to Memphis before flee to Ethiopia instead of fighting the invaders.<sup>149</sup> However, this changes when we take the apocryphal versions of Nectanebo II that we find in the *Alexander Romance* and the *Dream of Nectanebo*<sup>150</sup> into account. In the *Dream*, Nectanebo II is the recipient of a prophetic dream where he learns that he has incurred divine wrath due to his neglect of the temple at Sebennytos. This is similar to the prophecy in Manetho's story, only without the *Seer* as a middle man between the king and the divine. In the *Romance*, Nectanebo II defends Egypt against the Achaemenid Empire, but decides to abandon Egypt upon learning that he is fighting the gods. Instead of fleeing to Ethiopia, however, he departs for Macedonia, where he establishes himself as a soothsayer at the court and sires Alexander with the queen.

In Nectanebo's absence from Egypt, it is prophesized that he will return as a young man to expel the Persians. The prophecy is, in a way, fulfilled when Alexander conquers Egypt as part of his campaign against the Achaemenids. This last part is different from the ending of the Amenophis story, as Nectanebo II never returns to Egypt himself.<sup>151</sup> Ian S. Moyer, however, draws a parallel between Amenophis and his son Ramses expelling the Hyksos together, and Nectanebo's son Alexander expelling the Persians. Though Josephus only briefly summarizes the part of Amenophis and his son, Moyer suggests that that it holds more importance than the Romano-Jewish historian credits it. Indeed, Moyer believes that Amenophis and his son

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<sup>149</sup> Diod. Sic. 16.51 = Sherman

<sup>150</sup> Manetho would have been familiar with both stories

<sup>151</sup> Nectanebo is in fact killed by Alexander in a bizarre turn of events

Rampses provide a precedent for Nectanebo and Alexander.<sup>152</sup> This could suggest that Manetho not only found inspiration in the Alexander Romance, but also indirectly used it to legitimize the Greek rule. There is also a possibility that it is a reference to *Amenemhet I* from the *Prophecies of Neferty*, and his son *Seostris*. Late in Amenemhet I's reign, he and Seostris started new and important Egyptian tradition by becoming co-regents.<sup>153</sup>

Josephus only mentions Amenophis' son once, but it is clear that he is no longer quoting Manetho verbatim. This opens up the possibility that Rampses originally had a more important part in Manetho's story, but that Josephus did not consider it important enough to include it. In Cheremon of Alexandria's version of this story – also preserved by Josephus, it is Amenophis' son Rampses who liberates Egypt while his father stays in Ethiopia. If Josephus did not recognize its importance, then reveals an ignorance of the importance of fathers and sons in Egyptian divine kingship: the dying king becoming Osiris, and the ascendant prince becoming Horus. The story may originally have featured a fourth act centered on the succession of Rampses. It is worth repeating Dillery's speculation that parts of the *Aegyptica* was written to justify the co-regency of Ptolemy I Soter and Ptolemy Philadelphos. As mentioned above, Amenophis and Rampses might be a reference to Amenemhet I and Seostris. It might also be Manetho's attempt to legitimize Alexander in the context of the *Romance's* claim that he was the son of Nectanebo II. Could Amenophis and Rampses, then, not also represent Soter and Philadelphos? This would not be unprecedented, as the early Ptolemies created a pattern of varying references designed to associate themselves with Nectanebo, Alexander and even the Egyptian gods.

If we accept the premise that the story of Amenophis was modeled on the Persian Dominations, then that still begs the question of why this dubious honor was given to the Hyksos, and not the Nubians, Hittites or Sea Peoples. According to Ian S. Moyer, the Hyksos “*became a paradigm to which outsiders and enemies were repeatedly assimilated*”<sup>154</sup>. The Hyksos, then, became a conceptual enemy and a frame of reference. They were the Seth to the Egyptians' Horus; a shorthand for ‘the ultimate enemy’. By using this reference, they could frame any conflict against a foreign enemy as battle against chaos, and the conflict would become an existential

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<sup>152</sup> Moyer, 2011, 137-139

<sup>153</sup> Grimal, 1993, 160-161

<sup>154</sup> Moyer, 2011, 120

one. Thus, by casting the Persians in the role of the old familiar Hyksos, the Achaemenids became the forces of evil and chaos.

The reason why specifically the Hyksos were given this dubious honor, and not the Nubians, Hittites or Sea Peoples is not entirely clear. My own hypothesis is that it was because they came from Asia. Egypt may have had rivals and enemies both to the south and to the west, but their most tense rivalries were likely cultivated with those living in Asia. Indeed, the role of the Asiatics in the *Prophecy of Neferty* is an indication of this. Egypt was a proud nation, and its peoples believed themselves to be far superior to anyone on the outside.<sup>155</sup> However, they were consistently eclipsed by the empires that arose in the Near East. The post-Bronze Age era appears to have treated them particularly harshly. Before the Bronze Age collapse, Egypt wielded considerable influence in the Levantine coast, and city-states like Byblos had virtually been subservient to them.<sup>156</sup> In the new Iron Age, however, smaller city-states that had previously been vassal states to larger kingdoms or empires now enjoyed a considerable amount of autonomy.<sup>157</sup> This change in Egypt's relationship with the Phoenician city-states is perhaps best illustrated by a report made by *Wenamun*, an Egyptian official travelling to Byblos to acquire lumber on behalf of his king. According to this first-person account, Wenamun was not only robbed during the journey but was also made to wait twenty-nine days before being given an official audience with the prince of the city, *Tjekerbaal*. When he was finally granted an audience, the prince asked what business had brought him to Byblos:

*“It is in quest of lumber for the great and noble barge of Amon-Re, King of the Gods, that I have come. What your father did and / what your father's father did, you will also do,” so I said to him. And he said to me, “they did in fact supply it. You have but to pay me for supplying it, and I will supply it.”*<sup>158</sup>

Egypt's power and influence in the Near East had dissipated. Where once their wishes had been the Phoenicians commands, their relationship was now a transactional one. Wenamun even had to haggle with the prince of Byblos. Things were only going to get worse, as Egypt would find itself outmuscled by a succession of Near Eastern empires; suffering devastating invasions by the likes of the Neo-Assyrians, the Babylonians and the Persians. Redford has suggested that these invaders influenced the way the Egyptians remembered the Hyksos. The same destructive

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<sup>155</sup> Miles, 2010, 29-30

<sup>156</sup> Miles, 2010, 68-69

<sup>157</sup> Miles, 2010, 65-77

<sup>158</sup> PP 120 = Wente, Jr. E. F

nature was attributed to the Hyksos, and thus they became the prototype of the hated invaders from the north.<sup>159</sup> The Persians were likely considered the worst of these offenders, seeing as they not only deprived the Egyptians of their autonomy, but also because their atrocities were so fresh in their collective historical memory. This made them fit quite neatly into the role of the ‘chaotic, evil and blasphemous’ Hyksos.

#### A Bridge across the Abyss

In casting the Persians as the chaotic and sacrilegious Hyksos, Manetho may have made common cause with the Greeks. If the Persians were the agents of chaos, then surely the Greeks were the ones who restored order by banishing them as both Ahmose and Amenophis had banished the Hyksos; or indeed, as Horus had banished Seth. If John Dillery is correct in his assessment that Manetho wrote primarily for the benefit of his peers – the Egyptian priests, then his goal may have been to forge this exact connection in their minds. This would likely have been part of an effort to convince his fellow priests to accept Greco-Macedonian rule. The Greeks being foreigners themselves would naturally complicate his narrative. This may have been mitigated, however, by the already established Egyptian tradition of casting Alexander as the son of Nectanebo II. There is also evidence suggesting that the Egyptians may not have viewed the Greeks entirely as foreigners. Janet H. Johnson, one of the leading experts on the Demotic Chronicle, has noted that while the text does predict the end of the Macedonian reign, it is not hostile to them. The animosity residing in the Chronicle is reserved for the Persians. Indeed, the Persians are called foreigners, while the Ptolemies are merely referred to as the Greeks.<sup>160</sup> This could suggest that an attempt to forge a Greco-Egyptian identity did succeed to some degree.

It is also important to remember that the Greeks had their own dramatic history with the Achaemenid Empire. The Persians were the natural enemies of the Greeks, and were of course the entire reason for the liberation of Egypt. Unlike the Egyptians, the Greeks were traditionally not a united people. They were divided into rival city-states consistently vying for supremacy. Indeed, Greek nationalism only emerged when faced with the ‘other’. It was only an external enemy or their natural hatred of the Persians that could unite them. The latter, of course, ticking both boxes. Philip II and Alexander’s pan-hellenism was built upon the Greeks’ natural hatred for the Persians, and Alexander’s conquests would not have been possible without it. Thus, the

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<sup>159</sup> Redford, 1992, 100-101

<sup>160</sup> Johnson, 1984, 120-124

Greeks and the Egyptians – two cultures convinced of their own exceptionalism, shared a common natural enemy. Egyptian hatred of the Persians was of course the reason Alexander received such a warm welcome when he conquered the Two Lands. Thus, the Greeks and the Egyptians will likely have found common ground in their hatred for the Persians; similar to how the Greeks had united against the Achaemenid Empire. Manetho may have tried to appeal to both Greeks and Egyptians by appealing to this mutual hatred. This could mean that his narrative was intended to be read through a dual-lens .

This might beg the question of what the purpose would be of appealing to Greek anti-Persian sentiments in Ptolemaic Egypt. The Achaemenid Empire had been dismantled, and their former territories were now under Greek control. However, the heart of what had been the Persian empire was now known as the Seleucid empire, and they became Ptolemaic Egypt's most hated enemy. The two successor kingdoms were embroiled in numerous wars, and much of Egypt's foreign policy was devoted to defensive measures against the Seleucids. For centuries, the Egyptians had resented Asiatics and outright loathed their powerful kingdoms - whether they were the Hyksos, the Assyrians or the Persians, for the traumas they inflicted upon Egypt. Why should the Seleucid Empire be exempt simply because their current masters were Macedonians? It is likely that their hatred for the Persians was simply transferred to this new enemy from the East; particularly in the wake of the Seleucids' numerous invasions.

## 2.7 Conclusion

The Leper Fragment is a very esoteric text containing so many references that it is extremely difficult to derive any one message or theme from it. It is as if Manetho has taken everything Egyptian and distilled it into a single narrative. The fact that Josephus does not preserve the entire narrative verbatim does not make the task any easier. I believe that if the Jewish-Roman historian had provided us with the full version of the ending of the narrative in particular, we would have a clearer idea of what Manetho was trying to communicate. Having said that, I believe that the Leper Fragment is a kaleidoscopic narrative written to convey multiple messages and ideas, and that it is possible to determine its core messages.

I agree with the assessments of Martin Braun, John Dillery and Ian S. Moyer that the Hyksos and Amenophis' thirteen year exile in Ethiopia are an analogy to the Nectanebo's flight from Egypt and the Second Persian Domination. It is quite possible that the story is based on an

already established tradition, even though Josephus rejects this. The Egyptians were slaves to tradition after all, and as already established, the Leper Fragment conforms to a literary convention that stretches back well over a millennium. However, these stories often addressed contemporary issues, and even when set in the distant past, were often written to accommodate modern sensibilities. This is the case with the Prophecy of Neferty, the Oracle of the Potter and the Leper Fragment.

The purpose of this was to create an historical precedent for the Macedonian conquest of Egypt. Manetho intended for Egyptians to read the fragment and see a parallel between Amenophis and their new Macedonian masters. Thus, Manetho sought to forge a connection between Amenophis and the Greeks, so that the Egyptians would look upon the Ptolemies approvingly since they had done as great Egyptian kings had before them. The Ptolemies had already forged a strong connection to Alexander and Nectanebo as a means to legitimize their dynasty. By becoming associated with Pharaohs of the distant past they would strengthen their claim and further ensure that the Ptolemaic dynasty secured their place as part of the Egyptian cultural continuum.

That the narrative took the form of Chaosbeschreibung was only natural, since the parallel had to be drawn in Egyptian terms. Cultural memory survives through repetition, and Chaosbeschreibung represents a form of ritual in that it is essentially telling the same story every time: namely the conflict of Horus and Seth. Thus, by associating the Ptolemaic kings with Amenophis, they were also associating them with Horus. That is one of the reason the Hyksos were chosen as the invaders. Through cultural memory they attained a mythical and timeless quality that made them perfect for the role of agents of chaos, and thus it was only natural that they be cast as the villains in a Chaosbeschreibung. Manetho likely intended for the Persians to be associated with the Hyksos, and thus also with Seth, so that the Greeks were seen as the saviors of the Egypt by expelling this existential enemy. This was also intended to set the Persians up as a common enemy of the Greeks and Egyptians in order to bring the two cultures closer together and find common ground. This was all part of an effort to convince the Egyptians to accept Macedonian ru

This transmission and use of cultural memory went both ways, however. I believe the fact that the *Aegyptiaca* was written in Greek means that Manetho intended it to be read by the Ptolemies as well. Indeed, much like Ptolemy I Soter and his son Ptolemy II Philadelphos, Manetho was probably a man who thought in long terms. He knew that the Macedonians were here to stay,



and that they were by far more preferable to the Persians. The Ptolemies were willing to govern Egypt in Egyptian terms, and Manetho sought to help them. The best way to do this was to help them understand Egyptian culture. I believe that Ian S. Moyer and Amélié Kuhrt were correct when they characterized Manetho as a mediator between the two cultures who made the historical, ideological and religious world accessible to the Ptolemies. That was the Egyptian's purpose of writing the *Aegyptiaca* in Greek. Manetho was essentially providing the Ptolemies with a key to the Egyptian cultural memory. Stories like the Leper Fragment also had a normative purpose. Much like the Demotic Chronicle, it functions as an instruction for kings on how to govern in accordance with the principles of divine kingship. Amenophis safeguards his people and the sacred animals, before driving the invaders and the heretics out of Egypt and restoring order.

The priests of Egypt were the keepers and the preservers of traditions, and the temples were the primary vessels of cultural memory. They also played a vital role in legitimizing the Ptolemaic dynasty through cultural memory, as we have already seen with the decrees. Manetho was likely one of the most important figures in this regard. He was a man operating in the twilight zone of the Greek and Egyptian world; working as a mediator between the two cultures. The *Aegyptiaca*, and the Leper Fragment in particular, was meant to be read by both Greeks and Egyptians through a dual-cultural lens. Its purposes was to bridge the cultural gap between the two cultures as part of an effort to forge a Greco-Egyptian identity through cultural memory.

