



## **DIPLOMACY IN ANCIENT TIMES: THE FIGURE OF UDJAHORRESNET: AN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS PERSPECTIVE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

For international relations (IR) scholars, the story behind the figure of Udjahorresnet might seem as an obscure phase in international history. Yet the pre-Roman period is educative for testing constitutive IR concepts such as the balance of power theory, international system, or soft power, which are still widely assumed to have become relevant only in the post-Roman context rather than in the ancient civilizations of the Eastern Mediterranean preceding the Greco-Roman experience. This article proposes that insights from IR theory can offer ancient historians and Egyptologists theoretical tools by linking empirical facts to patterns rather than just unique events via conceptual analysis. Udjahorresnet as diplomatic figure is an important primary source to understand the transition of power from native Egyptian hands to the Achaemenid rule, and thus it provides a case study where micro and macro levels of analyses find fertile ground in a cross-disciplinary framework.

### **INTRODUCTION**

This essay offers an analysis on Udjahorresnet as diplomatic figure in the service of Achaemenid Persia during the mid-1st millennium BCE from the perspective of international relations (IR).<sup>1</sup> The first section provides a brief introduction into the central research questions of IR theory in relation to ancient history. In the second section, a concise factual description will be given in order to clarify the object of analysis, i.e., the diplomatic context, which saw the crucial role of Udjahorresnet acting as an Egyptian mediator in the face of the Persian conquest of the land of the pharaohs. The third section examines how the story of Udjahorresnet fits into the research agenda of international relations: this part forms the central argument of the article. From the outset, however, the reader is well advised to know that students of world politics only rarely

venture into the more remote past, and, when they do, they usually do not go beyond the Renaissance period. The 1st millennium BCE occasionally pops up as IR scholars have analyzed the ancient Greek city-state system during the period of classical Greece (510–323 BCE) and somewhat less often during the Spring-and-Autumn and Warring States periods (771–221 BCE) in ancient China. These examples show that the past, including the ancient past, is relevant in the theory-building of international relations. Moreover, at the beginning of the 21st century there has been a historical turn in the field of IR, which not only embraces the historical method but also rejects the idea of explanatory precision and predictive certainty based on the model of physical sciences.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the Anglo-American research tradition based on scientific modeling has left a legacy that is still visible in the

discipline.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, students of world politics aim for parsimony, i.e., they attempt to explain as much as possible empirical phenomena with as little theoretical apparatus as possible, whereas historians prefer complexity through “total” explanations and narration.<sup>4</sup> This divide in approach, although by no means all encompassing, sets the stage for the conceptual analysis that lies ahead of us. Relevant research questions that accompany such analysis would include what kind of units dominate the system, what is the scale of the system, what types of process—whether societal, economic, or military-political—define the system, how do units and structures interact with each other, and, finally, what is the logical endpoint for the systemic interaction.

In international relations, the most important political unit, the modern nation-state, is considered to be some 500 years<sup>5</sup> old, but if we follow this track, we leave the development of early states, including territorial states and empires, outside the purview of IR scrutiny. In fact, international relations scholarship has only recently started to make tentative ventures into the world of ancient Near East. A promising example of this is the work of a group of political scientists who analyzed power balancing during the Neo-Assyrian rule in the edited volume *Balance of Power in World History*, giving recognition to the political entity of “state” in this early context.<sup>6</sup> Other fields, from astronomy and mathematics to history of law, medicine, technology, economics, and cultural anthropology, have already joint forces several decades ago to wage “the battle for synthesis,” in the words of A. Leo Oppenheim, an Assyriologist, with the aim of making a better sense of ancient Near Eastern (ANE) studies.<sup>7</sup> To be sure, Egyptologists, Assyriologists, and other disciplines focusing on the ANE can gain valuable insights from the IR approach to see the bigger picture of great power dynamics irrespective of the discipline’s rather presentist temporal span. The specific contribution of international relations for ANE studies lies in making better sense of theoretical concepts, which “are derived from history just as history is used to test these concepts and categories,” as George Lawson, an IR scholar, observes.<sup>8</sup> Conceptual analysis matters, for the real question is not only the one put forth by Felix Berenskoetter, who asks whether we should use basic concepts that did not exist in the past to reconstruct that past.<sup>9</sup> We can also pose the question raised by a French Assyriologist, Bertrand Lafont: “... is it necessary to conceptualize diplomacy to make diplomacy?”<sup>10</sup>

What essentially is at stake here is the actual political behavior—whether diplomatic, imperialistic, or based on the policy of power balancing—of the entities involved, not the theoretical abstractions around which to build a reality. If we accept this premise, then the analysis of the Achaemenid period, or any other period in ancient history, becomes possible from IR angle.

#### THE STORY OF UDJAHORRESNET

In the *Museo Gregoriano* of the Vatican Museums, we find a most intriguing artifact dating back to the first Persian period (ca. 525–400 BCE): the *Naoforo Vaticano*.<sup>11</sup> Inscribed upon the statue is the autobiography of Udjahorresnet, an Egyptian high official, physician, priest, and naval officer (he retained only civilian titles after the Persian conquest) whose crucial eyewitness testimony describes the transition of power from native Egyptian hands to the Persians and the handing over to him of the office of chief physician.<sup>12</sup> The statue offers the best first-hand personal account of Persia’s conquest of Egypt at this moment of time, although he was not the only Egyptian high official to cooperate with the Persians.<sup>13</sup> However, the classical authors tend to paint a more unfavorable image of the Achaemenid rulers than their Egyptian counterparts.<sup>14</sup> The negative effects of the Achaemenid conquest of Egypt on the Greek poleis and the Greco-Persian Wars (490, 480–479 BCE) that ensued few decades later undoubtedly started to have a biasing effect on the way the Greeks depicted Persians, and this has had a lasting impression until modernity.<sup>15</sup> The contemporary term to describe Udjahorresnet’s role in all this is to call him a “mediator” between the two great states: he seems to have been genuinely respected by the Achaemenids, although the real power always rested on the side of the Persians. In light of the evidence, the main contribution of Udjahorresnet relates to the fact that he made the Persian rule somewhat easier for the local population to accept. Still, it is hard to imagine how the Egyptian elite would have complied in the face of the Persians, had the latter not made real conciliatory gestures such as accepting the traditional model of Egyptian kingship—and despite these gestures, the Persians were up against several rebellions by the Egyptians, such as the unsuccessful revolt of Inarus (ca. 460–454 BCE), who created an international coalition against Artaxerxes I.<sup>16</sup> A major historiographical problem relates to ancient Egyptian texts. They are marred not only with chal-

allenges and problems of interpretation depending on the literary genre and the presence of religious and cosmic beliefs but also with the question of exaggeration on the part of the officials in the highest echelons of power.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, we have to be prudent about the influence Udjahorresnet ultimately bestowed upon the Persian king Cambyses II, who is remembered for having continued on the imperial path of his father Cyrus the Great by conquering Egypt. Yet contemporary Egyptian texts largely confirm Udjahorresnet's narrative, and the circumstantial evidence speaks in favor of the high official's story—why would Cambyses not have made an honest effort to reconcile the Egyptians to Persian rule in order to guarantee the necessary status quo, we might be obliged to ask. The same pattern of cooperation continued in the relationship between Udjahorresnet and Darius I, and, in this, the former was simply responding to imperatives that were not unique to Udjahorresnet, for this was not the first time Egypt was under occupation, nor would it be the last.

Although Egyptologists have tended to undervalue the Late Period, seen as the last stage of a once great culture, it renders at least one crucial advantage: the period disposes a much broader range of written evidence offering potential for cross-reference instead of one-sided native Egyptian narrative filled with propaganda.<sup>18</sup> This fact does not necessarily allow a more objective view of the era, as there was anti-Persian bias in the texts of the classical authors, but it does make it more multidimensional for historical analysis. On balance, what we know from the nature of the Persian occupation of Egypt is that the Persians were perfectly willing to work with and promote native Egyptians to assist in government. Persian kings like Cambyses II and Darius paid close attention to the religious sensitivities and local customs by declaring themselves pharaohs. A rather risqué example of this is the claim, although erroneous, that Cambyses was the son of Cyrus by Princess Nitetis, the daughter of the pharaoh Apries.<sup>19</sup> In the field of administration, the Persians left the local governance to the natives while making sure that at the top a satrap, i.e., viceroy, was drawn from the Persian aristocracy. This kind of indirect and pragmatic rule gave leverage to Egyptians, including Udjahorresnet, to occupy positions of importance, if not power.<sup>20</sup> Still, unlike the Hyksos rule more than a millennium earlier during the Second Intermediate Period (1650–1550 BCE), the Persian rule seems to have

arrived more abruptly and violently, even though there is no evidence of systematic destruction, than the more gradual or “creeping” Hyksos conquest marked by earlier acculturation to the Egyptian society.<sup>21</sup> However, it is quite possible that Cambyses, whose father Cyrus the Great gave the famous declaration known as the Cyrus Cylinder, was influenced by this kind of imperial propaganda to give legitimacy to his own rulership: the declaration employed the language and idioms of the Babylonian priesthood, not the Achaemenids, and in similar fashion, in Egypt the politico-religious sentiments had to be taken into account by the Persians.<sup>22</sup> In this fashion the Persians tried to win the hearts and minds of its most precious imperial possession, Egypt.

