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Consolidation, Innovation, and Renaissance

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The Late Period is defined as extending from the end of the Third Intermediate Period around 663 BCE to the “conquest” of Alexander the Great in 332 BCE, comprising Dynasties 26 to 30 and periods of Persian occupation. It is a time seen as the last resurgence of the indigenous rulers of Egypt and of the decline or renaissance of Egyptian culture, depending upon one’s perspective. For the first time in Egyptian history there are outside accounts of events in Egypt from Assyria amongst others, and especially in Classical sources. The writings of Herodotus after a visit to Egypt around 450 BCE are extremely influential in creating the effect of a solid “history” of the period (Lloyd 1975, 1976, 1988). His accounts of “events” and personalities can be tied to absolute chronology from cross-reference to other cultures and give a Western slant to understanding the dynamics of the period. The archaeology has tended to be slotted in to this narrative, without being allowed to develop its own framework for the transformations of Egyptian culture at a time of profound changes in a world dominated by the Empires of Assyria, Persia, Babylon, and then Macedon. In the Iron Age global context, Egypt played a key role at times, but remained on the sidelines. Yet the actions of Late Period kings such as Psamtek I Wahibre, Psamtek II Neferibre, Ahmose II, Hakor, Nakhtnebef, and Nakhthorheb, as well as the conquering Persians, Cambyses, and Artaxerxes, suggest a dynamic and thriving sense of the positive integration of ancient ideologies and administrative practices in a new world order, and one that was successful – to an extent (Lloyd 1983, 2000). The key to understanding both Egypt’s history and the great amount of archaeology from the Late Period is in how the rulers used and exploited the natural resources of the country, initiated and developed an evolving ideological concept of the rulership of the Two Lands, and reacted to the perceived external threat posed to Egypt. Although such issues were just as real in earlier – and, indeed, later – times (see previous chapters), they continued to pervade many of the ways in which the Egyptian elite defined their ideal virtual world and organized the real world. Issues of “archaism” and “renaissance” are often discussed most with reference to the Late Period, perhaps

because it is so far removed in time from the Old and Middle Kingdoms to which reference was made, or to the New Kingdom Empire of almost one thousand years before. It is possible that such a Western sensibility of time arrived in Egypt during the Late Period, but in reality, there was already a well-established model of cyclical time underpinning elite ideology, which made it inevitable that the paradigm of the past served for the present. The fascination is in examining through the archaeological record how the Two Lands were re-established out of chaos in Dynasty 26, and the changes in Egyptian culture as a result.

The scene was set at the beginning of Dynasty 26, with King Psamtek I's greatest ideological and practical achievement being the way that he dealt with Thebes. The "City" was under the control of noble and efficient families, which had welcomed and enabled the Kushite attentions to the sacred site at Karnak. The families of Montemhat, Harwa, and others who were buried in mausoleum-type tombs on the West Bank attest to their devotion to Amun and their custody of the sacred relics and fabric of the buildings. They may have derived their wealth from the dwindling resources of Amun in the immediate vicinity of Thebes. The daughter of Psamtek, a girl of around 10 years old, called Neithikert, was chosen to be adopted by the current God's Wife of Amun, Shepenwepet, as her successor. The Neithikert Stela relates how she sailed from the north to Thebes (Camino 1964) under the protection of the Prince of Herakleopolis, Sematawytefnakht, who was married into the Saite family. Along the way the Saite procession received, on behalf of her father, the fealty of the nomes and their tribute offerings to take to Amun. The flotilla united the north and south in a manner reminiscent of the great processional festivals of the past. The Neithikert Procession achieved the unification of Egypt on a countrywide level, but in a symbolic and ideological manner, consolidating Psamtek's credentials at the beginning of his reign. The incumbent God's Wives of Amun were of Nubian descent and further joined the Third Land to the Saite king, the line of descent and claim on royal power passing directly from Amun through his "wives" to Psamtek I through his "daughter of the Upper Egypt king" and "daughter of the Lower Egyptian king" (Gozzoli 2006:87–92).

Several aspects of the surviving archaeological material are explored in this chapter to illustrate the strengths of the archaeological data in providing detailed information about the state of Egyptian culture during the Late Period and the themes to which the evidence gives rise.