# 3 The Egyptian Tales of the Alexander Romance

## 3.1 Alexander in Legend

It can be difficult to discern truth from fiction when studying Alexander, for the Macedonian was shrouded in myth from the day he was born. Indeed, even as a child, he was rumored to be the son of a god; sometimes Dionysis, sometimes Zeus. He was also believed to be descended from the Greek hero Heracles on his father Philip's side. Alexander also did his utmost to perpetuate such mythmaking, both consciously and unconsciously. Arrian wrote that Alexander was driven by *pothos*; a certain longing or yearning.<sup>161</sup> This longing appears to have been to live up to the myths that surrounded him. Alexander worshipped the Greek heroes of Achilles, Heracles and Perseus.<sup>162</sup> His tutor, Aristotle, gifted him a personal, annotated copy of the Illiad, which he slept with it under his pillow<sup>163</sup> He sought not only to emulate these heroes, but to surpass them. Alexander was not just fighting for an empire, he was fighting for a place amongst the legends.

His '*romance with the East*' was probably inspired by stories of Dionysus and Heracles. Indeed, Arrian writes that Alexander's *pothos* drove his expedition into India, in an attempt to emulate Dionysus' exploits.<sup>164</sup> He also writes that during the Indian expedition, Alexander learned of a certain rock fortress that even mighty Heracles were unable to conquer. Upon hearing this story, Alexander was seized by a longing to capture the fortress.<sup>165</sup> Alexander's longing to visit Ammon of Libya was apparently inspired in part by stories that Heracles and Perseus had consulted the oracle of Ammon in the past; but also because of his own supposedly divine parentage.<sup>166</sup>

If these actions, along with his achievements, did not sufficiently shroud him in myth, he could always count on his personal historians or generals to finish the job. Alexander made the conscious decision to employ a campaign historian in the form of his friend Callisthenes who

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<sup>161</sup> Arrian. Anab. 1.3.5 & 3.3.1 = Brunt

<sup>162</sup> Miles, 2010, 180

<sup>163</sup> Plut. Alex. 8.2. = Perrin

<sup>164</sup> Arrian. Anab. 5.1-3. = Brunt

<sup>165</sup> Arrian. Anab. 4.28-30. = Brunt

<sup>166</sup> Arrian. Anab. 3.3.1-2. = Brunt

was more than happy to chronicle the Macedonian king's adventures in a flattering manner<sup>167</sup> – up to a point.<sup>168</sup> His military servants, such as Ptolemy and Aristobulus also wrote glorifying accounts of their king's life. Their works have not survived, but serve as the basis for the accounts of later historians such as those of Arrian and Plutarch.

There had, as mentioned above, always been rumors that Alexander was the son of a god. After invading the Middle-East, however, he began to openly refer to himself as the son of Zeus, or the son of Ammon. This produced mixed reactions among his subjects. Among the natives, such as the Egyptians and Babylonians, there was great acceptance of this, as they had longstanding traditions associating kings with gods. The Greeks, however, were more uneasy. Some accepted it, others were horrified, while some found themselves unable to take him seriously.<sup>169</sup>

There really was no tradition of worshipping kings as gods in the Greek world, however, and this led to friction between Alexander and some of his closest allies. Arrian writes that Alexander would react with violent fury at any hint of questioning his divine heritage.<sup>170</sup> His old friend and trusted officer, Cleitus, was personally slain by Alexander during a drunken argument where the former criticized the latter for comparing himself to the likes of Heracles, and for disrespecting his Macedonian soldiers.<sup>171</sup> Callisthenes fell out of Alexander's favor when he disapproved of the Macedonian king's insistence that his subjects and servants prostrate before him as if he was a god.<sup>172</sup> Callisthenes was later tortured to death for his supposed involvement in a plot against Alexander, but it has been suggested that Alexander was merely looking for an excuse to do away with his old friend.<sup>173</sup>

It is not quite certain whether Alexander himself believed his own claims, or if he simply conformed to local culture as a means to secure his own rule. Plutarch is certainly of this opinion, writing that while Alexander appeared to be fully convinced of his own divinity around non-Greeks, it was simply a deceptive facade designed to enslave them.<sup>174</sup> The violent reactions to having his divinity questioned is perhaps understandable given the circumstances. In places like Egypt, questioning the Pharaoh's divine heritage was tantamount to questioning his

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<sup>167</sup> Stoneman, 2008, 2

<sup>168</sup> Arrian. *Anab.* 4.12-14. = Brunt. Callisthenes grew disillusioned with Alexander's megalomania

<sup>169</sup> Stoneman, 2008,

<sup>170</sup> Arrian. *Anab.* 7.8.3. = Brunt

<sup>171</sup> Plut. *Alex.* 50-51. = Perrin

<sup>172</sup> Arrian. *Anab.* 10-12. = Brunt

<sup>173</sup> Arrian. *Anab.* 4.12-14. = Brunt

<sup>174</sup> Plut. *Alex.* 28. = Perrin

legitimacy as a king. For a king who sought to rule as an absolute monarch, in contrast to the more limited traditional kingship of the Macedonians, such actions were deemed punishable by death. Arrian makes it clear, however, that Alexander would direct his fury at the Macedonians as well, and not just the ‘barbarians’. This suggests that he maintained a similar façade around the Greeks as well. Perhaps this is an indication that he had indeed begun to believe his own legend. There may have been those who dissented to Alexander’s deification, but there were also those who encouraged it. The Macedonian king surrounded himself with flatterers and sycophants. Indeed, the praises they heaped upon their king may even have precipitated the drunken confrontation between Cleitus and Alexander.<sup>175</sup> There is certainly ample evidence of his growing megalomania, such as the already mentioned literal attempts to surpass the Greek mythical legends. Alexander would also attribute the successes of his campaign to himself personally, and refusing to give credit to his Macedonian soldiers.<sup>176</sup> In this environment – surrounded court flatterers singing his praises, and ruling over natives who worshipped him as a demigod, he may very well have lost his footing in reality.

Though Alexander’s presence obviously loomed large in life, he cast an even greater shadow in death. Alexander became the ideal that future conquerors would aspire to. Just as Greek men aspired to live up to the standard of masculinity set by Achilles, so too did would-be rulers dream of becoming the next Alexander.<sup>177</sup> None succeeded. When his generals carved up his empire, they used the memory of him to consolidate their rules. Similarly to how a Pharaoh bolstered his status by associating himself with Amun, the Diadochi gained legitimacy by posthumously and publicly cultivating their relationships with Alexander.

His influence did not stop there, however. He became the subject of further mythmaking and numeral stories all over the Hellenistic world.<sup>178</sup> These stories could range from simple historicized fiction to highly religious and philosophical apocrypha.<sup>179</sup> Some of these stories were parts of state-sponsored propaganda,<sup>180</sup> while some were likely folktales that grew in size with each telling. Alexander became a literary vessel for exploring religious and philosophical questions. Indeed, it seems like every generation had its own Alexander. Richard Stoneman describes him as an *everyman* for every author; emblemizing the major concerns and anxieties

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<sup>175</sup> Arrian. Anab. 4.8-9. = Brunt

<sup>176</sup> Arrian. Anab. 4.8-9. = Brunt

<sup>177</sup> Miles, 2010, 213

<sup>178</sup> Nawotka, 2017, 30

<sup>179</sup> AR. 3.6. = Haight

<sup>180</sup> AR. 1.31. = Haight. Foundation myth of Alexandria

of the host cultures.<sup>181</sup> Many of these stories were incorporated into the subject of this chapter – *the Alexander Romance*.

## 3.2 *Historia Alexandri Magni*

The Alexander Romance is an epic, fictionalized story that chronicles Alexander's life from even before he was born until his body is brought back to Egypt by Ptolemy I Soter. Though the earliest version of it still in existence is dated the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D., the story is much older, and likely dates back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. Interestingly, there are several, different versions – or *recensions*, as they are called, still in existence. In fact, more than one Greek version was apparently circulated at the same time.<sup>182</sup> There are four major Greek versions that have survived. In addition to this, there are numerous versions around the world that are not direct translations, but rather variations tailored to fit the local cultural needs<sup>183</sup> - which speaks volumes about the popularity of the Alexander Romance. The four recensions differ both in content and style, with the oldest version—known as A, being written in verse, while the others are written in prose.<sup>184</sup> There are certain scenes that only appear in certain recensions, like the debate in Athens and the conquest of Thebes appearing in full only in A, while some of the more famous episodes occurring only in Y.<sup>185</sup>

The original work was for some reason attributed to Callisthenes, even though he cannot possibly have written it due to his execution by Alexander in Persia. Scholars thus attribute the Romance to 'Pseudo-Callisthenes'. This might be a little bit misleading to the casual reader, because the Romance was not written by any single individual. It is instead the result of contributions from multiple authors spanning several centuries. Indeed, the Romance has undergone numerous transmutations over the years, and there are significant differences between the various surviving versions. The main components of the story, however, was already in existence in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C., and most likely originated in the Egyptian

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<sup>181</sup> Stoneman, 2004, 116-117

<sup>182</sup> Nawotka, 2017, 30

<sup>183</sup> Nawotka, 2017, 30

<sup>184</sup> Stoneman, 1991, 30

<sup>185</sup> Stoneman, 1991, 30

Alexandrian milieu.<sup>186</sup> The authors are certainly very familiar with both Greek and Egyptian religion and culture, and the beginning of the Romance appears to have been drawn from native Egyptian traditions; as I will illustrate in my analysis below.

The title ‘Alexander Romance’ is a little misleading, as it is not a romance story at all. Richard Stoneman writes that the term has been lifted from medieval literature, which the Alexander Romance has very little in common with.<sup>187</sup> It has been named such because critics in the past have been reluctant to call it a novel, due to its lack of character development and psychological analysis.<sup>188</sup> For this reason, the *ancient romance* was considered a proto-novel, but is today referred to as ‘ancient novel’ instead.<sup>189</sup>

Martin Braun wrote that ancient romances emerged from the masses, and thus belonged to the lower stratum of society.<sup>190</sup> Krzysztof Nawotka is of a different opinion, pointing out that only about 10% of the population were able to read, and even fewer possessed the sophistication required to read longer texts.<sup>191</sup> James Dillery directly disagrees with Braun, pointing out that Manetho mixed both history and romance in the *Aegyptiaka*, which he claims targeted his fellow priests as its audience.<sup>192</sup> It seems very unlikely that the romances, like that of Alexander were written by anyone belonging to the lower stratum, or that they were the target audience. Braun may not be entirely wrong, however. The Alexander Romance features elements that appear to be folktales incorporated into a longer narrative. Some of these stories could very well have originated as oral folktales on a ground level, gained enough widespread popularity to be taken up by priests and then refined for a more sophisticated narrative. As Richard Stoneman writes: “*one cannot overstress the aspect of popular entertainment in the Romance*”.<sup>193</sup>

The Alexander Romance differs from most other ancient novels known to us, in that its main character is a historical figure and the story is largely based on historical events.<sup>194</sup> The events often deviate considerably from reality, but it maintains a historical foundation throughout the story. There are, of course, some utterly ahistorical, fantastic stories in the Romance as well, though they occur mainly in the later recensions. It is important to remember, though, that the

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<sup>186</sup> Braun, 1938, 31-33; Stoneman, 1993, 9-10

<sup>187</sup> Stoneman, 1994, 117-118

<sup>188</sup> Stoneman, 1994, 117-118

<sup>189</sup> Nawotka, 2017, 14

<sup>190</sup> Braun, 1938, 3-5

<sup>191</sup> Nawotka, 2017, 15

<sup>192</sup> Dillery, 2013, 38

<sup>193</sup> Stoneman, 1991, 11

<sup>194</sup> Nawotka, 2017, 17

Alexander Romance went through several transformations over the years. This, of course, makes it impossible to discern any single, coherent theme in the Romance. Instead, various parts features different themes that are often a reflection of the thoughts and anxieties that were prevalent at the time of writing. Alexander plays the role of conqueror, adventurer, tragic hero and a wise sage. As Richard Stoneman puts it: Alexander becomes a protean character that embodies the deepest fears and longings of the human condition.<sup>195</sup>

A satisfying analysis of the Alexander Romance in its entirety would constitute an entire thesis if its own, and would probably be less fruitful to my particular dissertation. Instead, I have chosen to limit my analysis to what Richard Stoneman refers to as *The Egyptian Tales*.<sup>196</sup> That means, as the title implies, the parts of the story pertaining to Egypt: Nectanebo's story in its entirety, from the invasion of Egypt until his death at the hands of his son and the foundation of Alexandria. I will of course reference other parts of the story where I deem them relevant. I intend to begin my analysis by offering a summary of the Egyptian Tales, before putting the Alexander Romance into a historical and literary context. For sake of both accuracy and simplicity, I will primarily be using recension A of the Romance, as a cross-recension analysis would demolish the parameters of my dissertation. I will mainly employ a Greek translation by E. H. Haight, occasionally supplemented with translations by Richard Stoneman. I will reference and make comparisons to other recensions when necessary.