The above contextualizing has so far tackled the general contours of the story of Udjahorresnet. We have to go deeper, however, by taking a look into what the actual naophorous statue tells us about how Udjahorresnet experienced the Persian overlordship. Udjahorresnet gives us several clues as to the way the Egyptians were coming to grips with the power transition. Following Alan Lloyd's and Lisbeth S. Fried's reasoning, we can assess two specific expressions used by Udjahorresnet while referring to the arrival of the Persian king Cambyses II in Egypt. First, according to the chief physician, Cambyses and his entourage came to Egypt as “the Great Chief of all foreign lands,” and second, after having established themselves, “he was the Great Ruler of Egypt and Great Chief of all foreign lands.”<sup>23</sup> The implication is that the Persian king first came to Egypt as a conqueror, i.e., as an enemy, whereas he soon became the ruler of Egypt, which in Lloyd's view signifies a positive force and a champion of the cosmic order.<sup>24</sup> Whether the title “Great Ruler of Egypt” carries the message of a wider acceptance by the local populace is another issue, but we can assume that the Egyptian ruling class, for their part, accepted the Persian rulership, at least for the time being. From an intentionalist perspective, the autobiography of Udjahorresnet holds other useful information for deciphering personal and other motives. Among them has to be included the religious aspect as when Cambyses, following the wishes of Udjahorresnet, “commanded to expel all the foreigners who dwelt in the temple of Neith, to tear down their houses and their entire refuse which was in the temple.” Udjahorresnet continues: “This did his majesty do because I caused

his majesty to recognize the importance of Sais (... city of all gods ...)."<sup>25</sup> Religious sensitivities are a well-known cause for sedition inside empires, so it is not surprising that Cambyses was quick to comply with Udjahorresnet's wishes. It becomes obvious that Udjahorresnet had become a trusted man for the Persian rulers. For example, we learn from the autobiography that he travelled to the Near East with Darius and was allowed to return to Egypt while Darius stayed in Elam. A more personal tone of the biography comes out when the chief physician acknowledges that "I was a learned man for all lords; my character was judged good by them. They gave me golden ornaments; they did everything needful for me."<sup>26</sup> This passage conveys the image that Udjahorresnet not only commanded respect on the part of Cambyses and Darius but also had a personal self-interest in working closely with the Great King—a modern reader would quickly conclude that this is what being a collaborator or even a traitor looks like. There is another passage in the autobiography that is of great interest to us. Udjahorresnet writes: "I saved its people from the very great disaster, which befell in the entire land." Scholars are divided as to whether the expression "the very great disaster" refers specifically to the Persian invasion or whether we are dealing here with a recital of conventional pious acts and civic virtues normally evoked in commemorative autobiographies of this type.<sup>27</sup> Perhaps it can be argued that ambivalence was warranted here since it would have been too compromising to mention explicitly a foreign threat by name. Either way, Udjahorresnet did not shy away to depict himself as the savior of his own people no matter what the cause of the calamity. This fits into the character profile of a man who was perfectly willing and able to take full advantage of being the confidant of the Great Kings.

But what to make of all this when we approach these events through the lenses of international relations? Clearly, the historiographical aspects are of secondary importance here since IR researchers have a tendency to rely on secondary sources, or at least they rely on them as much as, if not more than, on primary sources. From that perspective the issue is not really to what extent Herodotus and other Greek authors had a bias when writing about the Persian rule in Egypt. Getting the facts right of course matters in order to make sound inferences, but not to the same extent that a historian or an Egyptologist would appreciate making a thorough

research based on the primary sources available or making as accurate translations of the hieroglyphic texts as possible. The answer lies elsewhere. The autobiography of Udjahorresnet has to be seen in the larger context of the Late Period (664–332 BCE) of Egyptian history, which was characterized by four distinct phases: the Saite dynasty (664–525 BCE), the first Persian period (525–404 BCE), a period of independence (404–343 BCE), and the second Persian period (343–332 BCE). For a student of world politics, the periodization tells something about the overall power structure: the heyday of Egyptian kingdom being more unitary was long gone. More specifically, the power structure leads us to a term known as the "level of analysis" in IR scholarship.<sup>28</sup> The concept entails three levels: international, state, and individual. At the international level, the ANE was, for the time being, not anymore anarchic in the sense it was a millennium earlier. Instead of a multi-centric<sup>29</sup> political arena, we see the Achaemenid Empire imposing a hegemonic dominance on the political units from the outer limits of the Balkans and northern shores of the Black Sea in the west to the Indus Valley in the east and northern Arabia, Oman, Egypt, and Libya in the south. True, this constellation was not entirely unitary, as the simmering uprisings during the First Persian Occupation in Egypt testify. Empire-building projects do not to create solid, state-like structures but rather political communities, which are by their very nature volatile.<sup>30</sup>

From a systemic point of view, instead of being diffuse, power now became more hegemonic in the spirit of an "Achaemenid Peace" or *Pax Persica*, a term that will interest us more in the next section. Interestingly, there seem to have been power-balancing mechanisms at work to counter the Persian threat, when a grand alliance was created consisting of Egypt, Lydia, the Chaldeans of Babylonia, and even Sparta, yet their balancing efforts ultimately failed. In IR theory, the state-level perspective usually focuses on the internal political system of the state, but in the case of the Achaemenid Persia we can choose two other perspectives: internal and external balancing. These two terms, straight out of the realist school playbook, refer to the way states try to strengthen their standing in a hostile political landscape either by a process of military self-strengthening or by seeking to make alliances.<sup>31</sup> Finally, the individual level offers a philosophical aspect as it refers to the human nature as the

explicative variable—important causes of war and other related phenomena such as empire-building are to be found in the nature and behavior of man, i.e., ambitious and war-like individuals. While this variable is a bit general, it certainly applies to the ancient, as well as to the modern, world, where mixed motives of ambition and avarice played in the birth and growth of conflicts.<sup>32</sup> Even so, we have to be careful not to fall into stereotypical thinking. In the case of the Achaemenid Empire, the Persian rulers were capable of showing imagination, flexibility, and tolerance toward their subjects.<sup>33</sup> For all intents and purposes, the idea is to try to find a meaningful balance between the above-raised systemic, state, and individual levels of analysis, which together enable us to address the concepts of balance of power, international system, and soft power.

#### IR READING OF DIPLOMACY IN ANCIENT TIMES— UDJAHORRESNET AS DIPLOMATIC FIGURE

At a superficial level, ancient history lacks the immediate relevance sought in the discipline of IR. Yet, as Raymond Cohen, an IR scholar, and Raymond Westbrook, an Assyriologist, recognize, this remoteness from the contemporary world is educative in order to assess whether such fundamental features of international politics as states, national identities, borders, sovereignty, government, international law, balance of power, and diplomacy are permanent or transitory in nature.<sup>34</sup> If any of these institutions did exist in the ancient world, then this begs the question of how far back in time can we apply the idea of international system and all the ingredients that go with it. In any case, it seems quite inadequate to concur with a statement according to which the last five hundred years are sufficient to analyze the balance of power theory, among other things.<sup>35</sup> Before tackling the role of Udjahorresnet as diplomatic figure, it is useful to examine what do we make of the concepts of “state,” “sovereignty,” “empire,” and “international system,” because they set the stage for the systemic side of power transition of the Near East and Egypt to the aegis of Achaemenid Persia.

