

A “Veritable Cycle Romanesque?” The Relationship Between P. Krall and P. Spiegelberg Reconsidered

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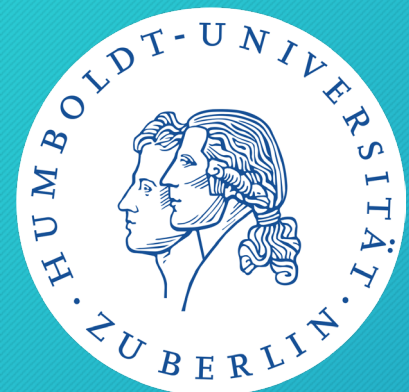
Demotic Egyptian Papyri and the Formation of the Hebrew Bible (DEMBIB)

- Part of research project led by Bernd Schipper at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
- Funded by the European Research Council



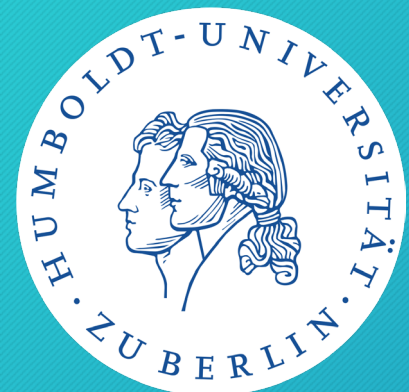
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- Subproject: “Inventing History: Narrative Compositions in Demotic and Biblical Literature”



Demotic Egyptian Papyri and the Formation of the Hebrew Bible (DEMBIB)

- Subproject: “Inventing History: Narrative Compositions in Demotic and Biblical Literature”
 - Comparative ancient literatures
 - Comparative poetics
 - Learned storytelling in Egyptian and Judean literature of the Achaemenian and Hellenistic periods



Today's paper

- How Papyrus Spiegelberg (*The Prebend of Amun*) is and is a part of a particularly learned storytelling literature

Today's paper / a definition

- Literature:

Today's paper / a definition

- Literature: a sociocultural system defined by the way in which circles of literate, learned individuals interact with certain texts