Militarization

The Assyrian accounts of the defeat of Taharqa and sack and burning of Memphis by Esarhaddon in 671 BCE and then the defeat of Tantamani and the sack of Thebes by Assurbanipal in 664/663 BCE make sobering reading (Pritchard 1969:290–297). The results of the two events suggest that within the world system of the first millennium, Egypt had lost its defensive capability and was reduced to the level of a vassal state, unable to withstand superior military technology. The Late Period revival showed clearly that this was not

the case. Part of the response to the Assyrian attack centered on the organization of Egypt as a militarized unit. The earlier “Great Chiefs of the Meshwesh” and the “kings” of Dynasties 21 to 24 are thought to have been descended from military families who acted as feudal warlords in their areas of control (or fiefdoms) (Redford 1992:335–337). They seem to have controlled the resource management of their areas, on a model not unlike that suggested for parts of Egypt in Dynasties 8 and 9, with varying degrees of interaction between regions. At a state level, however, such a fragmentary system in the seventh century within Egypt created the disunited and weak response to the Assyrians. The Dynasty 26 policy of militarization of the borders therefore arose not so much from an ideological as from a problem-solving position to stabilize internal security in order to meet outside threats. Archaeological survey and investigation has been successful in locating Saite military installations in a number of areas. To the northeast of the east Delta, the identification of the “Migdol” fortress 1 km north of Tell el-Herr in Sinai (Oren 1984) has demonstrated the immediate concern in fortifying the border area with Sinai and Palestine. The fort at Tell Defenneh (Leclère 2007; Petrie 1888) and buildings at Tell el-Maskhuta have also been identified as Saite foundations, the latter connected with the canal in Wadi Tumilat linking the Pelusiac Branch of the Nile and the Red Sea (Holladay 1982).

Saite military activity was not restricted to the northeast Delta, and a series of stelae of King Psamtek I from the desert road near Dahshur attest to sorties to control the desert dwellers (Perdu 2002:42–53). Some of the inscriptions imply that trouble was caused by disaffected Delta leaders who had fled to the lands west of Egypt and raised armies there. Psamtek called upon the Egyptian nome leaders to supply troops with which to deal with this force. There may well have been a real threat from the west, but the stelae underline Psamtek’s assertion that he was the one who was able to repel invaders, unlike the other Delta princes, who failed to withstand the Assyrians. He showed that he could rally troops from Egypt in a united front, secure the western border for trade, and provide protection for the new inland port at Naukratis. Further military activity in the west is suggested by the recent discovery of the Dynasty 26 fort at Bahariya Oasis (Colin 2004) and the presence of Saite period cemeteries, temples, and settlements in the oases at Dakhla (Dakhleh Oasis Project 2009; Fakhry 1973, 1974) suggest a broader, almost colonial, attitude to the border areas. To the south, expeditions were carried out against the Nubians and were accompanied by the same kind of military building activity, with a fort established at Dorginarti, near the Second Cataract (Heidorn 1991).

Associated with such sites there is a type of construction that has become synonymous with Saite fortifications. It consists of a squareish, mudbrick building with internal compartment walls, filled with rubble and mud debris (Spencer 1999b). The internal arrangements have no linking doorways and no stratified deposits. It appears that the structures are the remains of the foundation platforms upon which a substantial and perhaps tall building was erected. Examples are known from the Egyptian enclosure at Naukratis, Tell Defenneh, Migdol, Tell el-Maskhuta, Mendes (Wilson 1982:41–43), Buto (Hartung 2003), and the corner of the Dynasty 26 enclosure at Tell el-Balamun (Spencer 1996). The latter

structure was 61 m by 54 m in size, with an approach ramp intended to enter well above ground level. Spencer considered such a foundation to have supported some kind of secure official structure, perhaps a control point, built to overlook the town and surrounding region and as a defensible building to which to retreat if necessary (Spencer 1999b:299). The Palace of Apries at Memphis (Kemp 1977; Petrie and Walker 1909) may also be part of the same kind of structure, and the discovery of a garment armored with iron scales within the casemate where it had been discarded (Petrie 1888:78) again suggests that it may have had a high-level military purpose. It is not likely that all of the foundations located were for the same type of building, but the technique seems to have ensured that the structures were built above floodwater level, and were fairly tall. One of their primary functions may have been to act as watchtowers over the flat Delta landscape and to act as signaling towers in case of danger or for sending messages over flooded or agricultural terrain.

In addition to the built military installations, military titles from the Third Intermediate Period to the early Ptolemaic period show that the standing armies of the fiefdoms were reorganized, supplemented by mercenary forces and managed more effectively by a high command based at Memphis (Chevereau 1985). Military titles were held in common with civil or priestly titles, so it is not clear whether this was indeed a military elite along the lines of the early Dynasty 18 elite surrounding kings such as Amenhotep II, or whether the titles were given out in much the same way as any other insignia of office. While the degree of actual involvement in military duties is not evident from the titles themselves, they do indicate the command structure, perhaps actually operated by more field-trained soldiers. Such may be the origins of the military family from Sebennytos under Nakhtnebef which founded Dynasty 30. Most striking perhaps are the naval and port authority titles (Chevereau 1985:319–321), which are used by officials from Dynasty 26. These suggest that the marshy areas at the river mouths, the different distributaries of the river, and the routes to the Aegean islands were made into specific areas of control, implying that there was a degree of incoming traffic to be controlled and assessed for duty. At Tell Tibilla the temple town may have been primarily concerned with monitoring and managing sea-borne trade coming into the eastern Delta (Mumford n.d.). It seems most likely that the “navy” was both mercantile and military, with more of a customs and excise duty within Egypt itself (Darnell 1992).