There are several reasons why many political scientists and IR scholars avoid scrutinizing distant past. One of the obvious challenges for a student of world politics is the fact that the premodern world, ostentatiously, does not offer the necessary road map for analysis. In concrete terms, the lack of conceptual

framework may seem intimidating for the sole reason that the colloquial IR terminology is missing. Few examples. The first recorded use of the English word “diplomacy” by Edmund Burke, which itself originates from the French term *diplômes* or “written acts of sovereigns,” dates back to 1796, although, admittedly, the term “diploma,” meaning “privilege,” was already known by the ancient Greeks.<sup>36</sup> The same is true of the expression “great power,” which became a colloquial term only after the Napoleonic Wars. The term was first used in its modern sense in the negotiations leading to the Congress of Vienna and more precisely in the correspondence of the British Foreign Secretary Lord Castlereagh, who described it in several letters between 1813 and 1815.<sup>37</sup> In effect, the very word “international” belongs to the period of European enlightenment of the 18th century, as it was a British philosopher Jeremy Bentham who introduced the term in 1781.<sup>38</sup> The list goes on if we add the concepts of “state” and “sovereignty,” both of which became colloquial terms only in the 16th century through the writings of Jean Bodin and Niccolò Machiavelli, respectively.<sup>39</sup> The modern world’s bias toward the premodern world is not limited to international relations alone. Moses Finley, probably best known for his *The Ancient Economy* (1973), labeled the ancient economic institutions as “static” and “palace-dominated”—this no longer represents what is happening in the dynamic world of scholarship on ancient economies, where scholars see more complex models of trade in which private and public interests coexisted to some degree.<sup>40</sup> In the case of the 1st millennium BCE Near East, students of world politics would ask how can we talk about an international system of states interacting as a political arena when the “state,” which is a foundational actor in the discipline, seems to be missing. The closest entities we supposedly have at this moment in time are city-states and their opposite counterparts called empires. And if states are missing, how can we expect that there is such a thing as international system in this early context of international history? There are two possible solutions to overcome these complex issues. First, a lot depends on how we define the state—the more we add narrowly defined attributes to describe the state, the more likely we are to exclude most political formations in world history.<sup>41</sup> In political science and in IR scholarship there is still a tendency to consider the entity of state as a product of early modern Europe, i.e., the

nation-state. Second, if we can find evidence in the primary sources of the ancient world that supports the idea that there were indeed states and other related phenomena such as sovereignty, treaty-making, and power balancing, then this is another way of showing that it is unsatisfactory and even detrimental to the theory-building to dwell exclusively in the confines of modern world. Nevertheless, we should not underestimate the conceptual challenges when examining concepts with strong contemporary strings attached to them.

The second key concept to be looked is sovereignty, because it serves as a connecting point between states and international systems. Sovereignty, which is intimately linked to the state, is two-dimensional in nature, consisting of internal and external sovereignty. Internal sovereignty connotes supreme authority over a given political community, whereas external sovereignty connotes the lack of overarching authority in the international realm between political communities.<sup>42</sup> The instability in the international arena that ensues in the absence of world government is what IR scholars call international anarchy.<sup>43</sup> Sovereignty, then, is the intermediate link between states and the system, which creates the conditions for international systems to exist under international anarchy.<sup>44</sup> In the fields of international relations and political science, the internal aspect of sovereignty has received the bulk of attention through definition of the state as “human community that (successfully) lays claims to the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory—and this idea of ‘territory’ is an essential defining feature.”<sup>45</sup> However, Weber was explicitly referring to modern states rather than early states, emphasizing the bureaucratic nature of the early 20th-century state.<sup>46</sup> As late as the mid-1980s, Anthony Giddens would write that the existence of “... international relations is coeval with the origins of nation-states ...” and that “... borders are only found with the emergence of nation-states....”<sup>47</sup> This kind of interpretation of world politics is problematic, culturally limited, and historically narrow, for it alludes that the existence of a states system is directly linked with the formation of modern states.<sup>48</sup> Although Giddens’s nation-state-centric approach was being challenged already in the 1970s by the dependency theorists and world-systems analysts, his approach has lingered as other scholars have expressed similar views, considering early

states, whether tribes, chiefdoms, city-states, or empires, as too loosely organized to qualify as states and paying too little attention to the external side of sovereignty.<sup>49</sup> And yet, sovereignty, whether internal or external, historians are quick to remind us, was a long process, which began long before 1648 and continued long after, and still continues as it is an ongoing and integral part of the phenomenon of state formation.<sup>50</sup> In the concrete case of ancient Near Eastern history we witness a rich tradition of treaty-making where territorial issues frequently pop up. This fact alone speaks volumes in favor of the existence of external sovereignty in the premodern world.

The third term to be assessed is “empire,” since it features prominently in the story of Udjahorresnet. To begin with, there is a multitude of definitions over the word “empire” in the literature, but its dominant characteristic lies in the element of subordination of peripheral communities (former states) to a core or metropolis that was originally made up of the conquering and ruling polity.<sup>51</sup> The leading major powers in the ancient Near East, great states like Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt, and Hatti, were empires in the sense that they were large, multi-ethnic political units, created by conquest, and divided between a dominant center and subordinate peripheries. However, contrary to a persistent, often stereotypical, image outside ANE studies, the ancient Near East was far from unitary. Instead, there seem to have been a swing movement between periods of political fragmentation and central rule, and the starting point for empire-building projects directs to expanding city-states. Joyce Marcus, from the field of archaeology, argues convincingly that territorial states and city-states “were often different stages in the dynamic cycles of the same states rather than two contrasting sociopolitical types” and that “clusters of city-states were invariably the breakdown product of earlier unitary states.”<sup>52</sup> In other words, we can see an ebb and flow process between unitary and city-states polities, which are by no means mutually exclusive. This kind of environment bodes well for what the IR scholars call a “complex interdependence,” or “the existence of multiple channels of contact among societies.”<sup>53</sup> If we accept the above premise, then different balance of power strategies in West Asia, including the Achaemenid takeover of Egypt, make perfect sense. Finally, it is interesting to note that the ancients did

not use abstract terms like “empire” or “imperialism.” Yet as Barry J. Kemp, an Egyptologist, observes, “It is in our assessment of politically real behaviour that the answer is to be found as to whether they acted in a manner analogous to states of later periods who have conceived of ‘empire’ ...,” and other scholars like Dominique Charpin have shared similar views.<sup>54</sup>

International systems have been extensively studied in IR scholarship. It is a vast topic, which cannot be thoroughly analyzed in the present context, but nevertheless, few observations are worth sharing. The English School of international relations, a theoretical tradition inside the field, started to theorize in the late 1950s the theoretical constructs of international system and international society. Two decades later, it was Hedley Bull, a prominent intellectual figure of the school, who brought the international system’s analysis to the attention of the wider research community of the discipline. Bull defined an international system as an environment where “states are in regular contact with one another, and in addition there is interaction between them sufficient to make the behavior of each a necessary element in the calculations of the other,” whereas international society, according to him, was “a group of states or independent political communities which have established by dialogue and consent common rules and institutions for the conduct of their relations, and recognize their common interest in maintaining these arrangements.”<sup>55</sup> In Bull’s view, the main difference between a system and a society is that in the systemic side of the pendulum an intersubjective agreement—with its shared norms, rules, and institutions among the actors—is missing, i.e., the focus is mainly on the interaction. Despite Bull’s neat categorization, he seemed unsure at what point the international system and international society intertwine with each other. Subsequently, IR theorists have rightly criticized Bull’s conceptual classification as too rigid and categorical—for when there is a system, there are inevitably elements or seeds of society in the making such as communication and diplomacy—but also as too Eurocentric and historically narrow, linking as he did these two concepts to the birth of the modern state.<sup>56</sup> This discussion need not concern us here much further. Of greater interest for our purposes is the historization of these two concepts. On this domain, the writings of Barry Buzan and Richard Little since the 1990s have been of some importance. Both Buzan and Little have been con-

cerned about the presentist agenda of the IR field and the obsession with the legacy of the peace of Westphalia (1648), as well as the lack historical contextualization of the theoretical construct of international system.<sup>57</sup> Despite raising awareness, the IR field is yet to endeavor systematically how international system and its endpoint, international society, play out in the ancient Near Eastern political landscape.

When we scrutinize the story of Udjahorresnet, it is not necessary to look for all the abovementioned concepts. It is already an achievement if we can establish that two or three constitutive IR concepts are relevant in this early historical context. We have already briefly mentioned one such concept, i.e., the balance of power, but there are other candidates as well. Before addressing them, however, it is useful to go little further into the anatomy of power balancing. The concept is highly relevant in this setting, because the ancient Near Eastern history is much more dynamic than the stereotypical story of the rise and fall of empires. This is the image that typically first comes to mind for the non-specialist. If it can be established that power-balancing strategies were part of the diplomatic and military intercourse among various types of polities, then this would contribute to IR theorizing, which continues to lean primarily on the European experience. If we study carefully the ancient past in Eurasia, an argument can be made that the balance of power theory goes back thousands rather than hundreds of years. From this perspective, the analytical study of the story of Udjahorresnet becomes quite feasible and interesting for IR theory.