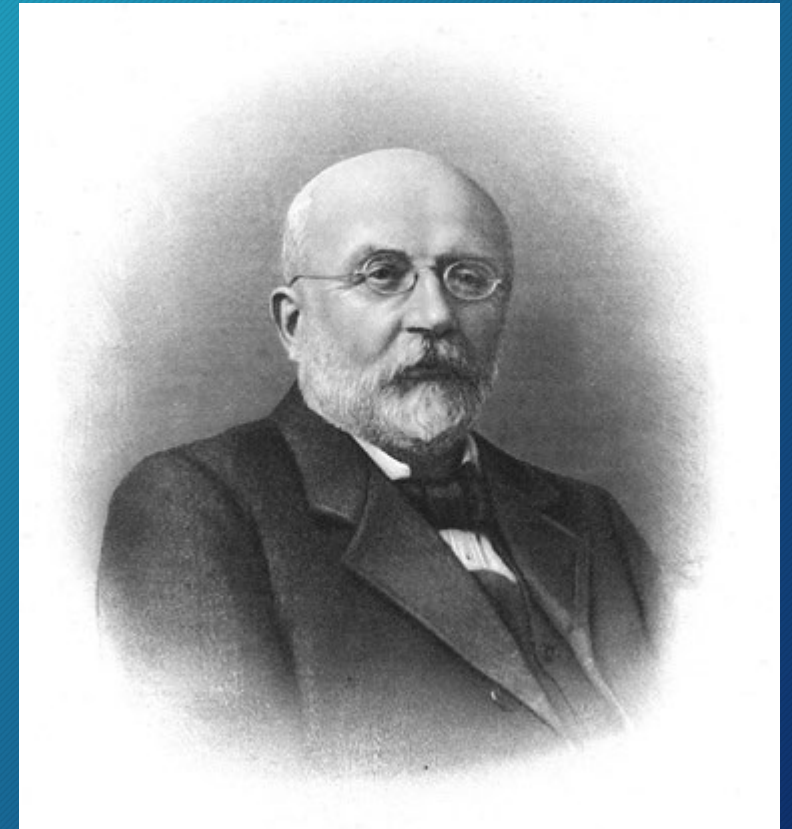
Today's paper / a goal

- Certain features of *Prebend* as a story imply a certain kind of literature

Discussions of *Armor* and *Prebend*
by the first generation

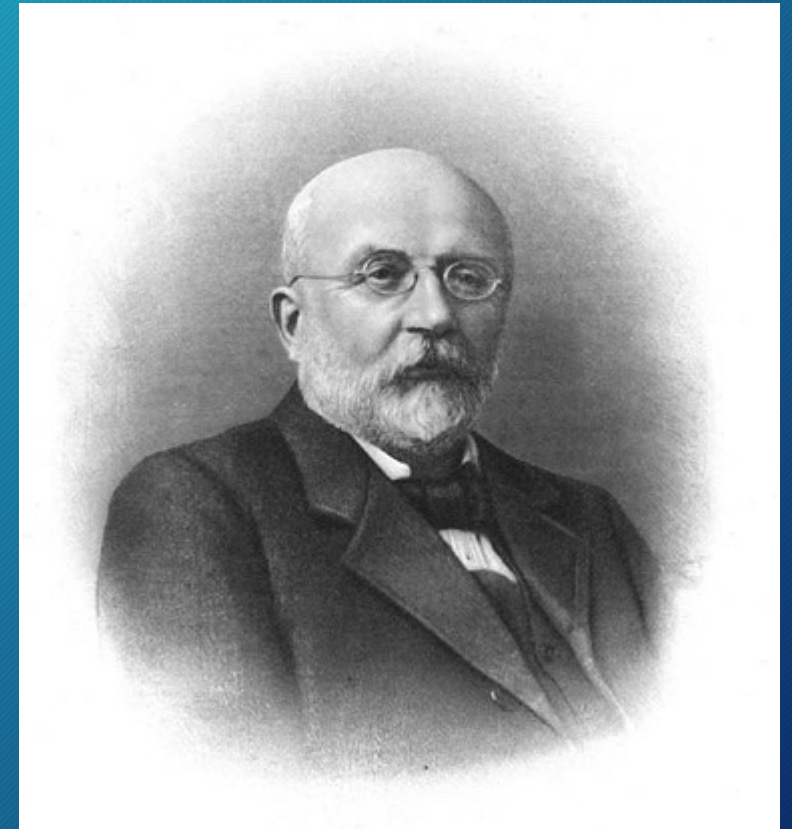
Maspero

- The first theoretical discussion of the Inaros Cycle