The mapping of the archaeological evidence demonstrates a large Saite military machine and perhaps part of the rationale behind the recruitment of the large numbers of Ionian and Carian mercenaries mentioned in the Classical sources (Herodotus 1966:II, 152, 163). Tangible proof of the presence of foreign mercenaries is surprisingly difficult to find because of the nature of the mercenary soldier as an acultural or assimilated entity, but several cremation burials were fortuitously preserved at Migdol. Egyptian pottery vessels were used to contain the burnt remains of presumably Greeks (i.e. people from the Greek mainland or Aegean islands and coast) buried with Samian wine amphorae as offerings (Oren 1984:30). The practice of cremation was totally alien to Egyptians and its existence stresses the otherness of the foreign forces. Their cultural presence is one of the notable markers of Late Period Egypt.

Foreign Immigrants

There are other positive traces of foreign groups, such as the Carian community buried at Saqqara in the mid-sixth century BCE (Masson 1978) and the cosmopolitan inhabitants of Memphis recorded in documents from the fifth to the fourth century BCE (Smith 1992). At Elephantine from the Persian period onwards there was a Jewish garrison as well as Arameans, Babylonians, Bactrians, Caspians, Medes, and Persians, all of whom are attested in the documents from the site (Porten 1996). Further evidence for the presence of non-Egyptians may come from the East Greek pottery found in Egypt in increasing quantity from the beginning of the Saite period onwards. There are, however, difficulties with the idea of “pots equals people,” and the increasing number of contextualized finds of East Greek pottery suggests that each find needs to be assessed more critically (Weber 2001). For example, the wine and oil amphorae from Lesbos, Samos, Clazomenia, Chios, and Milesia found in the Dynasty 27 tombs of Wedjahorresene and Iufaa at Abusir are most likely to have been offerings for the Egyptians buried in the tombs (Smoláriková 2002:106–107). Pottery of a similar date and type from rubbish dumps in one of the Egyptian temple areas at Sais (Figure 13.1; Wilson and Gilbert 2007) as well as fourth-century BCE material from enclosure landfill contexts at Mendes (Redford 2004:137–142) suggest that there was an Egyptian market amongst high officials or temples for the Greek produce. It cannot only be assumed to have been for a “Greek” market. Similarly, increasing numbers of Levantine pottery vessels in Egypt from the Saite period onwards may indicate



Figure 13.1 Fragment of a miniature jar decorated with the face of the god Bes, from a cult area at Sais (Sa el-Hagar), height 5.5 cm. Photo: The author.

increased trade with the Southern Levant as much as the presence of people from that area (Bettles 2003; Maier 2002).

Ethnicity and acculturation in the Late Period were an increasingly important local issue, especially with the establishment in the Ptolemaic period of the cities of Alexandria, Naukratis, and Ptolemais, whose Greek citizens had certain rights over Egyptians. Ethnic markers such as names can be useful at an individual level to identify non-Egyptians in Egypt and there are some archaeological indicators for larger numbers of non-Egyptian people, particularly at Naukratis.

The full impact of Petrie's rescue excavations at Naukratis is only becoming fully appreciated as the material from the work is published (Villing and Schlotzhauer 2006). Petrie's agenda at the time was to find as much archaic East Greek pottery and sculpture as he could before the local farmers dug away the soil from the site (Petrie 1886). He also recorded buildings and identified their functions, suggesting that some could be associated with Greek religious cults, such as those of Aphrodite, Apollo, and the Dioskourides. There were industrial areas, perhaps including a scarab workshop and faience factory. The huge quantities of East Greek pottery suggested that much of it had been imported for the use of its population, which was therefore predominantly from the Aegean world. They drank wine from decorated *kylix* cups at drinking-symposia and they appreciated the work of painters and potters who signed their cups for votive offerings. Votive statues to Herakles also suggest that there was a military mercenary contingent in the town (U. Höckmann, personal communication, September 2007), and Egyptian structures such as the Enclosure (Helleneion) as well as Nile-silt pottery suggest interaction with Egyptians at some, perhaps an administrative, level.

The great mass of material from the site was not stratified or contextualized well, so that a detailed fine-grained analysis of identity or ethnicity based on specific town quarters or ghettos will be limited. Economic questions, however, such as determining the role of Naukratis as an emporium of Greek port of trade, have been successfully broached (Möller 2000). In this case, the sizable merchant population was involved in the shipping of goods from the Greek world in return for Egyptian luxury products such as linen, papyrus, perfume, and small exotica such as scarabs, but the main export was most likely grain. The settlement history of Naukratis has also been described, with the original part of the city founded in the seventh and sixth centuries BCE in the area of Petrie's excavations, spreading to the north and east in the Ptolemaic period, and then to the west in Roman times (Coulson 1996:11). There are still gaps in the sequence, and detailed mapping of the town may not be possible, unless future systematic geophysical survey could reveal underlying house patterns from the later stages of the city's development. The potential of such archaeological sites extends beyond Egypt as it is just as important for the Aegean too.