The basic aim behind the idea of power balancing is an even distribution of power. David Hume, the philosopher of the Scottish Enlightenment, famously asked in an essay titled “Of the Balance of Power” (1752) the question that still stands: “It is a question whether the idea of the balance of power be owing entirely to modern policy, or whether the phrase only has been invented in these later ages?”<sup>58</sup> Theoretically, Hume’s way of thinking about the matter is of great importance, for he wanted to know whether the balance is a product of the modern world or an age-old principle that has only recently received theoretical recognition. By leaning on classical scholars like Polybius and citing as examples the power struggles aiming at creating a balance among Greek city-states in the 5th and 4th centuries BCE, Hume’s own answer was that the

idea pre-dated the actual invention of the concept. Over two centuries later, scholars in the field of IR are still debating over the question of temporal origins of the balance of power theory.<sup>59</sup>

What the story of Udjahorresnet tells us is that attempts at power balancing were not limited to the Western Mediterranean world, which is by extension part of the European experience. In fact, there was a rich tradition of balancing behavior in the ancient Near East dating back at least to the 2nd millennium BCE.<sup>60</sup> In the specific case of Achaemenid conquest of Egypt during the first Persian period, the counterbalancing measures taken by Egypt, Lydia, the Chaldeans of Babylonia, and Sparta ultimately failed, but importantly it tells us that there seems to have been a wider cognizance among these polities of the fact that they formed a part of a bigger whole, i.e., an international system. Admittedly, the use of the term “system” can be problematic, as it conveys the image of a formal or holistic structure that lacks an associational relationship and human volition, as when we speak of the “digestive system” or the “solar system.”<sup>61</sup> The idea behind using the term is to show that there was a pattern of behavior among the political units, that things did not just happen by accident. If we follow Herodotus (1.77), who appears to be the best ancient source on describing the formation of the anti-Persian alliance, it was the king of Lydia, Croesus, who was the *primus motor* in putting this counterbalancing effort on motion. To be sure, personal ambition and geographical vicinity to Persia also played their part.<sup>62</sup> The conflict itself between the Achaemenid Persia and Egypt seemed inevitable as pharaoh Amasis II was actively helping anti-Persian forces such as the Greek city-states after the fall of Babylonia in 538 BCE.<sup>63</sup> The fact that their grand alliance failed to check the rise of Persia is beside the point; what matters is the balancing behavior itself. In concrete terms, the external balancing measures of the anti-Persian alliance failed to check the rise of Achaemenid Persia as hegemon in the region. The external balancing, unsuccessful though it was, goes against the view still widely expressed in IR literature that the ancients did not fully understand the mechanisms of balancing. One often cited example is the way the Hellenistic Diadochi Empires of Macedonia, the Seleucid Empire, and Ptolemaic Egypt failed to prevent the rise of Rome in the 2nd century BCE.<sup>64</sup> From this perspective, the Egyptian-led campaign is interesting indeed, since it shows that power

balancing was possible in a systemic level in the ancient world, and it preceded the Greco-Roman international arena.<sup>65</sup>

When we move to the state level of analysis in dealing with the first Persian period, the second IR concept of some use to us in understanding the world of Udjahorresnet is internal balancing. The counterpart to this term is external balancing, but since power balancing in the form of alliance-making equals external balancing and has already been tackled, it will not receive further attention. Internal balancing means those measures, whether economic and military or both, that enhance a given state’s capabilities internally. Akin to internal balancing, there in IR literature is a vast scholarship on power transition theories, which try to explain great-power wars and causes of war in an environment where rapid changes in the distribution of capabilities, i.e., in the relative power of states vis-à-vis other states, threaten the primacy of the hegemon.<sup>66</sup> Modern examples of this include for instance Japan’s vast domestic reform program after the Meiji Restoration (1868) or Russia’s military reform in the 2010s in quest of maintaining its great-power status.<sup>67</sup> So far, the power transition theory model has not been applied to the ancient Near East by IR scholars—the single notable exception being the relatively recent work by Kaufman et al. (2007b) on the balance of power in world history, and even here the authors refer to the concept anecdotally.<sup>68</sup> More interesting is the analysis of the logic of anarchy within different imperial contexts across Eurasia, stretching from Han China and Persia to ancient Rome and the British Empire by Barry Buzan et al. (1993). Contrary to Kaufman et al., their approach is both general and descriptive, and it does not fully address the various aspects related to power balancing within the abovementioned empires. Nevertheless, they do tackle the important issue of balancing failure by pointing that the inability of the Hellenistic polities to ally themselves against the rising power of Rome was not unique to antiquity and that similar examples of failures in power balancing can be found in more modern times as in the context of the Italian city-states during the Italian Wars (1494–1559).<sup>69</sup> All the same, in the case of ancient Egypt during the Late Period, we can argue with some confidence that the internal balancing efforts of the land of pharaohs were not particularly successful, at least in the long run. Following the line of thought of William J. Murnane,<sup>70</sup> it is clear that

there was a sort of swing movement between more unitary efforts to solidify Egypt followed by internal division, rebellions, civil wars, and external threats posed by the Sea Peoples, as well as the Libyans on the western border. So, overall, gone were the days of the New Kingdom, which saw Egypt as a regional hegemon. The 1st millennium is a story of a gradually weakening major state, which was internally weak. Certainly, there were momentary periods when Egyptian pharaohs tried to remedy the situation with some success, e.g., when pharaoh Shoshenq I attempted to rebuild his kingdom's economy and inner cohesion during the Twenty-second Dynasty. These measures worked for a century, but by the later 9th century the country was split into warring factions. And yes, Egypt was to attain one more time a great-power status under Psamtik I, which thrived and saw an Egyptian presence in the Levant once again during the late Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian Empires. Yet, ultimately, Egypt could not withstand the growth of Persian power under Cyrus the Great, who was more than skillful in splitting up the international coalition of threatened nations, including Egypt. Consequently, the land of the pharaohs was defeated at the battle of Pelusium (ca. 527/526 BCE).<sup>71</sup> The above narrative does not suggest that Egypt's demise was inevitable, but it does show that internally the kingdom was in a difficult spot to try to match the threat posed by the might of Achaemenid Persia. We get an idea of this even from the Vatican naophorous statue where the conqueror of Egypt, Cambyses II, is put on equal standing with the pharaohs that had preceded him.<sup>72</sup> Cambyses wanted thus to legitimize himself before the Egyptian people by entering in the complex politics of imperial rule, claiming to be the son of a daughter of the rightful Pharaoh, Apries, as opposed to the "usurper" pharaoh, Amasis.<sup>73</sup> An important question is to weigh the role of Udjahorresnet in this act of pharaonization, and some scholars consider that the chief physician was instrumental in it.<sup>74</sup>

Yet the above system and state-level explanations do not address in a sufficiently concrete fashion Udjahorresnet as a diplomatic figure. For this, we need to tackle also the individual level. When analyzing Udjahorresnet's behavior, we can add a third IR concept called "bandwagoning." Bandwagoning is a term coined by Quincy Wright and later popularized by Kenneth N. Waltz, the founder of structural realism. The basic claim behind the idea

of structural realism is that the distribution of power in an anarchic environment, i.e., an environment without a central authority above the community of states, decisively determines the fate of nations.<sup>75</sup> Bandwagoning describes a situation where a weaker state decides to acquiesce before a great power as the cost of opposing a stronger power exceeds the benefits. IR scholars have a tendency to equate bandwagoning with hegemonism, which is contrary to the logic of power balancing. However, bandwagoning and power balancing are not mutually exclusive since both strategies reflect the delicate and often abruptly changing nature of power. Modern examples of bandwagoning are numerous and include most recently the policy of the so-called "New Europe," i.e., the Eastern European NATO members, who aligned themselves with the United States during the Iraq War in 2003.<sup>76</sup> Although the IR literature tends to emphasize bandwagoning at the state level, we can relatively easily apply this concept to the interactions of individuals as well, for international history is replete with examples where persons in high positions have decided to go along with the novel power structure rather than to fight a losing battle against it.