### 3.3 The Egyptian Tales

Nectanebo II is a Pharaoh so powerful he can destroy entire armies with magic. However, when Egypt is invaded by Asiatic hordes, he realizes that the gods are guiding the ships of his enemies. He decides that he cannot fight the gods, and discreetly flees Egypt. After his flight, the Egyptian people seek out the god Ptah and enquire of him what has become of their Pharaoh. Ptah prophesizes that Nectanebo will return one day as a young man. The prophecy was written down on the pedestal of a statue of the lost king.<sup>197</sup>

Nectanebo arrives in Macedonia and establishes himself as an astrologer and soothsayer. He soon catches the attention of queen Olympias, who summons him to the court in order to consult with him on her fears that Philip will divorce her. Nectanebo is immediately smitten with

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<sup>195</sup> Stoneman, 2008, 2-3

<sup>196</sup> Stoneman, 1991, 11-12

<sup>197</sup> AR. 1.1-3. = Haight

Olympias and tells her that she will bear the son of the god Ammon. To convince her of this, he uses his magic to influence her dreams the following night. The subsequent night he appears to her in the guise of Ammon and makes love to her.<sup>198</sup>

Olympias becomes pregnant with Alexander, but is worried about how Philip will react when he returns from his campaign. Nectanebo sends a number of visions to Philip that convince him that Olympias bears the son of a god. During the birth, Nectanebo is at hand to make sure that Alexander is born at a specific time to ensure that he will grow up to become a world conqueror.<sup>199</sup>

At some point after Alexander is born, Nectanebo becomes his tutor. However, one night when the two of them are out stargazing, the twelve year old Alexander seizes Nectanebo by the head, and hurls him into a rock. The mortally wounded Nectanebo asks why he has done this. Alexander replies that the astrologer has only himself to blame, for he sought to know the mysteries of the heavens though he did not understand the matters on earth. The Pharaoh then reveals that he is the father of Alexander before succumbing to his wounds. Alexander then carries his body home to his mother, and reveals to her what Nectanebo had told him.<sup>200</sup>

Years later, during his military campaigns into the Near East, Alexander travels to the Oracle of Ammon in Siwah, where Ammon confirms that he is his father. Alexander asks Ammon where he should found a city named after himself, and Ammon replies that if he wishes to flourish eternally, he should build an illustrious city at Rhacotis in Egypt.<sup>201</sup>

Alexander travels to Rhacotis to found his city. While preparing to lay the groundwork for construction of Alexandria, his workers are terrorized by a serpent known as Agathos Daimon. Alexander has the creature slain and orders that its burial place should become a sacred space. After construction has begun, Alexander soon encounters a god named Sarapis. Alexander asks the god when he will die, but Sarapis refuses to answer, telling him only that Alexandria will be a wondrous city and that it will one day become his tomb.<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> AR. 1.4-7. = Haight

<sup>199</sup> AR. 1.6-12. = Haight

<sup>200</sup> AR. 1.14. = Haight

<sup>201</sup> AR. 1.30. = Haight

<sup>202</sup> AR. 1.32-33 = Haight



Alexander continues his journey into Egypt until he reaches Memphis, where he is welcomed by the natives as ‘*the new Sesonchosis*’, the legendary Egyptian Pharaoh and world conqueror. He comes across a statue and asks the locals who it depicts. They reply that it is Nectanebo II and tell him about his disappearance and the oracle prophesizing his return. Alexander reveals that he is the son of Nectanebo, and asks them for the tribute money that would normally pay the Persians. He asks this not for himself, but so that he can spend it on Alexandria, which will be the metropolis of the world.<sup>203</sup>

### 3.4 The Nectanebo Romance

When news is brought to *Nectanebo* about the impending invasion by the *Achemenid* empire, he does not appear to be greatly alarmed by this potentially calamitous news. Instead, he thanks the messenger, and calmly retreats to the palace to deal with the invaders through his magical ways. Indeed, *Nectanebo* appears rather confident of his chances against Artaxerxes’ armies. It turns out, however, that the gods are guiding his enemies’ ships against him, and he realizes that he has no chance of victory.

The *Alexander Romance* never explains why the gods have turned against *Nectanebo*.<sup>204</sup> According to Egyptian tradition, when the pharaohs lost the favor of the gods, it was usually because they had failed in their kingly duties of upholding *ma’at*. The *Romance* offers no indication that this is the case. So why did *Nectanebo* lose the favor of the gods? The answer may reside in a different document entirely.

The aforementioned *Dream of Nectanebo*<sup>205</sup> is a Greek translation of a story originally written in demotic, preserved on papyrus from the middle of the second century. In the story, *Nectanebo* is the recipient of a dream of two gods in a boat. The war-god *Onuris* complains to *Isis*, the protector of Egypt, that the hieroglyphic inscriptions have not been finished at the sanctuary of his temple in *Sebennytos*. *Nectanebo* takes measures to correct his transgression, by hiring the most skilled sculptor he can find to finish the job. The sculptor, *Petesis*, however, is stated to have a taste for wine, and he postpones the work when he meets and is smitten with a woman

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<sup>203</sup> AR. 1.34. = Haight

<sup>204</sup> Eddy, 1961, 288-289

<sup>205</sup> P. Carlsberg 559 = Ryholt

called ‘*Noble Hathor*’. Unfortunately, this is where the narrative abruptly ends. It is not the end of the story, but it is where *Apollonios* ceased his work. According to Ludwig Koenen, the reason Apollonios stopped copying is that he was only interested in the dream part of the story.<sup>206</sup> The story is very similar to a Königsnovelle, in which the pharaoh receives a message from the gods; usually about the king as conqueror of Egypt’s enemies, or about the king as a builder and restorer of temples. In Nectanebo’s case, he receives a dream about the latter. The message is a call to action, and Nectanebo clearly makes efforts to appease the gods.

It is unfortunate that the translation is not completed. However, a document exists that appears to contain a fragment of the sequel<sup>207</sup> to the *Dream of Nectanebo*. From it, we may be able to discern what happened next in the narrative, and how it connects to the *Alexander Romance*. The sequel document is dated about 250 years later than the Dream of Nectanebo, but the story is likely much older.<sup>208</sup> The surviving material is very scant, but it features a scene that suggests that it is a continuation of the dream, rather than a different version of it. In the sequel, Nectanebo laments what befell Petesis the sculptor in Sebennytos, and states “*I have given orders to find out the might of the foreigners that will come after me*”. He then leaves for Wenkhem to present a burnt offering to *Haroeris*.<sup>209</sup>

We learn a few significant things here. Firstly, Petesis has clearly met with a tragic fate. The king would not lament his fate if he had simply failed in his duties, or Noble Hathor had broken his heart. Nectanebo states that terrible things have happened to him, and the words he use imply that he has been consumed by fire.<sup>210</sup> We do not know what happened exactly, but his grim fate may have been foreshadowed in the Dream. That Petesis’ love interest is named Hathor is likely not a coincidence. Hathor was the goddess of love and drunkenness; Petesis had a weakness for wine, and appears to have been seduced. Hathor also has a much darker side to her, as she was once sent to earth by Ra to destroy mankind.<sup>211</sup> The fate of Petosis may have been sealed when he met Noble Hathor.

The second thing we learn, is that Nectanebo knew that Egypt would be invaded. It is possible that he simply inferred it due to the prospect of Onuris withdrawing his protection. However, Kim Ryholt believes that Nectanebo was the recipient of another prophecy; likely in the missing

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<sup>206</sup> Koenen, 1985, 193-195

<sup>207</sup> P. Carlsberg 562 = Ryholt

<sup>208</sup> Ryholt, 2002, 222

<sup>209</sup> Ryholt, 2002, 229-230

<sup>210</sup> Ryholt, 2002, 233

<sup>211</sup> Lesko, 1991, 110-111

part of the *Dream*.<sup>212</sup> Indeed, Ryholt suggests that the prophecy in question may even have been delivered by Petesis before he perished.<sup>213</sup> Ryholt also draws parallels to other prophetic texts such as the *Oracle of the Potter* and the *Prophecy of the Lamb*. In both texts, the medium of the prophecies die after delivering their message.<sup>214</sup> The same goes for the *Seer* in the story of *Amenophis*, who takes his own life after writing down a calamitous prophecy. Ryholt has also pointed out that the mediums of the prophecies in the *Potter* and the hypothetical sequel to the *Dream* share similar vocations. In the *Oracle*, the prophecy is delivered by the titular Potter, which is a symbolic representation of the god *Khnum*, who creates life the same way a potter fashions pots. Petesis is a sculptor, which in the Egyptian mind, was also a symbol of a creator of life.<sup>215</sup> If Ryholt is correct, then Nectanebo's Dream and possibly its sequel can be placed within a pattern of prophetic texts that transcends the Persian, Ptolemaic and the Roman periods. What is more interesting, however, is the possibility that the prophecy delivered to Nectanebo may also have included a foretelling of a savior king. Indeed, Ludwig Koenen believes that part of Petesis' prophecy went something like this:

*«As I neglected my work, thus Egypt will be neglected by the gods, in particular by Ares/Onuris. The enemies (the Persians) will conquer Egypt, and all that is good will be turned into evil. In the end, however, the god will send a king under whom Egypt will flourish again»*<sup>216</sup>

The prophecy of a king who will save Egypt from the clutches of a foreign enemy is hardly an unfamiliar theme. Messianic stories of that kind were ten a penny in Egypt. Indeed, the *Prophecy of Neferty* features just such a prophecy about *Amenemhet I*. However, it is also reminiscent of another king – namely Alexander. Indeed, before the discovery of the sequel document, Ludwig Koenen suggested that he was specifically named as the savior by Petesis.<sup>217</sup> The mention of Alexander might solve some of the biggest conundrums in the Romance. It would certainly explain why Nectanebo fled to Macedonia, rather than Ethiopia. It would also explain a very bizarre aspect of the conception and birth of Alexander.

In the Romance, it is made very clear that Nectanebo's elaborate seduction of Olympias is motivated by lust and possibly even love. Alexander's conception, however, is planned, rather than a byproduct of their tryst. Indeed, Olympias's pregnancy appears to be predetermined.

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<sup>212</sup> Ryholt, 2002, 232-234

<sup>213</sup> Ryholt, 2002, 232-234

<sup>214</sup> Ryholt, 2002, 232-234

<sup>215</sup> Ryholt, 2002, 233-234

<sup>216</sup> Koenen, 1985, 191

<sup>217</sup> Koenen, 1985, 193

Nectanebo even assists in the delivery to make sure that Alexander is born at a precise time that will make him destined to become a great conqueror. This appears to be the marriage of two very different stories, and the result is jarring to say the least. Nectanebo's efforts do not make a whole lot of sense unless he was aware of a certain prophecy. The foretelling of him returning to Egypt as a young man was made only after he fled Egypt, so he could not possibly have been aware of it. However, if we take the Dream and Petesis' prophecy into account, Nectanebo's determination to birth a conqueror makes more sense. It is possible that the conception and birth of Alexander is more closely based on or inspired by the original Nectanebo Dream, while the seduction part is the result of a later addition to the narrative.

Kim Ryholt agrees in part with Koenen's hypothesis, but believes that the foretelling of Alexander's conquest was part of a separate prophecy. He has suggested that when Nectanebo sought out *Haroeris* in the sequel, he received a third prophecy that foretold the birth of his son Alexander.<sup>218</sup> Ryholt also believes that the *Dream of Nectanebo* was written as *nationalist propaganda against the Achaemenids* during the Second Persian Domination, while the sequel was written in the early years of the Ptolemaic reign *in support of Greek rule*.<sup>219</sup> That the Dream was conceived under Achaemenid rule makes sense, as the presence of unfinished hieroglyphs in the Onuris-Shu temple could suggest that they served as inspiration for the story.<sup>220</sup>

If Ryholt is correct in his hypothesis, then the hypothetical prophecy of a savior-king in Nectanebo's Dream would obviously not have featured Alexander, as it was conceived before his conquest of Egypt. In fact, it might not even have featured a son at all. This would certainly be more in keeping with other, similar prophecies like the *The Prophecy of Neferty*, the *Oracle of the Potter* and the *Prophecy of the Lamb*. The *Prophecy of Neferty* is particularly interesting in this regard. As established above, the prophecy states that a king will be born in the south who will deliver Egypt from chaos and restore ma'at. Not only is it similar to the prophecies of the *Potter* and the *Lamb*, but it also makes sense in regards to the *Dream*. Historically, Nectanebo is believed to have fled south to Ethiopia or Nubia. *The Prophecy of Neferty* does not specify where in the south Ameny is prophesized to be born, but Samuel K. Eddy believes it is *Nubia*.<sup>221</sup> Thus, the prophecy may yet have foretold the birth of Nectanebo's son after all;

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<sup>218</sup> Ryholt, 2002, 235-237

<sup>219</sup> Ryholt, 2002, 238

<sup>220</sup> Moyer, 2011, 138

<sup>221</sup> Eddy, 1961, 287

a savior-king who would return to Egypt and avenge his father. This makes sense on multiple levels, because firstly, it reconciles a specific, real event (Nectanebo fleeing to Ethiopia) with a piece of traditional Egyptian literature (a savior-king born in the south). Secondly, the savior-king is prophesized to restore *ma'at* in Egypt and expel his father's enemies. In effect, the savior-king avenges his father, as Horus avenged Osiris. Thus, the narrative also conforms to the Egyptian religious tradition of divine kingship.

Here it is worth remembering Manetho's story of Amenophis and the Lepers. As stated above, Manetho likely based this story on the early Nectanebo stories that became widespread after his disappearance. I speculated above that the original story may have put more emphasis on the fact that Amenophis and his son Rampses expelled the Hyksos and the lepers together. This could be an indication that the Dream foretold the return of the exiled pharaoh's son. The original Nectanebo Romance may even have prophesized that Nectanebo would return to Egypt alongside his son, similarly to Amenophis and Rampses. As mentioned above, Rampses' role may have been far more important in the original story, and the same may have been the case for the Nectanebo Romance. His son would be the savior-king, while Nectanebo would guide him. This too would be in keeping with Egyptian tradition, as it would evoke the importance of co-regency of fathers and sons.

My own hypothesis of what happened in the Nectanebo romance and how it relates to the Alexander is as follows: I believe that the Dream of Nectanebo was composed during the Second Persian Domination, and that it was inspired by the unfinished hieroglyphs in Sebennyos. In the story, Nectanebo's efforts to appease Onuris fail due to the sculptor becoming distracted by wine and a woman named 'Noble Hathor'. Petesis suffers a terrible fate, possibly being set on fire by Noble Hathor's father. Similarly to the Potter and the Lamb, he delivers a prophecy before succumbing to his wounds. Petesis states that Egypt will be conquered by foreigners, but that a king, the son of Nectanebo, will be born in Nubia who will expel the invaders and restore order. I believe that this particular part was written to be evocative of the *Prophecy of Neferty*.

The reason I believe that the prophecy included Nectanebo's son, rather than some random king, is as follows: according to the ideology of divine kingship, as interpreted from the Demotic Chronicle, bad kings were doomed to be supplanted, and their sons would not be able to assume kingship. That last part is of particular importance. Nectanebo II was remembered very fondly, however – particularly by the priests of Sebennyos. It was the reason the

Ptolemies' cultivated an aesthetic that was evocative of him. For this to have worked, there must have been a considerable level of nostalgia for him in the wake of his departure. The priests may simply have married their yearning for Nectanebo to return with the *Prophecy of Neferty* that said a king would be born in Nubia. I cannot know this for certain, of course, but it appears increasingly likely when we include Manetho's Leper fragment in our reconstruction. If we accept the premise that Manetho based his story on the original Nectanebo legend, then the idea of Amenophis and Rampses' return from the south may be based on Nectanebo and an unnamed son.

It is also worth noting that most rulers who found themselves ousted by foreign conquerors had made the unforgiving mistake of neglecting ma'at. Nectanebo, however, merely neglected a few hieroglyphs. The cosmic order is never at risk; Nectanebo's transgression is limited to the god Onuris, and he even takes immediate steps to rectify his mistake. If anything, he is unfortunate to have placed his trust in an easily distracted wino. Thus, Nectanebo does not fit the role of a 'bad king', and would not be precluded from passing the mantle on to his son.