Urbanization

The study of continuous settlement patterns is an interesting problem, both at site and regional level, throughout the Late Period. It is difficult to formulate a theoretical framework for understanding the fabric of social life and individual

and corporate identity in cities based upon the compressed stratigraphy and mud of town sites in Egypt (Holladay 1982). Egypt was apparently well populated from the end of the Third Intermediate Period through into the Ptolemaic period and with a plethora of cities (Lloyd 1983:299–230, 318–325). The number of sites of importance, especially the nome centers of the Delta with important city mounds dating back at least to the Third Intermediate Period (Leclère 2008), suggests that urbanization was a key feature of Late Period Egypt. The exact form of the process, the organization of “cities,” and the basic description of housing units from the Late Period are being addressed by current archaeological work, although with unpredictable results.

The site of the capital city at Sais (Sa el-Hagar) has hardly any archaeological remains surviving (Wilson 2006) to show the development from New Kingdom nome capital to Third Intermediate Period center of the “Kingdom of the West,” and then to state capital in Dynasty 26. Small excavations in sensitive areas, however, have shown that there was a settlement in the northern part of the site in the Third Intermediate Period, based upon a differently organized, wealthier Ramesside rural settlement. The small-roomed houses with their internal multiple hearths, indistinct boundaries between house units, and limited small finds, usually consisting of beads, amulets, pottery, and gaming counters, reflect the urban landscape of the Third Intermediate Period and can be detected elsewhere, as, for example, at Hermopolis in Middle Egypt (Spencer 1993). The mixture of well-built walls and smaller, more ephemeral structures suggests that there was an initial “planned” building phase which was then taken over by larger families, dividing up the internal spaces into their own rooms. Houses were also built over or later have built into them cemeteries where the bodies were laid out in a shallow pit, with the minimum of grave offerings and covered with a low mound, or sometimes with a mudbrick surround. In the Saite period, it is assumed that a new citadel was founded at Sais directly upon this earlier town, but the whole of the upper layers and huge mudbrick walls have been removed by *sebakhin*, workers who dug away the rich mudbrick and earth to use as fertilizer on the farm land. In the sacred area of the site, the earlier levels were stripped away by the Saite builders themselves, down to Predynastic layers in the “Great Pit” at Sais (Wilson 2006) and the Early Dynastic administrative layers at Buto (Hartung 2003). It is not clear whether this was a deliberate clearance to the ancient past or simply good construction practice.

If the stratigraphy is complex and the micro-picture is difficult to visualize even at sites such as Tell Nebesheh (Petrie 1888) where there were substantial house remains, the broader picture of city layouts can be re-created more successfully by combining evidence from Sais, Memphis, and Mendes, for example. There seem to have been separate zones in the settlements, and one might expect a typical Late Period city to be multi-nodal, with an administrative quarter, separate cemetery and temple area, harbor and storage facilities, military or police area, and a residential quarter. The inhabitants may have provided the service industries of the city, relying upon family outside the urban area for their agricultural produce, or they may have continued to work outside and used the city as a safer, less exposed place in which to store surpluses and keep their animals. Such is the lack of work so far for this period it has not been possible to include the Saite

cities in discussion of the phenomenon at a comparative level (see Yoffee 2005). Analysis of well-recorded material in Egypt will enable the Late Period to make an important contribution to the city-state debate in the future.

There are numerous cemetery sites throughout Egypt dating to the Late Period, but many have not been well recorded. The concentration of elite tombs at Thebes, spanning Dynasty 25 and 26, shows idealizing artistic sensibilities, religious innovation, and invention, as well as self-representation on a grand scale (Eigner 1984). Similarly, the elite cemeteries at Saqqara, Giza, and Abusir stress the separateness of the officials and suggest an element of individual choice in the inclusion of specific elements in tomb placement, architecture, and decoration. They include elaborate “sandraulic” systems for closing the sarcophagi (Ikram and Dodson 2008:286–287), Osirian pits (Hawass 2007), solar priest-king hymns (Betrò 1990), as well as promoting individuals as intermediaries between people and the gods. Elsewhere, for example at Quesna (cemetery for Athribis: Rowland and Strutt 2007) and at Kawady (cemetery for Sais: Bakry 1968), the elite were buried in mausoleum-type buildings, with individuals placed in stone sarcophagi within mudbrick, multi-chambered buildings. The Abydos Late Period burials are also suggestive of the importance of local choices in burial, as is likewise seen in the tombs of the governors of Siwa and Bahariya, which include an attenuated set of tomb scenes depicting, for example, the weighing of the heart, funerary provision, and solar procession (Fakhry 1973: 179–206; Hawass 2000:185–195, 203–211). For more ordinary individuals, cartonnage mummies covered in beads and amulets seem to have been the passport to the underworld, buried in mass tombs as at Bahriya Oasis, Saqqara, and Thebes.