One of the more prominent cases of bandwagoning emanating from the ancient world is that of Hieron, the tyrant of Syracuse who chose to bandwagon during the First Punic War (264–241 BCE). Hieron, the ruler of Syracuse on the island of Sicily, which was one of the biggest Greek city-states in the Mediterranean, faced a geopolitical predicament, squeezed as the island was between two giant warring Mediterranean powers: Carthage and Rome. Leaning on the ancient Greek author Polybius, Adrian Goldsworthy, a historian, and Kenneth N. Waltz, an IR scholar, have seen in Hieron's behavior the makings of power balancing, but in the final analysis his policy definitely looks more like bandwagoning.<sup>77</sup> Polybius (I 83. 2–4) opens up the dilemma of Hieron in following terms:

Hieron had always responded promptly to every request they had made of him in this war, and now he was even more committed to doing so, since he was sure that it was in his own best interests—for the preservation of his rule in Sicily and of good terms with Rome—that Carthage should survive, and because he did not want to see the stronger side in a position to gain its objective without

any struggle. This was sound and sensible thinking on his part: such a situation should never be ignored, nor should one help anyone gain so much power that disagreement becomes impossible even when everyone knows where justice lies.<sup>78</sup>

Interestingly, Polybius' account of Hieron's policy appears to be the only surviving implicit description of the logics of power balancing in the premodern world. While Hieron seems to have understood the mechanisms of balancing, what puts him in the category of bandwagoning is the fact that in 263 BCE he ultimately chose the Roman camp as he saw the Carthaginians losing the war. Admittedly, he didn't have much of a choice from a power political perspective, for it is hard to see how the Romans would have accepted even a neutral city-state of Syracuse in the battle against the Carthaginians in Sicily. Nevertheless, the crucial link between bandwagoning and balancing relates to the fact that the very act of choosing sides based on the changing nature of power only becomes possible if the actor has a general understanding of the relative strength of the rival parties and acts on it. Accordingly, without an overall grasp of how the political landscape functions, the weaker actors would not be able to conduct meaningful alliance strategies. This kind of opportunism is well attested in the history of the ANE especially during the second millennium, which provides a rich environment for bandwagoning practices by the vassal states in the Levant, in particular. The rulers of these buffer kingdoms were quick to switch their allegiance to the stronger power as deemed convenient.<sup>79</sup>

When we compare the story of Udjahorresnet to the bandwagoning efforts of the vassal rulers in the Levant, there are obvious differences, for Udjahorresnet was not a king and, in comparison, Egypt was a major state, unlike the small subordinate states in the Syria-Palestine area. However, we get a hint of the fact that Udjahorresnet was seduced by power and certainly embraced the new power holder when he stated that "His majesty assigned to me the office of chief physician. He made me live at his side as 'friend' and 'administrator of the palace.'"<sup>80</sup> This passage gives the impression that Udjahorresnet is on the receiving end, although maintaining evidently a very privileged position. This would fit the image of someone who has fully accepted to cooperate with the conqueror, and the

"gold of honor" given to Udjahorresnet further corroborates this. That the Persian monarchy rewarded conquered provincial elites with important honors and tasks throughout the empire including, e.g., Metiochus, the victor of Marathon, the former Spartan king Demaratus, or the victor at Salamis Themistocles, fits a wider practice.<sup>81</sup> It certainly made sense on the part of the Persians to "bribe" high officials' compliance. In Udjahorresnet's case, we also have to bear in mind the rather benevolent nature, in relative terms, of the Achaemenid rule, which made it easier for the Egyptian officials to accept the foreign rule. On the other hand, Udjahorresnet's collaboration with the Persians was also intended to benefit Egypt, so he was not simply after personal gain and glory but was genuinely, perhaps, interested in the well-being of his home country, although scholars are somewhat divided on this question.<sup>82</sup> It seems that the special relationship between Egypt and Persia in the time of Persian takeover was linked to the auspicious circumstances of benevolent Persian rulership combined with Udjahorresnet's tact in the art of diplomacy. However, we have to be careful not to take this argument too far. While the supposed "tolerance" of Persian rule has often been emphasized in contrast to the harshness, severity, and even brutality of Assyrian rulers of Sargon, Sennacherib, or Assurbanipal, bordering on the classic theme of "oriental despotism," scholars have seen a lot of continuity between the two empires in terms of words, images, and deeds.<sup>83</sup> There is, nonetheless, one aspect differentiating the two empires, and this relates to the flexibility in the administrative aspects of imperial order: the Persians tended to give more leeway to local customs, including religious ones, and traditions. This fact made the imperial landscape of the Achaemenid rule more conducive to the practice of bandwagoning.

In his efforts to ensure as smooth a "pharaonization" of the Persians on the Egyptian throne as possible, Udjahorresnet showed realism and even "statesmanship" to use a modern term.<sup>84</sup> Accordingly, we can add yet another IR concept in view of Udjahorresnet's and Persia's reciprocal diplomatic maneuvers: "soft power." Before deciphering this concept any further, it is pertinent to explain the term "power." In political science and international relations, "power" is what molecules and tissues are to biologists and medical scientists: it is omnipresent, unavoidable, and sometimes

elusive. In the late 1950s, American political scientist Robert A. Dahl, partly drawing on Max Weber's earlier theorizing, defined power as "A's power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do."<sup>85</sup> This somewhat crude and overly general definition of power has been much theorized since then as scholars have distinguished between relational, institutional, and structural power.<sup>86</sup> What has stayed, however, is the relational aspect of the concept, which is revealing in the same way as the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita tells us a whole lot more about the wealth of nations than the nominal GDP. However, power in itself is just an abstract term; what gives meaning to it is the way we wield it. There is a tendency to assume that in the ancient world coercive power or hard power was the rule—we think of *Pax Assyriaca*, *Pax Romana*, and in our present case, *Pax Persica*. Behind these Latin expressions lies the idea that somehow the peace was imposed by an imperial power on its subjects. Undoubtedly, peace building was usually hegemonic in nature in the premodern world. There is a well-known passage from the Roman historian Tacitus in *Agricola* (ca. 98 CE) that encapsulates what peace, achieved by imperial means, meant:

It is no use trying to escape their arrogance by submission or good behavior. They have pillaged the world: when the land has nothing left for men who ravage everything, they scour the sea. If an enemy is rich, they are greedy, if he is poor, they crave glory. Neither East nor West can sate their appetite. They are the only people on earth to covet wealth and poverty with equal craving. They plunder, they butcher, they ravish, and call it by the lying name of 'empire'. They make a desert and call it "peace".<sup>87</sup>

There has been some speculation about Tacitus' motives, as he was of Celtic ancestry with a family background in southern Gaul, for including this kind of anti-Roman passage by a Caledonian (modern-day Scotland) warlord named Calgacus on the eve of the Battle of Mons Graupius (ca. 83 CE) in his work.<sup>88</sup> Whether this story is true or not, circumstantial evidence certainly supports Tacitus' critical view of Roman imperialism, for more than a century earlier, the Greek historian Diodorus

Siculus, perhaps leaning on Polybius, lamented the way the Romans:

... held sway over virtually the whole inhabited world, they confirmed their power by terrorism and by the destruction of the most eminent cities. Corinth they razed to the ground, the Macedonians they rooted out, they razed Carthage and the Celtiberian city of Numantia...<sup>89</sup>

These stories raise the question of what was the vision of peace in the ancient world. The rock relief at Behistun can give us a partial answer to this end. In it, the policy of the "Achaemenid Peace" according to king Darius I is to maintain obedience and unwavering loyalty on the part of the subjects. According to Darius this can be attained through the stick and carrot approach, he writes:

Says Darius the King: These are the countries which ... were my subjects.... Within these countries, the man who was loyal, him, I rewarded well; him who was evil, him I punished well. By the favor of Ahuramazda, these countries showed respect toward my law; as was said to them by me, thus was it done.<sup>90</sup>

That the Persians were ready to use harsh measures, even terror, to crush rebellions within the empire is well recorded, but this was not unusual to other empires either. It was part of a conscious policy aimed at preserving the empire intact, for any sign of weakness was bound to stir rebellions. However, the Persians' approach to power was more complex than the mere use of naked force. The Persian royal ideology was comparatively flexible in the administrative aspects of the imperial order. The Persian crown turned away from drastic "pacification" methods used by the Assyrians such as mass deportations, and embraced, instead, the 'carrot and stick' approach.<sup>91</sup> In IR terms, this is called smart power—the combination of both hard and soft power.<sup>92</sup> It is not for nothing that in Judaism there is a great sympathy toward Cyrus the Great, who put an end to the Babylonian captivity. This contrasts strikingly to the Roman emperor Hadrian, who is referred to in Jewish literature with the epithet "May his bones rot in hell!" for having waged an almost genocidal war against the Jews during the Bar

Kochba revolt in ca. 132–136 CE, when over half a million people perished, according to the ancient sources.<sup>93</sup>