This narrative conflicts somewhat with the hypothesis of Alexander being named as Nectanebo's son in the sequel. However, the stories were likely conceived at different times and under very different political circumstances. Inconsistencies in literature are hardly implausible. Indeed, that Nectanebo received two similar, but varied prophecies in a story spanning two narratives is not out of character. This is because it would appear that the pharaoh received different foretellings regarding the future of Egypt. First, he dreams that Onuris is angered by Nectanebo's neglect of his temple, and it is implied that he will withdraw his protection if the situation is not rectified.

Petesis delivers a prophecy that heralds the gods' withdrawal of their protection, and that Egypt will be conquered by foreigners as a result. Many scholars have interpreted the Dream as the gods ultimately turning on Nectanebo and siding with his enemies. This certainly makes sense when we use Manetho's Leper fragment and the Alexander Romance – both of which explicitly stating that the pharaohs are 'fighting the gods' – to reconstruct the Dream. This, however, appears to be contradicted in the sequel to Nectanebo's Dream. Indeed, the Egyptian pharaoh declares that he has given orders to find out the strength of his enemies, when they will invade and what sort of havoc they are likely to cause. This suggests that Nectanebo had not yet been informed that he was fighting against the gods, and that defeat was inevitable. It is possible that he never received such a prophecy, but that seems unrealistic. A more likely possibility is that

the sequel effectively retconned the prophecy from the Dream; telescoping the foretelling to the sequel when Nectanebo went to Haroeris, where Alexander's name was invoked. Thus, Nectanebo travelled to Wenkhem in the belief that he could protect Egypt, only to learn that he was fighting the gods.

The object of this exercise has been to investigate the relationship between *Nectanebo's Dream*, the untitled sequel, and the *Alexander Romance*. It appears obvious to me that they are closely related. The opening of the Romance is clearly based upon or inspired by the other two documents. It is my belief that the *Romance* was written with these narratives in mind. The story, however, has undergone numerous transmutations, owing to both Greek and Egyptian influences. The story of Alexander took on a life of its own, and the differences between the beginning and the *Dream* which inspired it could be a reflection of that. It is possible that Greek influences cut Nectanebo story short because they wanted the focus to be on Alexander. The beginning is still heavily Egyptian flavored, and cannot be separated from the Dream and its sequel. Indeed, not only are they thematically similar, but tonally as well. It is my belief that it is impossible to analyze this part of the Romance outside the context of the Dream and the sequel.

### 3.5 From Pharaoh to Prophet

Now that the *Alexander Romance's* context has been established, a clearer picture of the literary Nectanebo II begins to emerge. It is my belief that the *Nectanebo* we meet here is intended to be similar in character and temperament to the one we meet in *Nectanebo's Dream* and its *untitled sequel*. There are a few dissimilarities, however. The portrayal of *Nectanebo* as a magician is a curious one. Magic was typically the purview of priests, and usually employed as protection against creatures and enemies. That is not to say that pharaohs were not believed to be adept at magic, far from it. All Egyptian kings were imbued with magical powers – or *heka*. They were masters of rituals, and capable of commanding the ebb and flow of the Nile. In the *Romance*, however, *Nectanebo* is a skilled and powerful enough magician that he can use his abilities to wage war against invading armies:

*“Nectanebōs, the last king of Egypt, after whom Egypt lost its great glory, surpassed all men in the use of magic. For through reason he subjugated all the cosmic elements to himself. If a cloud of war suddenly appeared, he did not prepare an expedition, or assemble arms or iron*

*weapons, or the machines of warfare, but he went into the palace, selected a bronze cauldron, filled it with rain-water, fashioned little boats of wax and sailors, threw them into the cauldron, and chanted an incantation, holding an ebony rod. He called upon the Messengers and Ammon, god of Libya. So when by such magic he observed the boats in the cauldron . . . when the enemy came they perished and he reigned supreme. And he used the same control over enemies who came by land.»*<sup>222</sup>

This is quite unusual, even for a pharaoh. Traditionally speaking, the great and beloved pharaohs of the past were often idealized to the point of mythical; the divine part of them being amplified in the Egyptian collective memory. Indeed, Nicolas Grimal writes that Ramesses III's military exploits and the propagandist manner in which it was depicted, transformed him over time from a great king to an archetypal figure unburdened by time and eternally victorious.<sup>223</sup> The great kings like Sesostris and Ramesses II were remembered as conquerors and valiant defenders of Egypt who vanquished their enemies with military might. They were generally not, however, depicted as laying waste to armies through magic alone. There is some historical precedent for Nectanebo's magical affinity, however. A magical papyri with his face illustrated on it, and a magical stela bearing his name could indicate that Nectanebo held a particular interest in magic<sup>224</sup>. These pieces of evidence may have inspired the author of the *Romance*, similarly to how the unfinished hieroglyphs may have served as inspiration for Nectanebo's Dream. It is possible that the story originally depicted Nectanebo as having a simple affinity for magic, but that his abilities were amplified with each re-telling. Krzysztoff Nawotka has suggested that Nectanebo sinking the enemies' ships may be a reference to one of the military triumphs of the historical Nectanebo, in which he caused the Persian forces to down in the marshy Lake Sirbonis through a ruse.<sup>225</sup>

The reason for Nectanebo's portrayal as such a powerful magician may be found in its authorship. As stated in the beginning of this section, the Alexander Romance was the product of both Egyptian and Greek authorship. There are no allusions to Nectanebo being a magician in the very Egyptian Dream of Nectanebo, other than him performing incubation to receive the titular dream. It is possible that the sequel featured more of his magical side, but we have no way of knowing this. Thus, we have to operate on the assumption that this particular attribute

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<sup>222</sup> AR. 1.1.5-14 = Haight

<sup>223</sup> Grimal, 1993, 274-275

<sup>224</sup> Stoneman, 2004, 15

<sup>225</sup> Nawotka, 2017, 41



was added specifically for the Romance. This could mean that the Greek influence played a part in Nectanebo's magic. There are certainly both Greek and Egyptian flavors to Nectanebo's magic.

The use of wax figures is a clear reference to the Egyptian protective magical rituals. Indeed, destroying wax figurines of Apep and the enemies of Egypt was an important ritual in Egypt<sup>226</sup> The gods guiding the ships of the enemies may be a throwback to the Dream of Nectanebo where Onuris and Isis are featured in boats. Nectanebo looking into a cauldron filled with a water to attain knowledge could be an allusion to lecanomancy, where one would study the shapes formed by pouring oil on top of water. This was a widespread practice throughout antiquity,<sup>227</sup> and its inclusion in the story may be a result of Greek authorship. It should be noted, however, that the Greeks learned this practice from the East, and. Furthermore, Nectanebo does not study oil figures, but instead sees clearly defined images in the water. This is similar to katopromancy, which was an established practice in Byzantium.<sup>228</sup> Its popularity later in antiquity could suggest that it was a later addition to the Romance. It is very difficult to ascertain this, however, and it does not seem likely that such a small element would seep into the narrative without any other changes at such a late stage.

The combination of lecanomancy and the wax figurines within the same ritual could be a decisive indication that both Greek and Egyptian influences are strongly featured in this part of the narrative. The question is, whose influence is featured more prominently? This is a subject that is still largely contested among scholars. Erich Gruen, for example, believes that the portrayal of Nectanebo is meant as a negative reflection of Egyptians; contrasting the Egyptian magician with the more masculine and warrior-like Macedonian. Krzysztof Nawotka has suggested that the portrayal of Nectanebo as a "sex-driven magician" might be a result of a Greek stereotype of the 'barbarian'.<sup>229</sup> Susan A. Stephens believes that this portrayal of Nectanebo was borne out of 'Greek chauvinism'.<sup>230</sup> These are interesting perspectives, but I believe that they are not entirely correct. The portrayal of Nectanebo as a magician could be interpreted as a negative depiction, but that is not the impression that I am left with. The scene

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<sup>226</sup> Nawotka, 2017, 41

<sup>227</sup> Stoneman, 2008, 15

<sup>228</sup> Nawotka & Wojchiechowska, 2014, 23-24

<sup>229</sup> Nawotka, 2017, 39

<sup>230</sup> Stephens, 2003, 71

in which Nectanebo receives news of the impending invasion immediately springs to mind. He declares that he:

*“will not act as a coward or a warrior. For power lies not in numbers, but in reason. One mind routs many men, overwhelming the multitudes with the right arm.”*<sup>231</sup>

This does not come across as a negative portrayal; in fact, it strikes me as rather respectful. It is important to remember that Greeks were deeply fascinated by Egypt. Indeed, As Phiroze Vasunia puts it

*“Egypt haunted Greece for a hundred and fifty years, leading up to and including the year 332 B.C.E., when it was invaded by Alexander”*<sup>232</sup>

If this part of the Romance was conceived in the beginning of the Greco-Macedonian period, then this perspective will likely still have been present at the time of writing. It is also worth pointing out that Greek scholars, from Herodotus to Plutarch, were fascinated with Egyptian knowledge of the sacred.<sup>233</sup> It is possible that the portrayal of Nectanebo as a magician here was borne of a Greek author’s idea of a traditional pharaoh – a stereotype, if you will. This could well be an example of Greek fetishization of pharaonic powers that borders on what Edward Said would call ‘*orientalism*’. This does not mean, however, that the portrayal was intended as disrespectful towards Egyptians.

The mistake I believe that the aforementioned scholars have made is that they have judged Nectanebo based on the whole of his portrayal. There are, however, two Nectanebos. Indeed, the Nectanebo we meet in Egypt is not the same that we meet in Macedonia. As hinted to above, this is where the narrative becomes rather jarring, and Nectanebo is at the heart of this. If there was any Greek chauvinism at play in the portrayal of Nectanebo, then I believe it occurs in the Macedonian part, rather than the Egyptian one. This section strikes me as very much indebted to the *Dream of Nectanebo*, and probably owes more to its Egyptian influences, rather than its Greek ones.

Upon his arrival in Macedonia, the character of Nectanebo turns into something of a trickster magician. While in Egypt, he single-handedly lays waste to entire armies through magic. In Macedonia he uses his abilities to engage in an illicit affair with the queen of Macedon. To

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<sup>231</sup> AR. 1.2.10-12 =Haight

<sup>232</sup> Vasunia, 2001, 1

<sup>233</sup> Nawotka, 2017, 37

quote Richard Stoneman, “*The noble Pharaoh becomes a sleazy Don Juan*”<sup>234</sup>. Even after the seduction of Olympias, he mostly uses his powers to send visions to Phillip, and to reading the stars. The latter even plays a part in his bizarre demise at the hands of Alexander. A later version of the story has Nectanebo *dressing up* as Ammon, rather than *using magic to make himself appear* as the ram-headed Libyan god. Indeed, there is something farcical about this particular version, and it is hinted that Olympias sees through Nectanebo’s disguise. Susan A. Stephens writes that the seduction story has the salacious qualities of a Milesian tale.<sup>235</sup> This is the reason I believe that there are two Nectanebos – one in Egypt and one in Macedon. The former has more in common with the one portrayed in the Dream of Nectanebo than it has with the latter. This schizophrenic portrayal might be the result of two clashing traditions, or multiple transmutations over many years. This will be analyzed further below.

### 3.6 Son of Man: Nectanebo

Nectanebo being the biological father of Alexander is the heart of this particular part of the narrative, and its meaning, significance and origin is still debated by scholars to this day. Some believe it to be Egyptian nationalist propaganda,<sup>236</sup> while others consider it an attempt at bridging a cultural gap between Greeks and Egyptians.<sup>237</sup> Alan B. Lloyd, for example, believes that this part of the story is undeniably Egyptian, citing the element of theogamy and the fact that folk-tales about Nectanebo were in circulation in the very early days of the Ptolemaic period, as his evidence. He goes on to state that it must have been authored by priests, and that its purpose was to reconcile the presence of a foreigner on the throne with the Egyptian ideology of divine. By appropriating Alexander thus, they also laid claim to his other conquests as well.<sup>238</sup> It is true that by making Alexander the son of Nectanebo, they conferred legitimacy upon him and, by extension, the Ptolemaic dynasty. Indeed, Alexander’s parentage is historically the only missing piece that would make him qualify as the ideal god-king. Like Ameny and Sesostris before him, he had cleansed Egypt of her enemies, thus performing the necessary feat to prove himself worthy of kingship. Alexander had avenged Nectanebo, as Horus avenged Osiris. As a ruler, he upheld local customs, sacrificed to the appropriate gods

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<sup>234</sup> Stoneman, 2008, 15

<sup>235</sup> Stephens, 2003, 71

<sup>236</sup> Eddy, 1961, 279-280. Huss, 1992, 160-161. Lloyd, 1982, 46-50

<sup>237</sup> Gruen, 2006, 308-312. Stephens, 2003, 64-63.

<sup>238</sup> Lloyd, 1982, 46-50

and ordered temples and monuments to be constructed; thus living up to the ideals of the divine kingship.

However, Alan B. Lloyd also believes that while there was a desire to make Alexander their own, there is also a hint of hostility towards the Macedonians in the narrative. He believes that the conception of Alexander represents the 'Egyptian getting the better of the Macedonian'. He goes on to state that propaganda of this kind aims to "*strip the enemy of its capacity to inspire fear by presenting it in a ludicrous or contemptuous fashion*", and that the Alexander Romance does just that through Nectanebo's sexual domination of Olympias. Lloyd believes that this domination was tantamount to total domination of the enemy in the minds of the Egyptians.<sup>239</sup> Taken at face value, this makes a certain amount of sense. Masculinity was and is in many ways still closely connected to sexuality, and to this day, questioning a man's virility, sexuality and gender to undermine him is common practice. There is a famous saying, often attributed to Oscar Wilde: "*Everything in the world is about sex, except for sex. Sex is about power*". To make a man a cuckold was to dominate him.

It is important to note, however, that for a story that is supposedly about male dominance and sexual humiliation, Nectanebo II is hardly portrayed as a paragon of masculinity. He seduces Olympias not through physical prowess, but by magic and trickery. In a later version of the Romance, it is even implied that Olympias is wise to his deception but decides to go along with the charade in order to get back at Philip. It is also worth pointing out that Alexander, while biologically the offspring of Nectanebo, is more like Philip than the Egyptian Pharaoh in spirit and temperament. The skills and attributes needed to become a world conqueror are learned from Philip, rather than Nectanebo. The most compelling piece of evidence, however, is the fact that this is not the first time the Egyptians have appropriated a foreign ruler in this manner.