avant la lettre

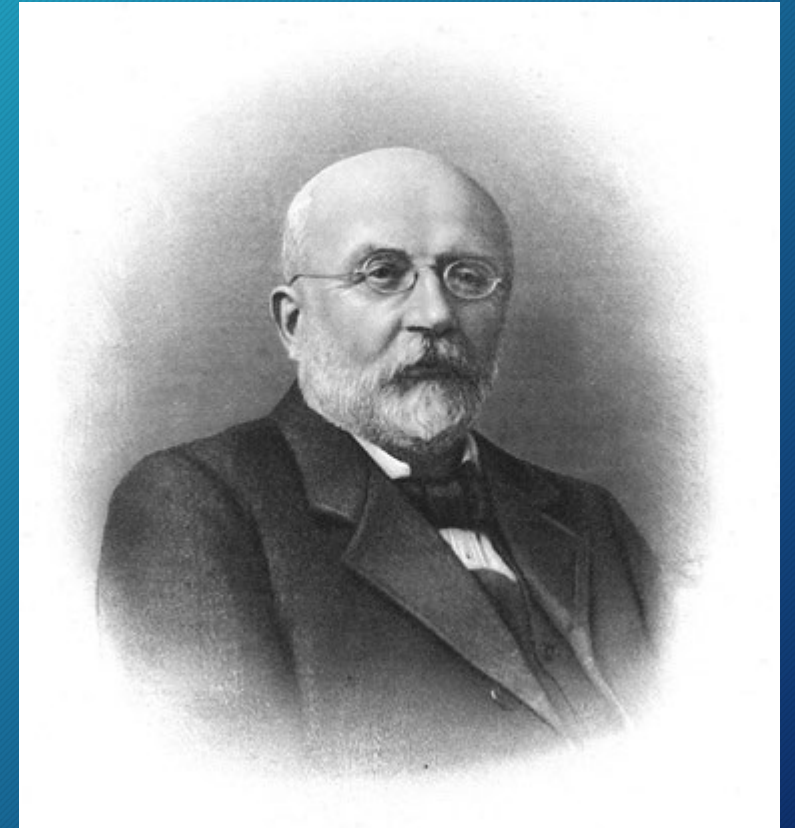


Maspero / Review of Krall (1897)

- Introduces the concept of the cycle
- *Armor* is part of a “dodecarchy cycle”

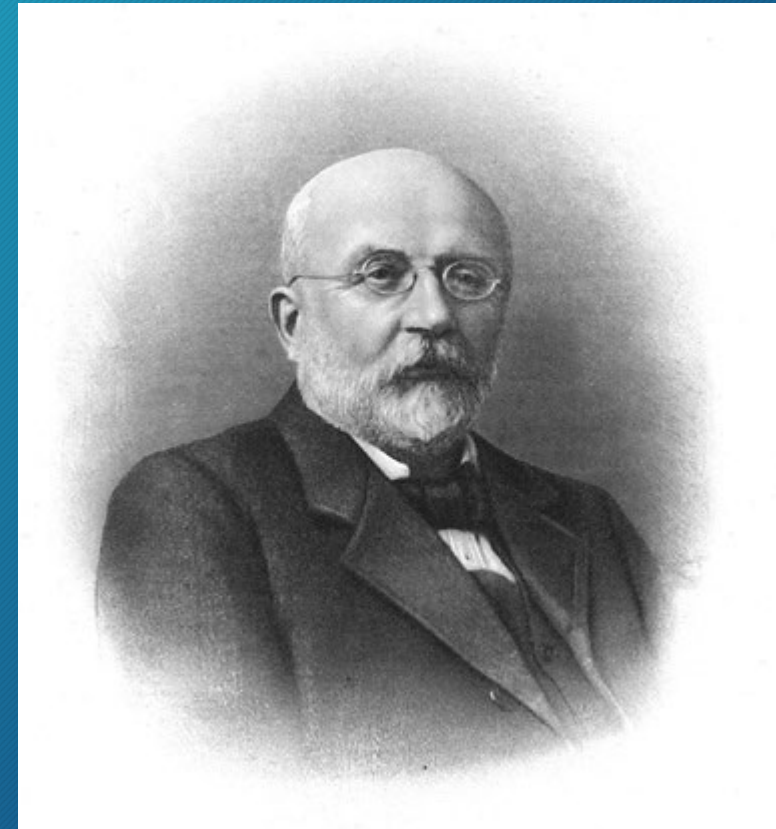


Maspero / “veritable cycle romanesque”