Soft power is a concept introduced to IR scholarship in 1990 by Joseph Nye, who later popularized it in *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (2004). The idea behind soft power is that hard coercive power is not the only option available in the toolbox of statecraft; instead, persuasion, attraction, and emulation also matter.<sup>94</sup> The term is useful for our purposes because, similar to balance of power, it is transhistorical in nature, i.e., it can be analyzed in different chronological and cultural contexts. There is something subtle about soft power, as Pawel Surowiec and Philip Long recognize. Following Joseph Nye's line of thought they also define soft power as more than "... just ... the ability to move people by argument," linking it to the power of attraction: if attraction leads to acquiescence, then the intangible and indirect influence of soft power has concrete effects and consequences on international politics.<sup>95</sup> At the risk of exaggerating, it can be said that if war is a continuation of politics by other means, to paraphrase Carl von Clausewitz's well-known dictum, soft power is a continuation of conflict management by other means, i.e., by seeking to avoid violence between potentially conflicting parties. In the 21st century, one prominent example of the use of soft power is the way Russia interfered in the US presidential elections in 2016 through various efforts of disinformation; accordingly, President Putin has rather successfully influenced the internal political process of the world's sole superpower without actually engaging in direct confrontation with America. Another example would be the way China (e.g., loans, investments), Russia (e.g., gas, oil), and the OPEC (oil) countries are using their economic muscle in trade policy for attaining foreign policy goals in global politics. IR scholars call this phenomenon geo-economics. Basically, it means economic power projection to promote and defend national interests to produce beneficial geopolitical ends by resorting, if need be, to economic pressures against countries not complying with the interests of a great power.<sup>96</sup> Geo-economics fits the profile of soft power, because it falls short of resorting to the actual use of military power, thus giving the concept of power a more nuanced meaning.

There is no reason to think that the concept of soft

power applies solely to modern diplomacy. But how exactly did it manifest itself in the world of Udjahorresnet if power was ostensibly predominantly based on hard power? In an effort to answer this question, we can go back more than a decade before the battle of Pelusium, which led to the defeat of Egypt by the Achaemenid empire. It is in this context, following the Persian conquest of Babylon in 539 BCE, that a declaration in Akkadian cuneiform script was written in the name of the Achaemenid empire-builder Cyrus the Great. In 1880 British orientalist and one of the founding figures of Assyriology Henry C. Rawlinson referred to the text as "Notes on a Newly-Discovered Clay Cylinder of Cyrus the Great", the epithet "Cyrus Cylinder" used in his article would stick to posterity.<sup>97</sup> The soft power aspects of the declaration lie in the passage where it is written that:

Without battle and fighting he let him (Cyrus) enter his city Babylon. He saved Babylon from its oppression.... All the inhabitants of Babylon, the whole of the land of Sumer and Akkad, princes and governors knelt before him, kissed his feet, rejoiced at his kingship....<sup>98</sup>

Scholars have justifiably been critical of the significance of the Cyrus Cylinder and stressed the propagandist rather than human rights aspect of the declaration by Cyrus. While we can concur with this assessment, for a student of international relations the real question, then, is what kinds of political ends the declaration served. Assuming that Persia wanted to gain certain political legitimacy in the eyes of the Babylonians, whom they had conquered, it is possible to think that the idea behind was to gain political capital among the locals. The term "political capital" was introduced to political theory in 1961 by Edward C. Banfield, who understood it to be the "employment of incentives at one's disposal so as to secure the cooperation one needs to accomplish one's immediate purposes."<sup>99</sup> Although Banfield applied the term almost exclusively to the structure of government in the metropolitan area of Chicago, his definition has wider historical implications, as Banfield was interested in the overall dynamics of influence in different political settings and its workings on people and institutions.<sup>100</sup> In the field of sociology, Pierre Bourdieu has likened political capital to a credit founded on belief and

recognition, which means that agents confer on a person the very powers that they recognize in him.<sup>101</sup> In the case of Achaemenid Persia we can argue that the Persians converted this recognition into winning the hearts and minds of their newly conquered subjects in order to make the costs of an expanding empire more manageable. The timing was opportune for the Persians to enter Babylonia, since there was a wide discontent among the local population against Nabonidus, the last king of the Neo-Babylonian Empire. Despite the problematic aspects related to the Cyrus Cylinder, the Achaemenids tended to share a somewhat different governing philosophy—certainly they did not want to rule an empire with the same iron fist as did the Assyrians. Against this background, it is perfectly feasible to think that they willingly gave similar slack to Egypt and Udjhorresnet.

The problem with ancient sources is the fact that there is often not enough textual material to make strong judgment calls in whatever direction. In the specific case of the story of Udjhorresnet, the challenge lies in the fact that it is by no means a personal diary but rather an official autobiographical document. Objective reporting of current events was virtually nonexistent in the ancient Near East and for the most part in the wider Mediterranean world as well. Yet the general explanation about the state of historiography in the ancient world is obviously not satisfactory, for nothing takes away the fact that there was finality and plurality in the historical thinking of ancient Mesopotamians and Egyptians as scholars already in the 1950s recognized.<sup>102</sup> As alluded to earlier, there is something elusive and delicate about the nature of power. One should remember that even in the contemporary world people in high positions of power rarely leave explicit evidence behind them on controversial issues, for this would be too compromising for posterity. This is also the view of Stephen Pelz, specializing in contemporary diplomatic history, who reminds us that “many international leaders take pains to disguise their reasoning and purposes.”<sup>103</sup> This logic must have been the case in the Achaemenid empire as well.<sup>104</sup> Nevertheless, modern scholars, such as Alan B. Lloyd, have not shied away from making the case that “... Udjhorresnet was perfectly willing to throw in his lot with the Persians...”<sup>105</sup> This interpretation translates into being a “collaborator,” which in power political terms equals to bandwagoning. From

an IR perspective, bandwagoning in some ways better captures the personal choices of Udjhorresnet because it stresses, how persons—and ultimately states—tend to behave when facing overwhelming power, which they are not in a position to resist effectively. Being a collaborator seems too narrow a term with its value-laden connotations of the Second World War period. The word “collaborator” is still widely used in scholarship analyzing the story of Udjhorresnet, but there have recently been publications that try to challenge common terminology and instead talk about “pragmatism” instead of collaboration.<sup>106</sup> Behind pragmatism lies the structural macro-level of political realities, as Persia had become the hegemonic power putting an end to the close interaction of a multicentric political arena. In power political terms, this meant that the Egyptians had very little room in which to maneuver against the Persians. What made Egypt exceptional, however, was its capacity to accommodate the new order—and in this, the role of Udjhorresnet was instrumental.

#### CONCLUSIONS

This article endeavored to contextualize the story of Udjhorresnet from the vantage point of international relations rather than from the standpoint of history. The IR theorizing, while not typically digging into the ancient Near Eastern world, can provide the interested reader with theoretical insights that facilitate historians to treat the empirical aspects of their research more critically and to focus on societal structures, not only on specific events and human agency. At the same time, IR scholarship has a lot to gain by engaging substantively with empirical historical facts that can make theory-building more viable; it is a question of finding the right balance between parsimony and thick description. In any event, the international arena of the ancient Near East offers a fertile ground for this, as cities, writing, administration and collection of laws, social stratification, state formation, even a primitive democracy, and other innovations in human endeavor saw birth for the first time in Western Asia. Nascent signs suggest that students of world politics are taking the ancient Near East more seriously. From an empirical perspective, the transhistorical concepts of balance of power, bandwagoning, and soft power, and the theoretical constructs of “the level of analysis” and international system allow to combine micro- and macro-level

perspectives over wide temporal and geographic spectrums. The balance of power and soft power, in particular, are interesting in this context, as they have been analyzed in the field of international relations almost without exception in post-Roman context. The autobiography of Udjahorresnet suggests that these essential tools of statecraft did play a part in the overall picture when the neighboring states to Persia tried, but ultimately failed, to counterbalance its rise. By contrast, the soft power measures, on the part of both Udjahorresnet and the Achaemenids, were something of a success, although without long-lasting effects.

In spite of all our knowledge about the diplomatic figure of Udjahorresnet, there are aspects to his story that are bound to be shrouded in mystery. The traditions of historical writing in ancient Egypt with emphasis on strict formulas and mythological prototypes, as well as bias and propaganda, set their limits as to what we can make of the available primary sources.<sup>107</sup> Yet there is another reason, which has nothing to do with historiography. By its very nature, diplomacy, especially matters that fall into what IR scholars call “high politics,” i.e., national self-preservation or issues of war and peace, was and is a secretive enterprise, and before the era of the so-called open diplomacy after the First World War, this was even more so.<sup>108</sup> With this caveat in mind, the story of Udjahorresnet is, nevertheless, revealing. What is, then, the final conclusion or “judgment” we can make of Udjahorresnet in light of the evidence? Traitor seems hardly an appropriate term in this context neither in concrete nor rhetorical sense. Already during the 1st millennium BCE, the complex interdependence was such that a member of elite cooperating with a foreign invader did not automatically qualify for treason. Had Udjahorresnet not worked with the Persians, the latter would, no doubt, have found another candidate to take his place. There simply was no rationale for resistance, as the Persian power and hegemony became evident all over the Near East. It is hard not to think that both parties used each other for political and personal reasons. Udjahorresnet gained in social status: he could claim to be the savior of Egypt in the face of difficult circumstances. Crucially, we can also notice that Udjahorresnet was an active player in the field. Instead of just passively accepting the role of an enabler in service of the Persians, he was instrumental in the process of pharaonization of the Great Kings. The Persians, on their part, found a

useful native official with valuable local knowledge of the local sensitivities to smooth the Persian occupation and maintain the status quo. Someone who chose to bandwagon thus qualifies as a more accurate characterization of these events, and this appellation is certainly less stigmatizing. In the end, what we can be absolutely sure about is that Udjahorresnet, the chief physician, had a unique eyewitness position vis-à-vis the Achaemenid rule. Hopefully this will continue to generate academic interest in the framework of increasing cross-disciplinary dialogue.