Land Ownership

Underpinning the programs of the king and his officials, the exploitation of the land remained paramount. The ownership of land in the Late Period and the nature of the agricultural hinterland supporting cities, temples, and the court seem to be different from the Late New Kingdom. Landholdings of the crown and temple estates may have become less regulated compared to the control implied by Papyrus Wilbour in the reign of Ramesses IV. The surviving land donation stelae from Dynasty 22 onwards perhaps demonstrate the changing economic system relating to land ownership (Meeks 1979), recording royal gifts of various types. These include donations of land, such as the 42 arouras of land bestowed by Sheshonq V upon Bastet at Bubastis (Meeks 1979:670). Other donations were made to maintain some part of a cult, as in a Dynasty 26 offering of land to pay someone to maintain the cult of the lamp of Osiris at Sais (Meeks 1979:647). Some gifts were made as a reward for services rendered, such as the offering of three arouras of land for the revenue of a guardian of pasturage recorded on a stela from year 6 of Osorkon I (Meeks 1979:666). Demotic land leases from Dynasty 25–26 also suggest that there was greater division of lands, possibilities of sale, and private ownership. There may have even been an attempt to reclaim more land to bring it under cultivation and thus extend the agricultural resource base of local ruler and kinglets. Such irrigation practices had been

successful in the Assyrian Empire, were part of the Ptolemaic land drive later, and could have been an integral part of the Late Period organization of Egypt.

Some changes may have been enforced. For example the high Nile inundation recorded at Karnak during Dynasty 25 had evidently resulted in bumper crops and destroyed rodents and vermin (Kitchen 1986:388–389). It may also have brought changes to the channels of Nile distributaries, particularly in the Delta, creating new land boundaries and enabling water to reach “new” areas of land for the first time. The knock-on effect in Dynasty 26 may have been that there were increased agricultural tracts in some areas, perhaps even in the hinterland of Sais, and that in the northern and northeastern marshy areas of Buto and Tell el-Balamun it was possible to bring more land under cultivation. The resulting increase in agricultural resources available for taxation benefited the landowners – the king, the temple and some private individuals, such as the soldier and priestly classes. Foreign trade coming into Egypt from the Levant, through the Phoenicians, and the Aegean islands, from the “Greeks,” would then have been bankrolled by the export of commodities, such as grain, papyrus, perfumes, and natron, as well as traditional commodities from central Africa, including material coming through the Red Sea by means of the new canal in Wadi Tumilat. Only with exportable commodities could Egypt expect to pay its mercenaries, build its temples, and furnish the elite officials with their pay (Möller 2000). The expansion of the agricultural base could be tested archaeologically by means of the investigation of installations of trade, and investigations into settlement patterns, textually in documentation and geomorphologically by looking at the palaeo-environment around towns.

Kings and Cults

As part of the duties of an Egyptian king, much attention was lavished on the temples at the center of towns and administrative areas. Sais may have been redesigned and remodeled as a northern version of Memphis, with a northern enclosure containing the palace of the kings and a southern enclosure containing the temple of Neith, matching the Memphite northern enclosure with the Palace of Apries and the southern enclosure of Ptah (Wilson 2006:261–266). The successive investment in cult centers elsewhere can be demonstrated, for example, at Mendes (Wilson 1982). Here King Ahmose II established a sanctuary for the god Banebdjed, with four huge stone *naoi* sanctuaries, constructed upon foundations formed from a massive clearance and pulverization of Third Intermediate Period mudbrick buildings and the remains of the tombs of local lords from the end of the Old Kingdom. The late Ramesside enclosure wall of the temple may have been repaired at this time, but it was subsequently rebuilt on the outside by Nakhtnebef I and later again, most likely by Ptolemy II. This pattern was repeated in part at Tell el-Balamun, the stronghold of the northeast shipping routes, where the Dynasty 22–23 local lords had been buried in the Ramesside temple enclosure, like the rulers of Tanis, but with bronze falcon beak fittings rather than the whole silver falcon sarcophagi of the Dynasty 21 kings. In Dynasty 26 Psamtek I built a small temple and enclosure wall within the old Ramesside Amun temple

enclosure and then it was reconstructed by Nakhtnebef I (Spencer 1999a). Taken individually, the enclosure wall building suggests royal interest in maintaining key cult centers throughout Egypt, but taken together, the building work implies that there was a statewide building project designed to impose the king's presence on the local populations – especially the elite – and to make the point to the temples that the king was in control.