Herodotus writes of a Persian story in which Cambyses asks Amasis II for one of his daughters. The Pharaoh, reluctant to give up his daughter or to defy the Persian king, sent another woman – Nitetis, the daughter of the former Pharaoh Apries, in her stead. Nitetis, however, reveals Amasis' treachery, and Cambyses responds by invading Egypt.<sup>240</sup> However, Herodotus also claimed that the Egyptians had their very own version of this story:

*"This is the Persian version of the story. But the Egyptians claim Cambyses for their own; they say that he was the son of this daughter of Apries, and that it was Cyrus, not Cambyses, who*

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<sup>239</sup> Lloyd, 1982, 59-50

<sup>240</sup> Herodotus. 3.1. = Godley

*sent to Amasis for his daughter. But this tale is false. Nay, they are well aware (for the Egyptians have a truer knowledge than any men of the Persian law) firstly, that no bastard may be king of Persia if there be a son born in lawful wedlock; and secondly, that Cambyses was born not of the Egyptian woman but of Cassandane, daughter of Pharnaspes, an Achaemenid. But they so twist the story because they would claim kinship with the house of Cyrus."*<sup>241</sup>

Note that Cambyses was depicted as the son of an Egyptian *princess*, rather than an Egyptian prince or king. This is a very important distinction, because unless ancient Egypt was considerably more progressive than the evidence suggests, it contains no sexual domination or humiliation of the Persians. There does not seem to be any attempt at ‘stripping the enemy of its capacity to inspire fear’ present in the story. What could be the reason for this? The Egyptians loathed the Persians, and had every reason in the world to humiliate and undermine them. It is possible that Herodotus is simply paraphrasing a longer and more complex story, and that the tale in its entirety featured a humiliating, anti-Persian element. We have no way of ascertaining that, however, as the story does not feature in any sources other than that of Herodotus.

As it stands, it seems much more likely that this was simply a way for the Egyptians to heal their wounded national pride. The blow of the Persian conquest was likely softened by pretending that the conqueror was one of their own. Moreover, if the Egyptians wanted to produce an anti-Macedonian tract, then surely it would have made more sense to *reject* Alexander, rather than *embracing* him? I would imagine that if the story was intended as a slight to the Macedonians, it would be more in the vein of apocalyptic texts such as the Oracle of the Potter or the Prophecy of the Lamb, which explicitly prophesizes the ousting of the Greeks.

The origin of this part of the story is widely believed to be Egyptian, and most of the evidence is indicative of this. One theory is that the story originated after Alexander’s death. When Ptolemy I Soter stole Alexander’s body and had it returned to Egypt, he brought it to Memphis and had it placed in a Sarcophagus meant for Nectanebo II. There it remained, until it was moved to Alexandria during the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus. Thus, the legend that Alexander was the reincarnated Pharaoh was born. The prophecy that Nectanebo would return as a young man is interesting, and – to my knowledge, not typical of ancient Egypt. It does, however, make a certain amount of sense in this context. The Greeks had already begun cultivating the connection between Alexander and the exiled Pharaoh, and may also have encouraged such stories. This would certainly make sense if the story was conceived by priests,

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<sup>241</sup> Herodotus. 3.2. = Godley

as many scholars believe. However, we also have to bear in mind that Martin Braun could be correct in his assessment that the Romance was born amongst the lower stratum of Egyptian society.

Interestingly, Alexander's body is never placed in Nectanebo's coffin in the Romance. Instead, Ptolemy I Soter initially brought the body to Memphis, but was met by a contingent of priests who ask him not to bring place his body in Memphis, but instead bring it to Alexandria. Their reason for this, is that whichever place Alexander is laid to rest will forever be plagued by conflict, strife and war. Ptolemy I Soter obliges them, and this actually fulfills a prophecy made by Sarapis earlier in the Romance, that Alexandria would become his tomb.<sup>242</sup> If the placement of Alexander's corpse in the sarcophagus of Nectanebo was the inspiration for the Romance, then it is very curious that it did not make it into the story itself. The scene occurs at the very end of the Romance, and may thus be a late addition or alteration made long after the inspiration had been forgotten. I believe this is another case of different narratives coming together.

As I have written above, I believe that the Dream of Nectanebo was conceived during the Second Persian Domination, and that – inspired by The Prophecies of Neferty and the Egyptian love for Nectanebo II, predicted that his son would return and defeat the Persians. The Sequel Fragment was written after the Macedonian conquest and made another prophecy in which Alexander was named as the son of Nectanebo II. If I am correct in my hypothesis, then I think it is a fair assumption that the Sequel Fragment was written in the very early days of the Greek period. My reason is that there was already a literary framework in place that would allow the Egyptians to make a simple addendum to the original prophecy. Thus, the prophecy that inspired the Romance could very well have been written before the death of Alexander. This would preclude the placing of Alexander's body in Nectanebo's sarcophagus from having inspired the prophecy made in the Romance. I am of the opinion that the original Nectanebo story merely prophesized that Alexander was his son and that he would save Egypt, with no mention of reincarnation. It is my belief that the prophecy made in the Romance that Nectanebo would return as a young man was a later addition, inspired by Alexander being laid to rest in the sarcophagus of Nectanebo. I am not certain if this was a Greek or an Egyptian change, or when it was made, but it might have been added at the urging of the Ptolemies as part of their efforts to develop a royal cult.

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<sup>242</sup> AR. 1.33. = Stoneman

Particular attention should be paid to the death of Nectanebo at the hands of a twelve years old Alexander. It is by far one of the most confusing elements in the Romance, and it has confounded scholars to no end. In fact, a theory as to its meaning that has attained any level of scholarly consensus has yet to materialize. The death springs put of nowhere, with zero hint or foreshadowing leading up to it. The dying Nectanebo claims that he had foreseen that he would meet his end at the hands of his son. This prediction is never mentioned earlier in the story, however. Furthermore, the oldest version of the story even features a line that states that while Nectanebo was a skilled magician, adept at foreseeing the future, he could not perceive “*his own fate lying before him*”.<sup>243</sup> According to Krzysztof Nawotka, Wilhelm Kroll suggested that that Nectanebo was disposed of for purely literary reasons; that Pseudo-Callisthenes simply had no further use for him in the story.<sup>244</sup> As simple as this may sound, it might be the most logical explanation. After Alexander is born, he becomes the main character, while Nectanebo is killed two chapters later.

What we are witnessing here may be the clearest example of the Egyptian influences passing the torch to the Greek ones. Nectanebo may have been killed because this was no longer his story. The Alexander myth began taking on a life of its own, and later writing may have inspired Pseudo-Callisthenes to make alterations to the earlier parts of the Romance. Indeed, the opening of the Romance even appears to be a condensed version of the Dream of Nectanebo and its sequel. This is not to say that there is a clear dividing line between the Greek and Egyptian influences, far from it. There does, however, appear to be a relatively clear line separating the early Nectanebo romance from the mythos of Alexander. I believe that that the early Egyptian tale prophesized the birth of Alexander and that Ammon was his father, but that that was approximately where it ended. As mentioned above, the Macedonian part represents the place in the story where the two cultures intersect; the myth of Alexander picking up where the myth of Nectanebo originally ended.

Alexander’s motives for killing Nectanebo are puzzling to say the least. The exiled Pharaoh served as a tutor to Alexander, who respectfully referred to his teacher as ‘father’. Alexander offers a reason for his actions, but as Richard Stoneman puts it – it is a singularly feeble excuse.<sup>245</sup> When the mortally wounded Nectanebo inquires as to why Alexander has slain him, the Macedonian prince replies that the astrologer had only himself to blame: “*Because, not*

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<sup>243</sup> AR. 1.14.1-4. = Haight

<sup>244</sup> Nawotka, 2017, 75

<sup>245</sup> Stoneman, 2008, 23-24

*understanding the matters of earth, you seek to know heaven*“. Krzysztof Nawotka has drawn a connection between this particular quote and an anecdote relayed by Diogenes Laërtius about the astrologer Thales of Miletos.<sup>246</sup> In this anecdote, Thales goes outside accompanied by an elderly woman in order to read the stars, when suddenly he falls into a ditch. When Thales cries out for help, the elderly woman responds: *"How can you expect to know all about the heavens, Thales, when you cannot even see what is just before your feet?"*.<sup>247</sup> The resemblance between the two sentences is undeniable, and Diogenes' anecdote may help us further understand the Romance.

For all his skills as a soothsayer, Thales is unable to see what is right in front of him, nevermind his own fate. Likewise, the great prophet Nectanebo is unable to predict his demise at the hands of Alexander. This appears to be, if not a specific reference to Thales of Miletos, then at least drawn from the same topos. There are some considerable differences, however. For while the words spoken by Alexander and the elderly woman are similar, the tone and gravity of the situations differ wildly. The Thales story highlights the irony of a man who can see the future, but is unable to see what is right in front of him. It may also serve as a commentary on the consequences of spending too much time gazing at the skies, and not enough time on life itself. The elderly woman's words appear to be a jibe at Thales' expense, but are primarily meant to highlight the irony of his predicament. This is quite different from the Romance, where the tone is more serious and the situation considerably dire. Where Thales was likely helped out of the ditch by the elderly woman, Nectanebo has been mortally wounded. Alexander's words are also scolding, rather than taunting. Thales story is a humorous and ironic anecdote, while Nectanebo's most closely resembles a tragedy. There is perhaps an implicit element of hubris in this scene. Nectanebo was a powerful magician, yet he meets his end at the hands of a child.

There are some tonal differences in the varying versions of this scene. In the oldest versions, there are some lines that are a bit harsh on Nectanebo, compared to the later ones. In all versions, Alexander is stricken with grief upon learning that he has murdered his own father. In the oldest Greek version, however, he has some harsh words for the dead Pharaoh. While remorseful, Alexander maintains that he is blameless, scolding Nectanebo for keeping this secret for him and deeming his demise a fitting punishment for his deception. This speech is not extant in other versions. The scene where Alexander presents the body of Nectanebo before Olympias is also much shorter, merely paraphrasing Alexander's conversation with Olympias and

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<sup>246</sup> Nawotka, 2017, 75

<sup>247</sup> Diog. Laërt. 1. 34. = Hicks



Nectanebo's burial.<sup>248</sup> In the *L* version, their conversation is extant, and Alexander states that he is a second Aeneas, carrying his father on his shoulders.<sup>249</sup> This part could be a very late addition to the story, given the significance of Aeneas in Roman culture.

The harshness with which Nectanebo is treated raises some interesting questions. When Nectanebo tells Olympias that she will become pregnant with the god Ammon, he ensures her that the child will become an avenger of the sins of Philip. The concept of an avenger was widespread in ancient Egypt, though mostly in the form of a son avenging his father, like Horus and Osiris. As part of the royal ideology, the Pharaoh succeeding his father was known as 'avenger of his father'; annihilating the death of his predecessor and assuming his predecessor's duties and responsibilities.<sup>250</sup> The concept was sometimes incorporated in the Horus-names of Pharaohs, like *Hornedjherotef* from the Second Intermediate Period, which translates to 'avenger of his father' or 'champion of his father'.<sup>251</sup>

The roles are somewhat reversed in the Romance. Alexander never fulfills Nectanebo's prophecy, however, as he never avenges the sins of Philip. The Romance never even establishes how Philip has wronged Olympias. All we know is that they have a rocky relationship, and that Philip contemplates divorcing Olympias. Krzysztof Nawotka writes that a later understanding of the epithet *Hornedjherotef* was closer to *ekdikoi*, which were legal representatives in the Roman age. Alexander later acts as Olympias' attorney in her conflict with Philip,<sup>252</sup> and plays an important role in their reconciliation. If Nawotka is correct, then the 'champion' epithet makes a lot more sense. Indeed, when Alexander takes on the role of mediator between Philip and Olympias after the former has taken another wife, he says that Philip is torturing his own soul over the *sins* he has committed. He then tells Olympias that if Philip does not sense his own guilt, then *he* will be her *avenger*.

Richard Stoneman has suggested another possibility, namely that it is Philip *himself* who is avenged, when Nectanebo is slain.<sup>253</sup> It was, after all, Philip who was cuckolded by the Egyptian Pharaoh, and Alexander explicitly names Philip along with Olympias as the injured parties when he scolds Nectanebo for his deception. Is it possible that the sentence "avenger of the sins of Philip" was originally the more Egyptian epithet "*avenger of his father*". This would make

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<sup>248</sup> AR. 1. 14. = Haight

<sup>249</sup> AR. 1. 14. = Stoneman

<sup>250</sup> Stoneman, 2008, 21

<sup>251</sup> Nawotka, 2017, 56

<sup>252</sup> Nawotka, 2017, 56

<sup>253</sup> Stoneman, 2008, 23-24

sense on two levels at the same time. Alexander avenges Nectanebo by ousting the Persians from Egypt, like Horus banishing Seth. He also avenges Philip, by slaying Nectanebo. Philip may not have been born of the Macedonian king's seed, but Philip is his legal father. Moreover, even after Alexander learns the truth of his parentage, he still sees Philip as his father. Their relationship is sometimes fraught, but Alexander wishes to serve Philip, who in return is proud of Alexander's achievements. The nature of their relationship is made clear during the death of Philip.

Pausinias, a wealthy man who desires Olympias, mortally wounds Philip so that he can claim her for himself. Alexander finds Pausinias and brings him before Philip, declaring *"I am here, Father, to wreak vengeance on your enemies. Live, king: Your name is immortal. Behold your foe, Pausanias, captured, standing before you, trembling."*, before killing him. The presence of Alexander and his vengeance completed allows Philip to regain enough strength to deliver his dying words: *"My child Alexander, it has been decreed that you be ruler of the world. Remember your father Philip and do not refuse to call me father. For my fate has been fulfilled."*<sup>254</sup> Grief-stricken, Alexander laments his father's passing thus:

*"Philip, father, King of kings, while you lived, no one despised you and did not pay for it. By awkward stroke your arm has dispatched Pausanias. How has perished from his wound the ruler of the world? The Cyclops Pausanias sent you to the gods before your time, and straightway justice dealt out to him his fitting reward."*<sup>255</sup>

Alexander honors Philip's wishes, and always acknowledges his father. Even as he claims to be the son of Ammon, he still calls Philip his mortal father. Nectanebo, meanwhile, is only acknowledged one time – when it is convenient.<sup>256</sup> The notion of Alexander's desire to avenge Philip could very well be based on reality. When Alexander sought out the oracle in the Siwah desert, one of the questions he asked was *if he had punished all of his father's murderers*.<sup>257</sup> Interestingly, Nectanebo himself actually predicted all of this. The sea falcon he sends to convince Philip that Olympias has been impregnated by Ammon, bears the message that the child will be the avenger of both Olympias and Philip.<sup>258</sup> In the Armenian version, it even explicitly states that the child will avenge *his father's death*.<sup>259</sup> Both Olympias and Philip are

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<sup>254</sup> AR. 1.34. = Haight

<sup>255</sup> AR. 1.34. = Haight

<sup>256</sup> AR. 1.34. = Haight

<sup>257</sup> Diod. Sic. 17.51. = Welles

<sup>258</sup> AR. 1.8. = Haight

<sup>259</sup> AR. 1.8. = Wolohijan

indeed avenged when Nectanebo is slain, and Philip is further avenged when Alexander brings his assassin before him. This was probably not meant as a real prophecy, but rather as part of his deception of Philip. There is undeniably a certain element of irony here, though, as Nectanebo has unwittingly predicted his own demise. Whether this irony was intentional or not, is another matter.