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- <sup>4</sup> For further knowledge on parsimonious theorizing, see Levy 2001, 54–59; Levy 1997.
- <sup>5</sup> State as a modern concept derives its roots from Renaissance political thought—*lo stato* and its derivatives in other European languages (*el stado, l’état, Der Staat*) date back to 15th and 17th centuries; see, e.g., Skinner 2009, 325. The most prominent authors to theorize on the concept in Western political thought have been Niccolò Machiavelli, Jean Bodin, Johann Gottfried Herder, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, and Max Weber; see Skinner 2009, 325–328; Dyson 1991.
- <sup>6</sup> For further information, see Kaufman and Wohlforth 2007, 23–24.
- <sup>7</sup> See Oppenheim 1977, 28–30.
- <sup>8</sup> See Lawson 2018, 86.
- <sup>9</sup> See Berenskoetter 2016, 9.
- <sup>10</sup> Lafont 2001, 41.
- <sup>11</sup> For further details on the Naoforo Vaticano, see Colburn 2016, 226–227, 233; Posener 1936, 1–2, 26–27; Baines 1996, 83, fn. 1; Lloyd 1982, 167–168; Lopez 2015, 84–85. Also see this volume, passim, especially the contributions by Ruggero, Schütze, and Wasmuth.
- <sup>12</sup> There is no clear-cut evidence available on the lifespan of Udjahorresnet, but it is believed that he lived sometime between 550–510 BCE. For further details, see Posener 1936, 6–7; Lopez 2015, 76.
- <sup>13</sup> One such example is the Egyptian treasurer Ptahhotep, who worked closely with the Persians at the time. See Perdu 2010, 150. For further details on the elite culture during the Late Period, see Wasmuth, forthcoming; Vittmann 2011; Markovic, this volume; Wasmuth, this volume.
- <sup>14</sup> See, e.g., Lloyd 2000, 374; Brown 1982. See also Bichler, this volume.
- <sup>15</sup> At the same time, as different and enigmatic as the Egyptians were in the eyes of the Greeks, their ambivalent perception of the mysterious East presented Egypt as a distant, mysterious, ancient land of great wealth and power whose inhabitants, particularly priests, were endowed with extraordinary wisdom and mastery of a rich knowledge. On the other hand, many Greek authors like Plato and Xenophon, while having

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Throughout the essay, international politics, international relations, and world politics are used as synonyms as far as they refer to the academic discipline of international relations. For issues of terminology used in the field of IR, see, e.g., Burchill and Linklater 2013, 1, 13. Also see Evans and Newnham 1998, 274–275, and Owens et al. 2017, 2.
- <sup>2</sup> What science is and whether international relations can or should be a science is a vast and complex topic within the discipline, which continues to raise heated debates. For a more detailed discussion, see, e.g., Wight 2013 and Schmidt 2013, 3–8.
- <sup>3</sup> For further details, see, e.g., Hoffmann 1995; Nye, Jr., 2008, 649; Onuf 2016, 36–37.

- a critical view, did have admiration for Cyrus the Great. For further knowledge, see Brown 1982, 387, fn. 4; Lloyd 2010, 1067, 1072, 1085. For a take on Herodotus' bias on Cambyses, see Brown 1982, 393–394.
- <sup>16</sup> For detailed information on the revolt, see Briant 2002, 573–576; Perdu 2010, 152.
- <sup>17</sup> Lloyd 1982, 167, 171. Also see Colburn 2016, 227; Schneider 2014.
- <sup>18</sup> See Lloyd 2000, 364. In the same vein, an American archaeologist, Henry P. Colburn (2016, 227), makes the case that, due to the confiscation of Egyptian artifacts back to Italy, this contributed to the view that, in comparison, the period of Achaemenid rule in Egypt was a period of artistic scarcity, as if the supposed cultural decline was the result of endogenous factors.
- <sup>19</sup> While there is some ambiguity as to the family line of Cambyses, in reality, his mother was almost certainly Cassandane, a woman of Persian royal origin. Classical Greek authors, Herodotus first among them, mostly, although with some hesitation, follow the Persian family line thesis. For further details, see, e.g., Brown 1982, 391–394; Lloyd 1982, 175.
- <sup>20</sup> See Lloyd 2000, 375; Perdu 2010, 150–153.
- <sup>21</sup> See, e.g., Hawkes 1963, 444; Bourriau 2000, 175, 182–183; Smoláriková 2015, 151–152.
- <sup>22</sup> For a take on the implications of the Cyrus Cylinder, see, e.g., Fried 2004, 163; Kuhrt 1995, 600–603; Lloyd 1982, 174–175.
- <sup>23</sup> Translation in Kuhrt 2007, 118.
- <sup>24</sup> See Lloyd 1982, 176–178. Also see Fried 2004, 63–65.
- <sup>25</sup> Kuhrt 2007, 118.
- <sup>26</sup> Kuhrt 2007, 119.
- <sup>27</sup> Kuhrt 2007, 119. If we accept Alan Lloyd's (1982, 176–178) interpretation already raised in the article, then the phrase "the very great disaster" symbolizes Cambyses as a hostile foreigner, who gradually transformed himself into a legitimate and worthy Egyptian king.
- <sup>28</sup> The concept of "level of analysis" was introduced into the vocabulary of international relations by David Singer (1960, 1961) when he first reviewed and then wrote an article about Kenneth N. Waltz's influential book *Man, The State and War* (1959). Singer's basic argument was that the IR discipline needed to be better aware of the units of analysis being studied. The larger issue behind Singer's intervention was the question of the relationship between agents and structure in explicating the phenomena in international politics. For further details, see Evans and Newnham 1998, 303–304; Singer 1961.
- <sup>29</sup> Multipolar would be the proper term an IR scholar would use in modern context. For further information on the concept, see, e.g., Evans and Newnham 1998, 340–341; for an assessment in the ancient Mediterranean context, see Eckstein 2006, 1, 23.
- <sup>30</sup> British historian Adrian Goldsworthy puts this well when he writes about the Roman empire, which was exceptional in its duration. According to Goldsworthy: "With Gibbon, we might stop inquiring why the Roman empire was destroyed" and instead "be surprised that it lasted so long." For an analyses on the dynamics of empire formation, see Barjamovic 2016, 129–133, 150–153; Goldsworthy 2009, 11, 412; Scheidel 2016, 38–40.
- <sup>31</sup> Realism is the most prominent school of thought in the field of international relations. For further information on the concepts of internal and external balancing in the context of ancient Mediterranean history, see, e.g., Eckstein 2006, 66, fn. 124; also see Eckstein 2008, 358–359.
- <sup>32</sup> See Waltz 2001, 16–17, 98, 170, 237; Barjamovic 2016, 123.
- <sup>33</sup> Lloyd 2000, 374–377.
- <sup>34</sup> See Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook 2000, 4.
- <sup>35</sup> For the controversial claim made, see Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2009, 347–349, 370.
- <sup>36</sup> For further information, see Numelin 1950, 125–126. On the etymology and institutionalization of diplomacy, see Jönsson and Hall 2005, 25–26. Also see Der Derian 1987, 107; Roberts 2009, 4–5. In the context of Old Babylonian Period, see Sasson 2015, 87, fn. 165.
- <sup>37</sup> For a detailed description of the correspondence, see Webster 1921, 157, 307. Scholars emphasizing