The new cults and endowments may also imply, however, that temples owned less land than they had under the New Kingdom system, especially from the Persian conquest onwards. Such a loss of income may have meant that there was a relative shortage of temple revenue, resulting in the emergence of a program of income generation. Temples seem to have begun to promote the “sale” of amulets, votive bronzes, ritual objects, parts of the temple, such as powder from the walls, and even the space around the temple that could be used for oracles and incubations (Davies and Smith 2005; Smith et al. 2006a, 2006b). The animal cults of temples may also have furnished a ready “product,” with animals being slaughtered, turned into statue-mummies, and sold to devotees to be dedicated to the gods to ensure blessings for the dedicator. The animal necropolis areas throughout Egypt were very busy during the Late Period (Kemp 2006:376), with unprecedented numbers of animals of all kinds being raised and mummified throughout the Late Period. It is possible to take a less cynical view and suggest that the animals cults represented something “Egyptian” in the face of an influx of “foreignness,” that is, an assertion of Egyptian national identity (Ikram 2005), or that people living in Egypt felt so insecure that they could only turn to their local gods for the kinds of supernatural protection they desired. The implication may be that the king was no longer thought to have such a divine power as in the past. The phenomenon may have been simply cultural in nature, a fashion trend, trickling down from the royal bull cults, especially the Apis cult, which was an extremely important royal institution (Kessler 1989). Egyptians could also participate in this kind of ritual through different animals, perhaps more suited to individual tastes. There is still much work to be done to understand this phenomenon at a cultural and social level. Most interesting is that there was a “market” for whatever commodities could be offered in the temple and there was a larger group of people who could take part in this process than perhaps had existed before.

The caches of bronzes and animal mummies from Late Period sites provide a strong indication that these were marketable products and that revenues were gained from this practice. By using the threat of Assyrian, Babylonian, and then Persian attacks on Egypt and playing on ever-present fears of low flood and famine as well as individual problems, the temple priests operated a slick system of sale of benefits for payments in kind or metal. The impression given can be one of a general loss of confidence, decline, and decay of Egyptian culture in general. Such an impression should be resisted, however, because comparable data are not available in such quantities from earlier periods or spread across as wide a cross-section of society. It is not known how people obtained amulets in the Old and New Kingdoms, how they obtained votive offerings, or, except for a few cases, how they made them, and the kind of cults operated for people such as Amenhotep son of Hapu imply that there was always a temple fringe of cultic practice. The priesthood also operated a closed system, perhaps to protect their rights and

privileges by operating guilds both for priests and for other professions (de Cenival, 1972). By creating exclusive corporations, they maintained their rights, obligations, and social hierarchy within their own networks. This, too, suggests that social organization continued with a formalized system of guilds and obligation systems, establishing a new dynamic within a system of widening elite control.

The presence in Egypt of several important cult centers could have been a source of tension, but it may have created more of a market for those centers, with each one offering specialist shrines or particular festivals. Thebes had been the center of the Late New Kingdom theocracy with Amun-Ra, Lord of the Two Lands, at its head. It seems to have retained its significance through Dynasty 25 and 26, when people from all over Egypt dedicated statues at Karnak – for example, a man and his family from Xoïs and Petimouthes from Balamun (Guermeur 2004). The cults of the God's Wives of Amun seem to have been responsible for much priestly activity at Medinet Habu as well as for the rejuvenation of various Osiris chapels within the Karnak complex (Coulon and Defernez 2004). Sais itself may have been a key center for pilgrimage in the north. Its temple of Neith, with the twin shrines of the Mehneith and the Resneith, accompanying temples of Atum, Ra, and the special form of Osiris Hemag who was prominent also at Memphis meant that the cosmogony of the creator, in this case the mother of the sun, was covered, as well as the solar cycle (Ra and Atum) and the funerary cults (El-Sayed 1975). At Memphis, the Saqqara temples provided a key focus for visitors to the site and serve to underline the numbers of people who seem to have had some kind of access to the shrines. The movement of people for religious purposes is particularly evident in the Late Period, in terms of both the scale and the numbers of votive objects they left behind. In itself pilgrimage to sacred places was not new, nor was the manifestation of an individual through a statue or stela, but the distances covered by some individuals and the facilities at their disposal, including oracles and all kinds of votive offerings, suggest that it was an important social activity. New cults formed rallying points for certain kings, perhaps endowing lands and elevating the status of certain individuals, while the re-endowment of old cults re-established old families and gods. At Giza, for example, the temple of Isis was re-established and an Inventory Stela written which fictitiously accounted for all of the divine images inside the temple and even provided a pseudo-history of it (Zivie-Coche 1991).