Regardless, I would say that as the Romance progresses, Nectanebo is portrayed less favorably than Philip. This could be a result of the increasing Greek influence on the story; combined with the fact that Nectanebo had in effect '*played his part*'. The Macedonians held Philip in very high regard, even after his death. In fact, the horror with which the Macedonians reacted to Alexander's proclamation that he was the son of Ammon may partly have been because they considered it disrespectful to Philip II.<sup>260</sup> This could well be the reason why he is depicted more positively in the continuation of the Nectanebo Romance. In reality, the relationship between Alexander and Philip was volatile and wrought, and Alexander was even suspected of orchestrating the assassination of Philip. In the Romance, however, their relationship is retroactively healed. Pseudo-Callisthenes gives their father-son relationship that the Macedonians believed it deserved.

The Romance even features a possible subtle hint that Alexander actually *is* Philip's biological son after all. When the Macedonian prince is born, he is described as having the physical characteristics of a lion, which is likely a reference to Heracles. According to one of the many legends, Alexander was the descendant of Heracles *through Philip*

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<sup>260</sup> Plut. Alex. 50. = Perrin

### 3.7 Son of God: Ammon

The parentage of Alexander is further complicated by the ram-headed Libyan god. Ostensibly, Nectanebo only pretends to be Ammon when he copulates with Olympias. Alexander's birth, however, plays out rather spectacularly, as it is accompanied with lightning, thunder claps and the rumbling of the earth. Plutarch, who claims that Alexander was descended from Heracles, writes that on the night her wedding was consummated, Olympias dreamt that thunder fell upon her womb.<sup>261</sup> It is unknown if Plutarch's account was based on the Alexander Romance, or if the Romance's account of Alexander's birth was a later addition inspired by Plutarch's account. They may both have been based on the original myths about Alexander, however. As stated in the beginning of this section, the legends of Alexander were circulated already in his own lifetime. It would be surprising if thunder and lightning was not attributed to the birth of a man who sought to emulate Achilles and claimed he was the son of Ammon.

The choice of Ammon in the Romance makes perfect sense in a story of both Greek and Egyptian authorship. The ram-headed Libyan god was also identified as Amun-Re, one of the most important gods in the Egyptian pantheon. In the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, during the reign of Hatshephu, a belief arose that the Pharaoh was the offspring of Amun-Re himself.<sup>262</sup> The queen used this myth to legitimize her own rule, and it subsequently became part of the ideology of divine kingship.<sup>263</sup> Indeed, subsequent rulers would use this link to the Sun-god in order to strengthen their powers. This ideology was taken to its logical extreme by Akhenaten, who tried to do away with Egyptian polytheism and focus its worship on a sun-god known as Aton. The concept survived Akhenaten's ill-fated experiment, however, and the link between Pharaoh and gods remained a core part of the royal ideology. Thus, Ammon fathering Alexander makes perfect sense, and it legitimizes him as a Pharaoh.

The Greeks were also familiar with Ammon, as he had somehow made his way to the Greek mainland. He was worshipped as Ammon-Zeus, and his following was particularly strong in Thebes. Zeus himself was known for fathering numerous offspring, often with mortal women. The most famous of these is the mighty Heracles, one of Alexander's heroes, and whom it was said that he was descended from. Zeus and his procreation was not linked to kingship and royal ideology like that of Amun-Re, but rather individual feats of strength and daring; like that of

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<sup>261</sup> Plutarch. 1.2. = Perrin

<sup>262</sup> Exell & Naunton, 2007, 96

<sup>263</sup> Exell & Naunton, 2007, 96

the heroes that Greeks aspired to be. In this sense, Ammon may here represent both the legitimacy of Egyptian kingship as well as the ideal of the Homeric heroes whom Alexander sought to emulate. If this is the case, then it is a subtle and sophisticated example of Greco-Egyptian cross-cultural interaction. There are, however, a few complications.

The problem with Alexander's parentage is, as Susan A. Stephens puts it, that it is overdetermined.<sup>264</sup> To put it bluntly: there are too many fathers. The Egyptians were, of course, fully aware that the Pharaohs had mortal fathers.<sup>265</sup> However, the situation in the Romance is quite unique – for it is initially made quite clear that the divine parentage is a sham, as Nectanebo merely *pretends* to be a god. Normally, the god would come to the queen in the guise of her husband, but Nectanebo does almost the opposite here. In a way, it is a complete inversion of the traditional Egyptian myth. So what exactly is going on here? Susan A. Stephens has suggested that this part is meant to be satirical, pointing out that this was not unheard of in Egyptian culture.<sup>266</sup> The later versions of the Romance, where Nectanebo actually dresses up as Ammon could be indicative of that. It is also possible that that this particular part was the product of Greek irreverence, as well. As stated above, the Greek response to Alexander's claim that he was the son of Ammon was mixed. Some accepted it, while some were horrified. Some even reacted with apathy, simply responding “*let him be Zeus if he wants*”. The notion of Nectanebo pretending to be a god while impregnating Olympias could well be a mockery or a subversion of Alexander's claim to godhood. This would be an exceptionally bold move, as Alexander is reported to have reacted with fury at anyone questioning the veracity of his divine heritage.<sup>267</sup> It seems equally unlikely that it was composed in the early days of the Hellenistic period, as the Ptolemies relied on the legacy of Alexander to legitimize their rule.

It would perhaps be unwise to interpret the events too literally. As an Egyptian Pharaoh, Nectanebo is the son of Amun-Re, and thus - while not a god, or even a demigod *himself*, has *a part of a god in him*. This piece of the divine is then transferred to his son upon death; the Pharaoh becoming Osiris, and the prince becoming Horus. Nectanebo draws upon the powers bestowed upon him by the gods to assume the form of Ammon. Based on this, one could interpret the event as Ammon acting *through* Nectanebo. It is naturally not identical to the

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<sup>264</sup> Stephens, 2003, 69

<sup>265</sup> Stephens, 2003, 70

<sup>266</sup> Stephens, 2003, 71

<sup>267</sup> Arrian. *Anab.* 7.8.3. = Brunt

traditional Egyptian myth, but then the specific act of theogamy is never clearly defined. It would be but a small variation on an established tradition.

There may actually be a certain precedence for this in Greek tradition as well. Writing on the subject of Alexander's supposedly divine parentage, Daniel Ogden points out that in some versions of the mythical tradition of Heracles, the Greek hero was *jointly sired* by Zeus and Amphitryon. He goes on to suggest that this may have been the case with Zeus and Phillip as well, in that the former works through the latter.<sup>268</sup> This certainly makes sense, since Alexander does not renounce Philip; referring to him as his 'earthly father'. This could also be the case in the Romance. Alexander would be the son of both Nectanebo *and* Ammon, without there being any contradiction. This would probably satisfy Egyptian sensibilities, as the two fathers served dual purposes. Nectanebo legitimizing Alexander as a native Pharaoh, and Ammon inserting him into native theology.<sup>269</sup>

From an Egyptian perspective, the doubling makes sense,<sup>270</sup> but there is historical evidence suggesting that the Greeks struggled to wrap their heads around the concept. According to Arrian, the reports from that time states that Alexander demanded obeisance based on the underlying idea that his father was Ammon, and not Philip.<sup>271</sup> This certainly suggests that Alexander was not considered the son of *both* Philip and Ammon at that particular time. In Plutarch's account of Alexander's murder of Cleitus, the latter angrily berates Alexander for disowning Philip as his father and instead making himself the son of Ammon.<sup>272</sup> Alexander, however, does not appear to have disavowed Philip as his father. There is no reason to believe that he would do such a thing either, as rejecting Philip would also mean forfeiting his right to the Macedonian throne. During the Mutiny at Opis, the mutineers declared that they were fed up with the expedition, and asked him to discharge them and bring his father along with him instead; mocking his claim to divine heritage.<sup>273</sup> Alexander delivered a speech where he invoked Philip as his father, listing everything he had done for them.<sup>274</sup> Alexander may have done this for purely political reasons, but it demonstrates that he did not disavow Philip. Instead, he claimed both Philip and Ammon as his fathers. The report that he demanded obeisance because his father was Ammon, and not Philip, and Cleitus attack on Alexander for supposedly

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<sup>268</sup> Ogden, 2011, 10-11

<sup>269</sup> Stephens, 2003, 70

<sup>270</sup> Stephens, 2003, 70

<sup>271</sup> Arrian. Anab. 4.9.9 = Brunt

<sup>272</sup> Plut. Alex. 50.11. = Perrin

<sup>273</sup> Arrian. Anab. 7.8.1-3. = Brunt

<sup>274</sup> Arrian. Anab. 7.9.1-9. = Brunt

disavowing Philip, appear to me as Macedonian inability to accept the idea that Alexander had a mortal father and a divine one. To the Egyptians and the Persians, there was no contradiction. To the Greeks and Macedonians, the idea caused cognitive dissonance. Alexander had to be the son of *one* or the *other*.

The question is, how do we make sense of how pronounced Nectanebo's charade is in the Romance? Nectanebo clearly makes himself appear as Ammon, and in later versions, he dresses up as the ram-headed god. His dying confession does not make any sense if he did not *pretend* to be Ammon. It may be a result of a Greek authorship wishing to eliminate the ambiguity. As stated above, the details of Egyptian theogamy were obscure to say the least, and that may have been the case in the original Nectanebo Romance as well. In the Alexander Romance, however, Pseudo-Callisthenes may have wanted to make the theogamy more defined and tangible when he adapted the story for the Greek novel. Thus, we have a Greek adaptation of an Egyptian theological myth about kingship; or at the very least a Greek attempt at making sense of it.

An interesting point is that Pseudo-Callisthenes appears to have forgotten about Nectanebo's confession later in the story. After conquering Egypt, Alexander visits the Oracle of Ammon in the Siwah desert where he asks if Olympias was correct when she named him the son of Ammon. The Oracle responds in the affirmative, confirming that Alexander is indeed the son of a god. The Romance features no such scene between Alexander and Olympias. The Macedonian queen only makes one reference to Ammon after Nectanebo's death, and this only occurs in one of the later versions of the Romance. That the later parts of the Romance still maintains that Alexander is the son of Ammon is not surprising. The Romance is fictionalized history, and Alexander's claim was historically real, and his divine parentage a well-established part of his legend. To remove it from the story would not have made sense. This could be further evidence of the mixed authorship of the Alexander Romance. It just does not mesh well with the previous part of the story. The Alexander legend appears to have been crudely tacked onto the Nectanebo Romance, with seemingly little to zero effort put into ironing out the wrinkles in the resulting narrative.

### 3.8 The Foundation of Alexandria

The parts of the Romance that actually takes place in Egypt, are very interesting. The central theme appears to be the foundation of Alexandria, its status as an Egyptian city and the city as the legacy of Alexander. One would think that this part of the Romance would include some sort of continuation of the Nectanebo part of the story, but that is not the case. The prophecy is repeated, and Alexander does proclaim himself the son of Nectanebo. It is such a brief scene, however, and the story quickly returns to Alexandria instead.

It is interesting that the story of the foundation of Alexandria begins before the Macedonians have even arrived in Egypt. In reality, Alexander did not visit the oracle of Ammon until after he had conquered Egypt. The reason why the chronology was changed may have been to make the commands of Ammon as to where Alexander should build his city more impactful. The Romance never mentions any intentions by Alexander of conquering Egypt. In fact, after the death of Nectanebo, Egypt is not even mentioned by name until chapter 39 when the founding of Alexandria is already well under way. By reversing the chronology, Pseudo-Callisthenes may have tried to give the impression that Alexander came to Egypt in order to found Alexandria. His aim may have been not only to strengthen the idea that the foundation was the will of Ammon, but also to forge a connection between Alexandria and the liberation of Egypt.

Ptolemy I Soter's account of Alexander's campaign to the Oracle of Ammon at Siwa differed from that of his contemporaries. All the other accounts wrote that Alexander's party followed two crows to the desert. Ptolemy, however, claimed that they were lead by two talking snakes. That Ptolemy I Soter's account differs so widely from the rest is peculiar, and suggests that the alteration was a conscious decision. There are indications that he sought to create a pattern that associated Alexander with serpents, and himself with Alexander.<sup>275</sup> Both Diodorus Siculus and Curtius writes that during the siege of Indian Hermetalia, Alexander was the recipient of a peculiar dream. In it, a serpent revealed to him how he could heal his favorite, Ptolemy, for whom he was grieving.<sup>276</sup> That both Diodorus and Curtius relayed this story suggests that their original source was Cleitarchus, who was working in Alexandria and frequented Ptolemy's

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<sup>275</sup> Ogden, 2014, 134

<sup>276</sup> Diod. Sic. 17.103.4– 8. = Welles; Curtius 9.8.22– 28 = Yardley



court.<sup>277</sup> Daniel Ogden believes that these myths, if not created by Ptolemy, was probably at least sponsored by him.<sup>278</sup>

The reason Ptolemy wanted to associate both Alexander and himself with serpents was because Agathos Daimon, the patron god of Alexandria, took the form of a snake. Agathos Daimon was, as his name suggests, a ‘*good spirit*’, and not originally a deity himself. Regardless of his nature, he did not feature prominently in Greek mythology, but may have been considerably more popular in Greek folk religion.

In Egypt, however, he became a god. Ptolemy created a foundation myth for Alexandria, wherein Agathos Daimon was slain on Alexander’s orders during the construction of the city. The good spirit was buried underneath the city, which bound him to it, and thus he became Alexandria’s patron deity. The earliest version featuring this story is actually the one in the *Romance*.<sup>279</sup> The story itself, however, likely dates back to the early Hellenistic period, as the Agathos Daimon cult appears to have been established in the reign of Ptolemy I Soter.<sup>280</sup> There is a statue known as *Alexander Aegiochus* that depicts Alexander with a serpent coiled around his leg. The original is now lost to us, but scholars believe that it was made ca 320-300 B.C.<sup>281</sup> Numerous copies were made, with eighteen surviving in variable conditions.<sup>282</sup> This could be indicative of the popularity or at the very least prevalence of the cult.