- the institutionalization of the great power concept in the 19th century, see, e.g., Osiander 1994, 322–324.
- <sup>38</sup> Bentham 2000, 10, 236. Also see Evans and Newnham 1998, 259.
- <sup>39</sup> See Bodin 1986, Livre I, chs. 8, 10. Also see Skinner, 2009.
- <sup>40</sup> See Finley 1990, 9. Also see Manning 2018, 6–16; Monroe 2009, 196–197.
- <sup>41</sup> See Scheidel 2016, 7–8.
- <sup>42</sup> For further information, see Levi 2002, 39–40.
- <sup>43</sup> The term “international anarchy” was introduced into the discipline by a political scientist and philosopher G. Lowes Dickinson into modern IR theory in two books called *The European Anarchy* and *The International Anarchy, 1904–1914*. For Dickinson the war was the result of a general situation in Europe, i.e., alliances, secret treaties, rivalries, outright aggressions, and the build-up of armaments, rather than the individual events per se. These factors combined with the sovereign states as the sole arbiters of their own security, in the absence of a superior coercive power above them, created the conditions for international anarchy. See Dickinson 1916, 13, 16–17, 42; Dickinson 1926, 3.
- <sup>44</sup> See Poggi 1990, 23.
- <sup>45</sup> Weber 2004, xiv, 33–34.
- <sup>46</sup> Levi 2002, 40; Poggi 2006, 105, 109–110. Also see Popitz 2017, 184. For further information on the aspirational nature of the Weberian idea, also see Ferguson and Mansbach 1996, 12.
- <sup>47</sup> Giddens 1985, 4, 50–51.
- <sup>48</sup> For further details, see Nardin 2013, 316.
- <sup>49</sup> See Poggi 1990, 25; van Creveld 1999, 1; Scheidel 2016, ch. 1; Denmark and Gills, 2012.
- <sup>50</sup> Wilson 2010, 751, 753. Also see Evans and Newnham 1998, 573. For further information on the contemporary aspect of state-formation, see Steinmetz 1999, 8–12.
- <sup>51</sup> See, e.g., Doyle 1986, 30, 45; Finer 1997, 8; Reynolds 2006, 152; Howe 2002, 30; Burbank and Cooper 2010, ch. 1; Goldstone, and Haldon 2009, 17–19; Motyl 2001, 4; Tambiah 1976; Lieberman 2003, 33; Watson 1992, 15–16.
- <sup>52</sup> Marcus 1998, 92. Also see Barjamovic 2016, 123–126; Eidem 2003, 745–746; Liverani 2005, 4.
- <sup>53</sup> For further information, see Keohane and Nye 2012, 31, 270.
- <sup>54</sup> Kemp 1978, 7. Also see Charpin 2006, 810.
- <sup>55</sup> Bull 2002, 9–10, 13. Also see Bull and Watson 1984, 1.
- <sup>56</sup> On this topic, see, e.g., Dunne 2001, 225–227. Also see James 1993, 272–276; Buzan 2014, 171–172.
- <sup>57</sup> For further details of this problematic raised in the IR literature, see, e.g., Buzan 1993, 332; Buzan and Little 1994, 233; Buzan and Little 2000; Buzan and Little 2001, 24–28; Luard 1992, 342.
- <sup>58</sup> Hume 1987.
- <sup>59</sup> Dinneen 2018.
- <sup>60</sup> See Aissaoui 2019.
- <sup>61</sup> For a closer analysis, see James 1993, 279–280.
- <sup>62</sup> For further details, see Kuhrt 2007, 61–62.
- <sup>63</sup> For further information, see Bresciani 1985, 502; Kuhrt 1995, 658; Lloyd 2000, 373.
- <sup>64</sup> Butterfield 1966, 133; Butterfield 1973, 179–180.
- <sup>65</sup> Another example of power balancing in the ancient Near East during the first millennium BCE includes the hegemony of Assyria in the 8th century BCE, which triggered a balancing coalition of twelve Levantine states, led by Damascus, aimed at thwarting Assyria’s drive into what is now Syria. While initially successful at checking Assyrian advances at the battle of Qarqar (853 BCE), it ultimately met defeat. For further details, see Wohlforth et al. 2007, 161–162; Grayson et al. 1996, 11–12, 23–24, 144; Kuhrt 1995, 487–488.
- <sup>66</sup> Lebow 1991, 135–137. Also see Levy 2002, 354–355.
- <sup>67</sup> For further details on internal balancing in modern context, see McNeill and McNeill 2003, 237–248; Myers and Schmitt 2015.
- <sup>68</sup> Kaufman et al. 2007, 4.
- <sup>69</sup> Buzan, Jones, and Little 1993, 91–101.
- <sup>70</sup> Murnane 2006, 707–711.
- <sup>71</sup> For a new reading questioning the traditional dating of the battle, see Quack 2011.
- <sup>72</sup> See Bresciani 1985, 503; Lloyd 1982, 170–171, 174.

- <sup>73</sup> Bresciani 1985, 503–504.
- <sup>74</sup> Amélie Kuhrt (2007, 119, fn. 14) makes an astute observation when she states that in case Alan Lloyd is right in his interpretation, according to which Cambyses's rule changed from that of a "hostile foreigner" into "legitimate and worthy Egyptian king," then Udjahorresnet was instrumental "in enabling Cambyses to achieve the transformation from demonic threat to beneficent ruler."
- <sup>75</sup> See Wright 1942, 136, 784–785, 1258–1259; Waltz 1979, 126, 204; Waltz 1986, 126–127.
- <sup>76</sup> See Grigorescu 2008, 286–287. For an analysis of the logics of bandwagoning with a list of historical examples, see Schweller 1994.
- <sup>77</sup> Waltz 2001, 199; also see Goldsworthy 2004, 73–75, 135, fn. 14.
- <sup>78</sup> Polybius 2010, 72.
- <sup>79</sup> For further details, see the Amarna correspondence, especially the letters EA 62 and 101 in Rainey 2015. Also see Liverani 2004, 102–106; Tignor et al 2018, 88, 96, 98.
- <sup>80</sup> See Kuhrt 2007, 118.
- <sup>81</sup> Wiesehöfer 2009, 89.
- <sup>82</sup> Self-interest put forth in Fried 2004, 64. A more nuanced take in Lloyd 1982, 170, 180.
- <sup>83</sup> Wiesehöfer 2009, 93. For a take on the prejudice of Western scholarship on the negative aspects of Assyrian rule, see Frahm 2007, 79–87. Also see Rollinger 2017, 572.
- <sup>84</sup> Similar argument expressed in Smoláriková 2015, 152; Lloyd 1982, 170, fn. 12.
- <sup>85</sup> See Dahl 1957. Also see Weber 1978, 53.
- <sup>86</sup> See Hurrell 2017.
- <sup>87</sup> Translation from Latin after Birley 1999, 22.
- <sup>88</sup> Birley 1999, xxi.
- <sup>89</sup> Dio Sic 32.4.4–5. Also see Everitt 2012, 345.
- <sup>90</sup> Briant 2002, 125. Also see see Raaflaub 2016, 20; Wiesehöfer 2007, 125, fn. 9.
- <sup>91</sup> Wiesehöfer 2009, 92, 94.
- <sup>92</sup> Nye, Jr., 2004, xiii, 32, 147.
- <sup>93</sup> See Montefiore 2010, 163–165. For the casualty figure of 580,000 Jews being killed in battle, see Cassius Dio 69.14.1.
- <sup>94</sup> For further information, see Nye, Jr., 2004, xi–xii, 5–18, 25–32.
- <sup>95</sup> See Surowiec and Long 2020, 171.
- <sup>96</sup> For a closer analysis of the concept and its application by the great powers, see, e.g., Paul 2005. Also see Blackwill and Harris 2016, 8–9, 19–32, 50, 90, 93–94.
- <sup>97</sup> See Rawlinson 1880, 78, 84.
- <sup>98</sup> See Kuhrt 1995, 601.
- <sup>99</sup> See Banfield 1961, 241–242.
- <sup>100</sup> Banfield 1961, 4–6.
- <sup>101</sup> See Bourdieu 1991) 192, 194–197. Also see Banfield (1961, 241, 242), who uses the term "stock" in the same sense that Bourdieu uses "credit," both of which convert into political influence.
- <sup>102</sup> On questions of historiography of the ancient Near East, see, e.g., Van Seters 2006. Also see Speiser 1955, 55–56 fn. 50.
- <sup>103</sup> See Pelz 2001, 100.
- <sup>104</sup> For a Late Period context, see especially Blöbaum 2006; see also Wasmuth, forthcoming.
- <sup>105</sup> Lloyd 1982, 180.
- <sup>106</sup> See Holm-Rasmussen 1988. Also see Smoláriková 2015, 152–153.
- <sup>107</sup> For issues of modern historiography vs. ancient history-writing in the ancient Near East, see Schneider 2014, 117.
- <sup>108</sup> For further details on the concept of high politics, see, e.g., Evans and Newnham 1998, 225.