Industrialization

As a result of provision of material for temple and animal cults there may have been what amounts to an industrialization of production of faience and bronze objects in particular at sanctuary sites. It is likely that specialist production was always concentrated around temples or royal centers and that the larger the center the greater was the production capacity. The Dynasty 18 Amarna temple bakeries were organized for the large-scale production of bread, for example, but there was not the step-up to an increased efficiency and scale of production that we would recognize as industrialization. At Pi-Ramesse, the bronze- and glass-working areas of the site may certainly approach this scale for the production of military

and royal supplies (Pusch 1990; Pusch and Rehren 1999). The evidence from the Late Period for industrialization of manufacture is not abundant, but may be suggested by a number of developments in technology and recent discoveries. At Saqqara, around the area of the Serapeum, geophysical survey work has detected a large area of temple platforms, with other structures for cultic and domestic use (Leahy and Mathieson 2002). The area discovered appears to be only a part of the complex supplying bronze objects and other services for the myriad cults at Saqqara, and future work may allow an evaluation of the speed and efficiency of the production here. The technological changes in bronze manufacture also indicate an increasing desire for economy and speed of manufacture. Analyses of bronzes and comparison of the results shows that from the Late Period onwards more lead was added to the metal mixture, in some cases up to 25 percent of the content (Ogden 2000). The fluidity of the molten metal was increased and porosity reduced, improving the workability of the metal. Furthermore, in addition to the lost wax technique (Ogden 2000:156–157), not so much copper was required, representing a saving in metal.

There were also developments in the technology of faience manufacture. “Glassy faience” is particularly characteristic of Dynasty 26, although examples from as early as the Middle Kingdom are known (Lilyquist and Brill 1993). It is a near-glass material which contains frit and a high proportion of alkali. The hard, dense, opaque material was colored throughout and had a matte surface. It was particularly suited to sculpting, so that fine detail could be achieved on objects made from it (Friedman 1998:55, 215–216, 267). More work is needed to establish how such a combination of materials had been achieved. Some of the actual innovations may have occurred earlier, but because of the location of production centers near Wadi Natrun, for example, faience-working centers were able to take advantage of the technical knowledge and availability of resources. More curious, perhaps, is the issue of the manufacture of iron products in Egypt. Petrie identified iron-smelting facilities at Tell Defenneh, where aside from the finished tools and weapons there were also crucibles containing “iron” slag (Petrie 1888:77–79; see also Ogden 2000:166–168). Civil and military ironwork was also found at Naukratis and Nebesheh (Petrie 1888:27) as well as a horde of iron tools with an “Assyrian” bronze helmet at Thebes (Petrie 1897:18). Iron working in Egypt is usually associated with East Greek craftsmen and the military because of the provenance of the find. Although there are known to be iron ore sources at Bahariya and in the Western Desert, the material does not seem to have been mined in antiquity. The reason may be that in order to smelt iron on a large scale, a good supply of wood would be needed and Egypt lacked suitable trees. Part of the Egyptian interest in acquiring Cyprus or areas of the Levant may have been driven by the desire for wood for fuel as well as ship-building and for access to ore. It is possible that technological advances in tools used for agriculture may have begun in the Late Period, but such innovations were probably minor and far from universal.

The pottery of the Late Period from around 750 BCE also demonstrates a changing repertoire which may suggest technological as well as functional and ideological purposes (French 1992). For example, there are a group of marl vessels attested in Dynasty 25 in the Theban area, which created a taste for white-slipped, silt

vessels, apparently in imitation. It is likely that in the Late Dynastic period new technology in the form of a faster, foot-operated wheel allowed the walls of silt vessels to be made much thinner and also their shapes to become more slender and graceful. Furthermore, it is likely that in order to sustain this technique, the production centers were consolidated, leading to an increasing degree of standardization, especially visible in Lower Egypt.

Distinct types of pottery were introduced in phases throughout the Saite period, attesting to the vitality in the pottery industry. For example, there was a type of thin-walled, silt jar introduced between 570 and 525 BCE which had a long, slender, shaped body, with a rounded base and a long, straight neck decorated with relief bands. The vessels were coated in a thick, red slip or wash and burnished in horizontal lines, sometimes creating a striped effect. It has been suggested that they were in imitation of metal vessels (French 1992:90), such as *situlae* (ritual buckets containing water or milk), but there are other types of vessel made from this fabric such as an almost neckless jar with a large globular body. Vessels made with the features of the god Bes (Figure 13.1) seem to have been introduced in the Third Intermediate Period and flourished in the Saite period, perhaps related to the taking of medicine or other potions (Aston 1996:82). In the oases a special type of keg called a *sigā*, with a long neck, barrel-shaped body, and rounded ends, was introduced, perhaps for the transport of water or wine (Hope 2000). Even the characteristic Third Intermediate Period “Fire-dogs” were replaced by horned stands for the heating of large vessels or crucibles. With the continuing study of the pottery forms, their close dating, and the finding of kiln sites and production centers, the functionality of the vessels can be addressed in a more detailed manner, along with the impact on cultural change and social behavior.