In a fragment of Manetho’s *Aegyptiaka*, preserved by Syncellus, the Egyptian priest produces a list of gods and demigods constituting what he calls ‘the first dynasty of Egypt’. Of the twelve names listed, Agathos Daimon is ranked as number 3 – behind only Hephasteus (Ptah) and Helios.<sup>283</sup> That Agathos Daimon ranks so high on a list of gods at such an early point in history suggests that the cult had gained significant footing in Egypt at this point. There is also the possibility that this was an attempt to popularize Agathos Daimon; probably at the behest of Ptolemy II Philadelphus.

Agathos Daimon appears to follow in the tradition of Greek foundation myths such as Cadmus slaying the serpent Ares before founding Thebes; and Apollon slaying Python before re-

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<sup>277</sup> Ogden, 2014, 145

<sup>278</sup> Ogden, 2014, 134

<sup>279</sup> Ogden, 2015, 130

<sup>280</sup> Ogden, 2015, 131

<sup>281</sup> Ogden, 2011, 36. Stewart, 1993, 246-253

<sup>282</sup> Ogden, 2011, 36-37

<sup>283</sup> Syncellus. Frg 3. = Waddell

founding the Delphic oracle.<sup>284</sup> The good demon could also be tapping in to Egyptian culture as well, by playing the roles of Apophis or Seth, to Alexander's Ammon or Horus.<sup>285</sup> Agathos Daimon also became associated the Egyptian god of destiny whom, as mentioned above, was depicted as a serpent. Agathos Daimon appear to have appropriated some of Sai's characteristics; most notably his association with fate.<sup>286</sup>

To which degree these deities were syncretized is not entirely clear. The Greeks may have borrowed attributes from the Egyptian Sai, while the Egyptians simply began referring to Sai as Agathos Daimon; similar to how Ptah became Hepheistos, and Thoth became Hermes. The Egyptians do appear to have accepted Agathos Daimon as a protective deity into their own religion. The most compelling evidence of this can be found in the supposedly anti-Greek, or certainly anti-Ptolemaic text *The Oracle of the Potter*. This apocalyptic story not only prophesizes the expulsion of the Greeks, but also that Agathos Daimon will abandon Alexandria and take up residence in Greece.<sup>287</sup> If Agathos Daimon was seen only as a Greek deity, then they surely would not have wanted him to relocate to the sacred city of Memphis. This appears to me as evidence of the syncretization of Agathos Daimon and Sai.

Sarapis was a Greco-Egyptian hybrid god that was introduced during the reign of Ptolemy I Soter. The basis for this deity was the Egyptian Osiris-Apis, who was given a Greek appearance along with attributes of Pluton and Dionysus.<sup>288</sup> He was conceived as a god that was meant to appeal to both Greeks and Egyptians.<sup>289</sup> The Ptolemies were sponsors of his cult, and probably hoped that he would be able to unite the two cultures. Sarapis had a mixed reactions, though. The Greco-Egyptian god became immensely popular among Greeks in Egypt and even other parts of the Hellenistic world.<sup>290</sup> The Egyptians, however, did not take much of an interest.<sup>291</sup> The reason for this is likely that while Sarapis fulfilled some religious need of the Greeks, the Egyptians already had Osiris who fulfilled the same purposes.

That Sarapis, as a chthonic god, is invoked as part of Alexander's search for immortality and questions of his own death makes sense. More surprising, however, is his close association with Alexandria. Indeed, Sarapis speaks of the future splendor of the city, and promises to protect it

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<sup>284</sup> Ogden, 2011, 38

<sup>285</sup> Ogden, 2011, 38

<sup>286</sup> Greenbaum, 2015, 85

<sup>287</sup> ZPE 13 = Austin

<sup>288</sup> Miles, 2010, 205

<sup>289</sup> Miles, 2010, 205

<sup>290</sup> Stambaugh, 1972, 98-102

<sup>291</sup> Stambaugh, 1972, 102

from harm. Thus, he becomes something of a second protective deity of Alexandria; keeping Agathos Daimon company. His prophecy that the city will be the final resting place of Alexander is probably to emphasize the his eponymous cult which was centered on his tomb in Alexandria.

Sarapis is also given more mythological depth. Although he was conceived during the early days of the Ptolemies, he is presented here as a long lost god of the world who was worshipped by the legendary Sesonchosis. The Romance even depicts Alexander as the founder of his cult. The intention appears here to confer legitimacy upon Sarapis by associating him with Sesonchosis and Alexander, but also to propagate an idea of an Alexandrian mythology.

Alexander is proclaimed a new Sesonchosis; ruler of the world. Sesonchosis, more commonly known as Sesostris, was a mythological Pharaoh of Egypt's past. Interestingly, the first surviving account documenting his supposed existence is actually provided to us by Herodotus. In Book II, the Greek historian writes that Sesostris was a great Pharaoh who not only conquered the Scythians, but was also the only Egyptian king who ruled Ethiopia as well. Many years later, after Darius I of Persia conquered Egypt, he wanted to erect statues of himself in front of the temple of Ptah. The priest of Ptah objected to this, for this was also the location of statues in honor of Sesostris and his family. The priest's reasoning was that while Darius had conquered many lands, his achievements were still inferior to those of Sesostris, because Darius had not subjugated the Scythians.<sup>292</sup>

Although Herodotus treats Sesostris as a real historical figure, he appears to be little more than a legend based upon various Pharaohs. Herodotus claims to have seen various pillars erected by Sesostris during his campaigns,<sup>293</sup> it is more likely that these pillars he refers to were instead Hittite monuments.<sup>294</sup> Stephanie West believes that Herodotus has "*synthesised hearsay evidence derived from various sources with over-confident speculation.*"<sup>295</sup> It is worth noting that Herodotus' main sources for the Sesostris story appears to have been Egyptian priests,<sup>296</sup> who as we already know, had a penchant for shaping history to suit their needs. Manetho lists him in his kings-list, stating that he was considered by the Egyptians to be second only to Osiris in their esteem.<sup>297</sup> However, as we have already seen, Manetho was himself not exactly the

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<sup>292</sup> Herodotus. 2.102-110. = Godley

<sup>293</sup> Herodotus. 2.106. = Godley

<sup>294</sup> West, 1992, 117-119

<sup>295</sup> West, 1992, 118

<sup>296</sup> Herodotus. 2.102. = Godley

<sup>297</sup> Syncellus. Fr. 34. = Waddell

most reliable of historians. His ahistorical accounts of the Hyksos should be evidence of that. Manetho was also intimately familiar with the works of Herodotus, and he may even have based his account on that of the Greek historian.

Sesostris was most likely a composite character; a legendary amalgamation of previous successful Pharaohs. The mythic king shares his name with previous Pharaohs, and given his supposed conquests in the south, it seems likely that he was closely based upon both Sesostri I and Sesostri III.<sup>298</sup> The legendary Pharaoh's campaigns in Syria suggests that inspiration was also drawn from their beloved Ramesses II. Sesostri appears to have been a magnified version, however, as no Egyptian king ever subjugated the Scythians. Sesostri appears more to represent an idea, rather than an actual person; an ideal for other kings to aspire to. In this sense, Sesostri is similar to the Homeric heroes of the Greeks.

The specific mention of Darius I of Persia is interesting. In Herodotus' account, a direct comparison between Darius and Sesostri sees the latter come out on top, since Darius never subjugated the Scythians. Since no Egyptian Pharaoh had done so either in the past, this particular accomplishment of Sesostri may have been invented specifically to undermine the achievements of Darius I. The legend of Sesostri appears to have become a vessel of Egyptian nationalism directed against the Persians. This should not come as a surprise at this point, as I have already documented the Egyptians' willingness to rewrite history in order to nurse their national pride. Stephanie West describes Sesostri as a legend to sustain the dreams of national independence.<sup>299</sup> Alan B. Lloyd writes that Sesostri served not only to console the Egyptians' national pride, but also to restore faith in Egyptian cultural ideals and satiate, on a fantasy level, their military aspirations.<sup>300</sup> Indeed, there is even evidence that the Egyptians later employed Sesostri against the Macedonians as well in a similar manner.

Diodorus Siculus writes that Sesostri not only campaigned across the lands that Alexander the Great would himself later conquer, but had also claimed India as his territory.<sup>301</sup> Thus, what Alexander the Great had failed to do, Sesostri had already accomplished long ago. This is remarkably similar to Herodotus' account where Darius' achievements are deemed inferior to the legendary Pharaoh. Here it is Alexander the Great who is not able to quite measure up to the standard of Sesostri. Notice, however, that the standard has changed. In Diodorus' account,

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<sup>298</sup> Braun, 1938, 16

<sup>299</sup> West, 1993, 117

<sup>300</sup> Lloyd, 1982, 39-40

<sup>301</sup> Diod. Sic. 1.55.2-3. = Oldfather

the conquest of India has been added to the list of Sesostris' achievements. This is conspicuously absent in Herodotus' account. It does not seem likely that it was part of the legend from the start, and that Herodotus simply missed it or omitted it from his account. Indeed, according to Strabo, Megasthenes – who wrote around the time 275. B.C., listed Sesostris among the many great conquerors that never conquered India.<sup>302</sup> It appears to have been added specifically to undermine Alexander the Great, just like the conquest of Scythia undermined Darius. Diodorus' main sources for the account are Greek writers – primarily Hecataeus of Abdera, certainly, but possibly also Herodotus and Megasthenes – along with Egyptian priests and poets.<sup>303</sup> It is difficult to know how much is based on Hecataeus of Abdera, and how much is based on Egyptian priests and poets. Considering that Megasthenes' If I am correct, then Diodorus Siculus – like Herodotus before him, may have become the unwitting propagator of Egyptian nationalist propaganda.

As much as the Sesostris legend may have been used to undermine foreign rulers like Darius and Alexander, it was also very much informed by them.<sup>304</sup> Diodorus' account states that after 33 years of reign, Sesostris took his own life.<sup>305</sup> Kim Ryholt believes that this was due to the fact that Alexander died in his 33<sup>rd</sup> year. Sesostris was thus partially modeled on Alexander the Great.<sup>306</sup> That Sesostris was based on Alexander is not too surprising. By nature, the legendary Pharaoh had to be partially based on whichever ruler he was invoked to surpass. But the anti-Greek element of Sesostris may not have developed until the late Ptolemaic period. The aforementioned account by Megasthenes could be indicative of this.

Regardless of the political nature of the legend, however, Sesostris gradually became Hellenized after having been a staple of Greek lore about Egypt for centuries.<sup>307</sup> gaining traction as a literary figure among Greeks and Egyptians alike. He was the subject of his own romance, or novel, of which three fragments have survived.<sup>308</sup> More fascinatingly, though, is the fact that he features in Apollonius of Rhodes' *Argonautica*, albeit unnamed.<sup>309</sup> He is presented as a great conqueror and the founder of Colchis – the ultimate destination of Jason and the Argonauts.<sup>310</sup>

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<sup>302</sup> Strabo. 15.1.7. = Jones

<sup>303</sup> Diod. Sic. 1.55.1. = Oldfather

<sup>304</sup> Ryholt, 2013, 61-62

<sup>305</sup> Diod. Sic. 1.58.4. = Oldfather

<sup>306</sup> Ryholt, 2013, 62

<sup>307</sup> Stephens, 1995, 246-248

<sup>308</sup> Stephens, 1995, 247-248.

<sup>309</sup> Apollonius Rhodius. 4. 271-276. = Race; Stephens, 2003, 176-178

<sup>310</sup> Apollonius Rhodius. 4. 271-276. = Race; Stephens, 2003, 176-178

In the *Argonautica*, his civilizing journey appears to have been modeled on Alexander's conquest of the East.<sup>311</sup> Indeed, Alexander appears to have provided a template for conquering literary heroes in Hellenistic literature.<sup>312</sup> Sesostris is no exception in this regard, but he appears to have been retroactively been cast as precursor to Alexander. This idea is present in the *Romance* as well, when Alexander is declared the "new Sesonchosis".

Alexander being declared the new Sesostris suggests not only that the Egyptians deem him equal to the legendary Pharaoh, but also that they accept him as a national hero. Krzysztof Nawotka has suggested that Pseudo-Callisthenes may have invoked Sesostris as a proponent of Sarapis as a means to mitigate anti-Alexandrian sentiments.<sup>313</sup> There is certainly a case to be made for the necessity of this; particularly if the anti-Greek sentiment expressed in the *Oracle of the Potter* was prevalent in the early Ptolemaic period.

The point in which his name is invoked, along with his monument dedicated to Sarapis, suggests that he is linked with the foundation of Alexandria. This would certainly fit with the already established pattern of linking various historical and mythological figures with the Greco-Egyptian city. Sesostris himself makes an appearance in book III of the *Romance*, where he echoes the sentiments of Sarapis on the subject of death and immortality. He also says that Alexandria will be famous among all men, and those who walk its streets will worship Alexander as a god.

Kathryn Gutzwiller writes that the *Argonautica* is best read against the legends of early Egypt and Greek colonization there. Cyrene – the Greek colony that Euphemus dreams that his descendants will found in Libya, replicates the foundation of Alexandria.<sup>314</sup> Susan A. Stephens writes that the *Argonautica* can be read as a story about the inevitability of Ptolemaic rule over North-Africa.<sup>315</sup> The mythological pharaoh in the *Romance* could thus be a reference to Apollonius' *Argonautica*. The reason Sesostris was chosen might have something to do with his Hellenized nature. At this stage in the cultural development, Sesostris belonged to both cultures – a Greco-Egyptian icon. Pseudo-Callisthenes may have intended for him to be viewed through a dual cultural lens. It may also be more closely related to Alexandria, as suggested earlier. Kathryn Gutzwiller suggests that the Sesostris in the *Argonautica* is connected to the

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<sup>311</sup> Gutzwiller, 2008, 193

<sup>312</sup> Gutzwiller, 2008, 193; Stephens, 1993, 178

<sup>313</sup> Nawotka, 2017, 110-111

<sup>314</sup> Gutzwiller, 2008, 193

<sup>315</sup> Stephens, 2003, 182

Ptolemaic vision of Alexandria as the center of the world.<sup>316</sup> It could also be an attempt to forge a connection between the Greek and the Egyptian world. This could explain the invocation of Sesostris at this particular part of the story. According to Egyptian religion, Egypt was the centre of the world. By legitimizing Alexandria in the eyes of the Egyptians, it became an extension of this mindset.