“Archaism”

Some of the material culture from Late Period Egypt as well as the daily processes of recording show innovation and a sense of moving away from the past, especially for the larger owner-groups in society. On the other hand, it was important that the Saite kings and the elite used the past to justify the present, mainly through monumental display in temples and tombs. In order to be able to achieve this aim, as much written religious material as possible was codified and listed from earlier periods, then embellished in the Saite period. Certainly the use of the past as a guarantor of authority, representing an accumulation of experience, was already a long-established tradition in Egypt (Baines 1989), but it is intensified in many ways in the Late Period. The funerary texts of Nespasefy seem to have been earlier forms of the Book of the Dead, with later texts apparently added from a papyrus roll found at Tanis (Yoyotte 1977), but in fact the practice went much deeper, eventually creating the so-called “Saite Recension” of the Book of the Dead (Verhoeven 2001: 16–21).

There were many variations in this process by material, place, and period. For example, the copying of art from stone to stone often seems to be occasional rather than continuous copying – a tomb scene from Gebelein was copied at Thebes and the phraseology of royal inscriptions can be shown to have its origins in Classical

and Ramesside monumental texts (Der Manuelian 1994). The door-jambs and inner walls of the gate of the Apries Palace at Memphis were decorated with low-relief scenes of rituals carried out by Apries, for example invoking extremely ancient hippopotamus rituals connected specifically with Lower Egypt. Originally the scenes were identified as Middle Kingdom in date by Petrie, but von Bissing (1933–1934) showed that they were Saite imitations of Old Kingdom reliefs and that the Saite artists had shown great interest in the Step Pyramid complex at Saqqara as a model for royal relief scenes. The shaft tombs at Saqqara and Giza may owe their design as much to a desire to copy the deep shafts of the Step Pyramid complex as to security (Eigner 1999). The Pyramid Texts themselves were integrated into temple rituals as well as tomb inscriptions, and the Temple of Hibis, with its multiple and all-embracing forms of Amun, suggests that some form of reassessment and re-imagining of text and ritual had occurred to create something new and multi-layered in meaning. Instead of being preserved merely on papyrus rolls in the Late Period, Books of the Dead and other texts were inscribed on stone sarcophagi. Temples were furnished with great shrines (*naoi*) covered in mythological vignettes and text – at Mendes alone there were four such shrines, there were three at Elephantine, and others are known, for example, from the temple at Saft el-Henneh. Later, in Dynasty 30, magical texts were inscribed all over the stone bodies of statues of semi-deified individuals (Kákosy 1999) and on portable amuletic stelae showing Horus destroying all dangers (Sternberg-el Hotabi 1999). In this way the power was transmitted outwards from the temples to people outside.

The titles of the administrative class also show the preference for imitating the past, but, like some honorific Old Kingdom titles, the exact functions of the posts are not always clear. *hrp hwwt*, “Director of the Mansions (Estates),” is one of the most prominent titles from the Old Kingdom used in Dynasty 26 and seems to have been used by an official high in the administration. In the Old Kingdom it seems to have been held by the person responsible for the royal regalia and the rituals associated with coronation, but in Dynasty 26 the Estates are often specifically those of Neith at Sais and the title seems to have a priestly and administrative role which fluctuates in importance throughout the Late Period (El-Sayed 1976). The cemeteries of officials from the Memphite necropolis suggest that the administration was a tightly run unit, often with families well established in certain posts and passing on the posts to their sons, forming hereditary dynasties. The occurrence of the king’s name in many formal names on sarcophagi and in tombs attests that the earthly allegiance is primary and gives the impression of a bureaucracy formally putting the king first, a symptom of reverence for the Old Kingdom well learned from the Saqqara necropolis. The position of *szwnw*, “physician,” is prominent in the Saite period, when it seems to have been an elite title, often held by high-ranking individuals with good administrative posts, but it may either have meant that some kind of specialized training was essential amongst the elite or it may have been a means of distinguishing people who had attended an institution of learning, either religious, medical, or administrative – or all three. Wedjahorresenet, the naval commander of Ahmose II and Psamtek III, took up the post of “chief physician” under the Persian king Cambyses, which seems to have been a strange career change. The Egyptian centers of learning were still

producing educated officials trained in many fields, as Wedjahorresenet seems to have been.

The elegant reliefs and statues recalling the style of Old and Middle Kingdom precedents may have been intended as a reassuring signal that everything was back to “normal” and that the threat of the foreign invaders had been dissipated by those kings who upheld the ancient values. Psamtek I had successfully regained the ideology of the Two Lands and his successors continued to use it as an overarching theme with which to sustain Egyptian culture and absorb the effects of the world outside Egypt.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that a distinct flavor of information can be provided from the perspective of the Egyptian archaeology in the Late Period. There is also potential for investigating further the multi-layered social and daily life experiences of individuals and towns at a time of foreign conquest, cultural restabilization, and outside influence. The material from stratified city contexts, from concentrated sets of votive offerings at pilgrimage centers, from technology, from economic data in texts, as well as the subtle hues of nuance from hieroglyphic texts, suggests a rich, vibrant society of the first millennium, still dynamically interwoven with the paradigm of past ideologies.

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