The Agathos Daimon foundation myth of Alexandria, along with the invocation of both Sarapis and Sesostris suggests to me that this part of the Egyptian Tales is meant to legitimize Alexandria and possibly, by extension, Ptolemaic rule. Establishing a new city in the ancient world was all fine and well, but a city does not automatically achieve a legendary status. Egypt already had Memphis, Heliopolis and Thebes. The city needed a foundational myth that would appeal to both Greeks and Egyptians. Alexandria was as Alexander himself declares in the Romance, meant to be a city for both Greeks and Egyptians. Agathos Daimon appears to have done that, considering his role in the Oracle of the Potter. The invocation of Sarapis, who was also associated with Alexandria, was likely included to appeal to both groups. Sesostris was likely also invoked to appeal to both Greeks and Egyptians. He was, after all, an Egyptian national hero that gained a substantial amount of popularity with the Greeks as well; as evident by the Sesostris Romance. The intention was probably also to forge the connection between Alexander and the legendary Pharaoh.

All of this was likely written as part of an effort to both legitimize and elevate Alexandria in the eyes of Egyptians. The Ptolemies did their utmost to make their rule appear as a continuation of traditional Egyptian rule, as already established, and this appears to have been part of their effort. Egyptian memory culture worked differently to that of the Greeks; it was far less amenable and flexible. Egypt still very closely identified the order of the world with their own culture, and thus continuity was of the utmost importance. The Ptolemies had to find a way to fit Alexandria into this continuity for it to be accepted by the natives. Greek rule, with Alexandria as its foremost symbol, could not come to be seen as a temporary blip of chaos in the otherwise orderly stream of Egyptian history. Thus, a Greco-Egyptian ideology was required.

It is of course possible that Pseudo-Callisthenes wrote this of their own volition, similarly to Apollonius of Rhodes. Kathryn Gutzwiller writes, however, that many Hellenistic writers were also philoi – ‘friends’ of the king. They were wealthy and influential men, who sometimes

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<sup>316</sup> Gutzwiller, 2007, 193

wrote to please the monarch and the courtiers.<sup>317</sup> Apollonius of Rhodes was known to spend a lot of time at the Ptolemaic court, and both the Argonautica and the Alexander Romance originated in the same Alexandrian intellectual milieu. Pseudo-Callisthenes may have been encouraged by the Ptolemies to add this part about Alexandria, or was influenced by an already well established ideology that permeated his circle.

### 3.9 Conclusion

The first part of the Egyptian Tales, and indeed the Alexander Romance as a whole, is what Martin Braun refers to as the Nectanebo Romance. It was a narrative conceived during the Second Persian Domination in order to make sense of their current predicament. This dire situation had to be explained in Egyptian terms, and so the narrative took the form of a mixture of a *königsnovelle* and a *chaosbeschreibung*, known as a prophetic *königsnovelle*. This became the Dream of Nectanebo – a story with a traditional format that not only explained how Egypt came to be conquered, but also envisioned the return of their missing Pharaoh: the titular Nectanebo

After the Macedonians conquered Egypt and drove the hated Persians out, the Dream of Nectanebo was expanded upon to reflect the recent development. The story now included a prophecy stating that the son of Nectanebo would return to Egypt and banish the invaders, as Horus banished Seth, and that this son was Alexander. The Egyptians thus rewrote history in order to make Alexander one of their own, as they had once did Cambyses. The reason they did this was to heal their wounded national pride; to satisfy their longing for the return of Nectanebo; and but primarily to maintain the idea of continuity. If Alexander was the son of Nectanebo then Egypt had not been conquered by foreigners; it had been liberated by their rightful king. I wrote earlier that throughout history, Alexander Thus, the past was reimagined in order to rationalize the present in Egyptian terms.

The Ptolemies were probably overjoyed with this narrative, as they sought to legitimize their own rule. As part of this effort they did their utmost to associate themselves with both Alexander and Nectanebo. A narrative that cast Alexander as the son of Nectanebo made this process

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<sup>317</sup> Gutzwiller, 2007, 193



considerably easier. I believe that the Ptolemies not only welcomed this tradition, but also actively encouraged it.

The Nectanebo Romance obviously gained traction among the Greeks, as evident of the fact that it is part of the Alexander Romance. This is where things get increasingly complicated, however. The version of the Nectanebo story that constitutes the opening of the Romance is likely the result of Greek alterations. The part detailing the flight of Nectanebo has been condensed – most likely for narrative reasons – while the Macedonian part of the story has been expanded upon. It is here we can identify a gradual passing of the proverbial torch between Egyptian and Greek influences.

Nectanebo begins the story as a Pharaoh with untold magical powers, who has to flee Egypt because the gods have turned against him. Though there are Greek influences in this part of the story, it is primarily the result of Egyptian influences. Upon reaching Macedonia, Nectanebo becomes a different character; turning into more of a trickster magician. This is because he is primarily in the realm of Greek authorship at this point. The original Nectanebo Romance likely did not feature a particularly detailed account of how Nectanebo sired Alexander. This was changed when it was adapted into a Greek novel about Alexander.

The reason for the complicated nature of this part of the Romance, is that it is the product of two different traditions stitched together. These are the Nectanebo Romance itself, and the legends of Alexander, which were mostly based upon the more fabulous accounts of the life of Alexander by Clitarchus. Pseudo-Callisthenes thus had to reconcile these two traditions into a single cohesive narrative. That is why Nectanebo is killed off in such an abrupt manner. The Pharaoh had served his purpose, and Pseudo-Callisthenes had to find a way to write him out of the story.

The stitching together of these two different traditions meant that Pseudo-Callisthenes had to provide an account of the parentage of Alexander that accommodated both traditions, and both Greek and Egyptian culture. To the Egyptians, it made sense that Alexander was the son of both Nectanebo and Ammon. This did not represent a dichotomy in the original Nectanebo Romance. Pseudo-Callisthenes struggled to make sense of this in Greek terms, however, and that is part of the reason why the parentage of Alexander was written so crudely. This was also compounded by Macedonian affection for Philip II, which may have played a part in the negative portrayal of Nectanebo; particularly the cruel and embarrassing manner in which he met his end.

The story of Alexander and Nectanebo in the Alexander Romance is a unique example of Greco-Egyptian cross-cultural art. Not only is it a product of mixed authorship, but there is evidence of what I call *cultural negotiation* in the text. The Nectanebo Romance was created as a genuine attempt to reimagine the past in a way that would incorporate Greek rule into the Egyptian cultural memory. The Hellenized version of the story in the Alexander Romance is a result of the Nectanebo story gaining traction among the Greeks and Pseudo-Callisthenes adapting it for a Greek audience. Its inclusion in the grand story of the life of Alexander suggests that Nectanebo, along with his role as the father of Alexander, gained a certain amount of acceptance. The Nectanebo Romance was effectively made cannon by its inclusion in the Romance. What we are witnessing, then, is a form of dialogue between the two cultures: The Egyptians by embracing Alexander, and the Greeks by accepting his Egyptian heritage. Two different cultural memories of Alexander merged into one narrative, and ultimately an expression of Greco-Cultural identity.

Compared the ambiguity and complex nature of the opening of the Alexander Romance, the second part of the Egyptian Tales is a relatively straightforward affair. This section of the Romance is almost entirely about the founding of Alexandria, and is distinct from the Nectanebo-Alexander story. It is unknown when it made it into the Romance, but it largely references traditions that date back to the early days of the Ptolemaic period. The Sarapis and the Agathos Daimon cults were both established very early during the Ptolemaic reign, and the Greeks were already familiar with Sesostris before they conquered Egypt. The purpose of invoking these traditions was part of an effort both to legitimize Alexandria and to forge a Greco-Egyptian identity. We cannot know for certain who wrote it, or when it was incorporated into the Alexander Romance. Based on its content and purpose, however, I believe that it was written by one of the Alexandrian *philoï*, and that it was sponsored by the Ptolemies,

The city of Alexander would become a metropolis of the Mediterranean, and the cultural center of the Greek world. It was the city where Heron invented the steam engine; where Apollonius of Rhodes wrote the *Argonautica*, and where Aristarchos formulated the Heliocentric system. The greatness of Alexandria is prophesized numerous times throughout the Romance. Yet the purpose of the Foundation part of the story was not to convince the world of its splendor, but to convince the Egyptians of its worthiness as an Egyptian city. That the city bore Alexander's name and became his final resting place helped a great deal in that regard. However, Alexandria had to be seen as a Greco-Egyptian city, and not simply as a Greek city in Egypt. Thus, a

foundation myth was created that posited that the founding of Alexandria was the will of Ammon; that it was protected by Sarapis and Agathos Daimon; and that it was approved of by Sesostris.

It would be a mistake, however, to categorize this as simple pandering to the Egyptian population. If the sole purpose was to appeal to Egyptian sensibilities, they could simply have invoked purely Egyptian gods and heroes. I suspect that would have defeated the purpose of the story. The early Ptolemies knew they had to appease both Greeks and Egyptians, and sought to bring the two peoples closer together. That Pseudo-Callisthenes chose two Greco-Egyptian gods and a Hellenized demigod suggests that its purpose was not simply to appease to either group, but to create a Greco-Egyptian identity. It would be absurd to think that a simple foundation story would achieve this, but the story in the Romance has to be viewed in the context of the numerous other Ptolemaic efforts. The story was not meant to achieve this on its own, but rather as part of an elaborate pattern of references designed to forge associations Greco-Egyptian associations. This means the physical cults of Agathos Daimon and Sarapis; the tomb of Alexander; and the Sesostris Romances along with his now-lost monuments.

Ptolemy I Soter was a pragmatic man who thought in long terms. His actions were part of an effort to legitimize his own reign and to secure the long-term survival of his dynasty. He knew that to do this, the cultural gulf between the Greeks and the Egyptians had to be lessened. The best way to achieve this was to forge a Greco-Egyptian identity with Alexandria as its focal-point. Cultural memory takes time to develop, however, and he probably knew that this would not happen in his own lifetime.

## 4 Final Thoughts

In a differently structured thesis, this is where I would write my grand conclusion to all my analysis. Since I have already provided my conclusions of my analysis of the two texts individually, I shall instead give a short summary of my work and offer my reflections on how my thesis fits into the field of Greco-Egyptian relations.

In chapter two I began my analysis by establishing the Leper Fragment as belonging to two traditional Egyptian literary conventions called *Chaosbeschreibung* and *Königsnivelle* that are textual reenactments of the stories of Horus and Seth.

I then analyzed the role of the Hyksos in the story and in Egyptian cultural memory. I determined that they were meant to represent the forces of chaos, and that their 13 year reign was an allegory to the Second Persian Domination.

I concluded that the Leper Fragment is a kaleidoscopic story written to convey different messages to readers depending on their cultural belonging. The Egyptians were supposed to see the story as a parallel to the Macedonism liberation and be encouraged to accept Greek rule. The Greeks were meant to gain insight to Egyptian culture and learn to govern in accordance with the principles of divine kingship. The purpose of the text was to bridge the cultural gap and encourage a Greco-Egyptian identity.

In chapter three I began my analysis by using the *Dream of Nectanebo*, its sequel fragment, the *Prophecy of Neferty* and the *Romance* itself in order to reconstruct what Martin Braun calls the *Nectanebo Romance*. The reason I did this was to place the Egyptian Tales in a historical and cultural context as well as to establish the Egyptian roots of the *Alexander Romance*. I determined that *The Alexander Romance* grew out of an Egyptian *Chaosbeschreibung* conceived during the Second Persian Domination that prophesized that Nectanebo II or his son would one day return to banish the Persians and Horus and banished Seth. After the Macedonian conquest, the story was updated to incorporate Alexander as the son of Nectanebo and it was eventually Hellenized into the version that we know from the *Alexander Romance*.

I then set about analyzing the main part of the *Nectanebo* story in order to identify cross-cultural interactions and discover where the Egyptian influences bow out and where the Greek authorship pick up the proverbial. I identified two important areas in which we can detect the

change. The first is in the change in character of Nectanebo from a powerful Pharaoh to a trickster magician. The second is in Pseudo-Callisthenes' struggles in making sense of Alexander's abundance of fathers (Philip, Nectanebo and Ammon). I determined that this was a result of the author trying to juggle two different traditions – one Egyptian the other Greek.

In the second part of the Egyptian Tales, I analyzed the the roles of Ammon, Agathos Daimon, Sarapis and Sesostris in the foundation of Alexandria. I determined that they had been invoked in order to create a foundation myth for the city that would help legitimize it in the eyes of the Egyptians.

I then concluded that the Nectanebo-Alexander part of the Romance is the cultural offspring of two different traditions. The first an Egyptian Chaosbeschreibung that posited Alexander as the son of Nectanebo. The second a Greek tradition based on the more fabulous stories of the Alexander legend. The Hellenized Nectanebo Romance was the merger of two memories merged into one, and represents an expression of Greco-Egyptian identity.

Meanwhile, the Foundation of Alexandria was part of a larger effort by the Ptolemies to not only legitimize Alexandria, but also make it the focal point of a Greco-Egyptian identity. Ptolemies wished to unite Greeks and Egyptians through an Alexandrian mythology.

On a surface level, the idea of two groups as convinced of the superiority of their own cultures engaging in meaningful cultural interaction with one another might seem absurd. History, however, is very rarely that simple. The Leper Fragment and the Egyptian Tales of the Alexander Romance reveals two cultures that are not only curious about one another but also willing to engage in interaction.

Manetho wrote a traditional Egyptian story designed to both convince the Egyptians to accept Greek rule and to give the Ptolemies access to Egyptian cultural memory. The reason he did this was because he was trying to forge a future where the two cultures could co-exist as peacefully as possible; invoking the past to shape the future. The early Ptolemies harbored similar visions of the future. The Foundation of Alexandria shows that the Ptolemies wanted Alexandria to unite Greeks and Egyptians and form a Greco-Egyptian identity.

The Nectanebo Romance provides the most complex example of this cultural negotiation. It shows an Egyptian culture willing to embrace foreign rule on its own terms; incorporating Alexander and his countrymen into an Egyptian conceptual framework. It also shows a Greek acceptance of this while awkwardly trying to reconcile it with its own culture. The Nectanebo

Romance represents the overlapping of Greek and Egyptian cultural memory, and Alexander became an archetype of Greco-Egyptian identity.

Different cultures approach and engage each other in different ways. It can manifest itself in very subtle and intricate ways, and can thus be difficult to identify. The theory of cultural memory is ideal for identifying and analyzing these nuances. I have found it an immensely helpful tool in my endeavor to understand the cultural meaning of the Leper Fragment and the Egyptian Tales of the Alexander Romance.

This thesis belongs to the integration model. The last decades have seen a substantial amount of important work on this subject within the integration paradigm, yet very few of these studies have employed the theory of cultural memory. I believe that the theory of cultural memory provides an invaluable dimension to the integration model that can enrich and evolve the study of Greco-Egyptian relations. That is the reason I believe that this thesis has meaning. My hope is that it can provide a fresh perspective on the relationship between Greeks and Egyptians in Ptolemaic Egypt.

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