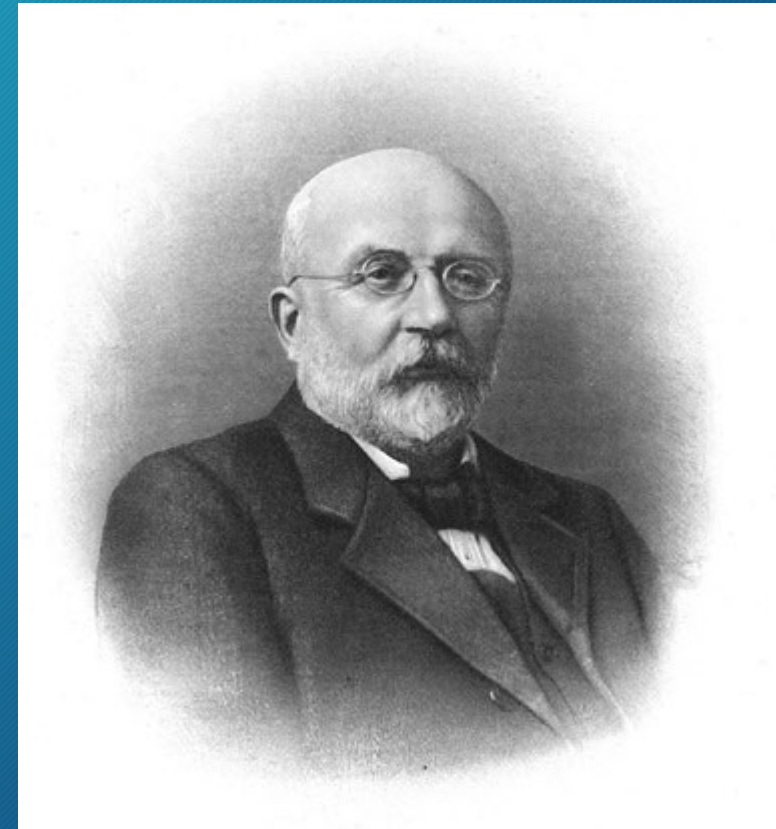
Maspero / “veritable cycle romanesque”

- “Romanesque” involves medieval romance cycles like the *Chansons de Geste* and the *Nibelungenlied*



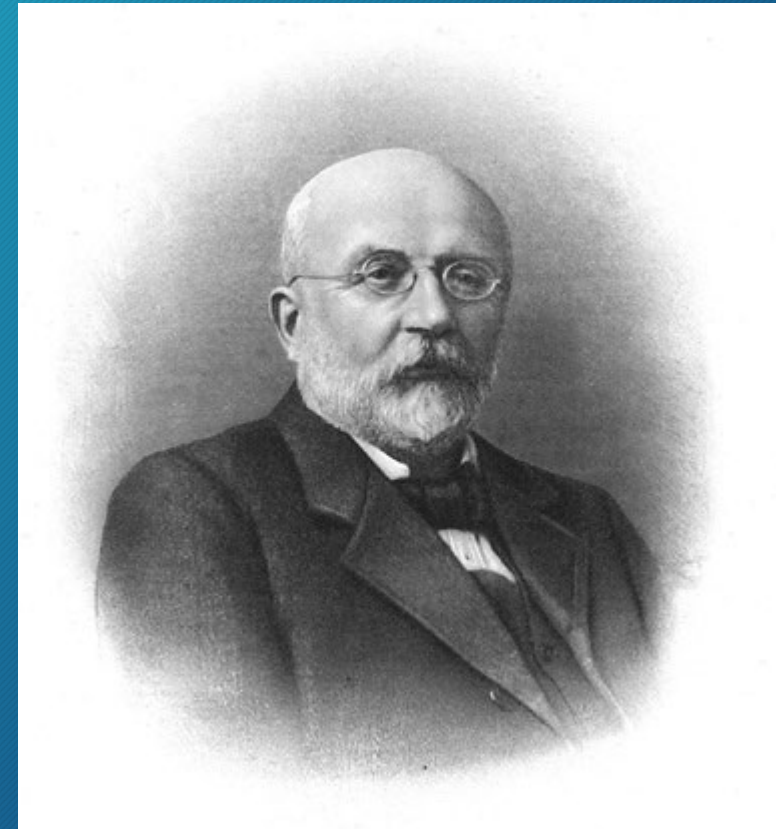
Maspero / “veritable cycle romanesque”

- Standing behind Papyrus Krall:
 - Orally-circulating stories about the figures
= *Sagen* (Grimm)



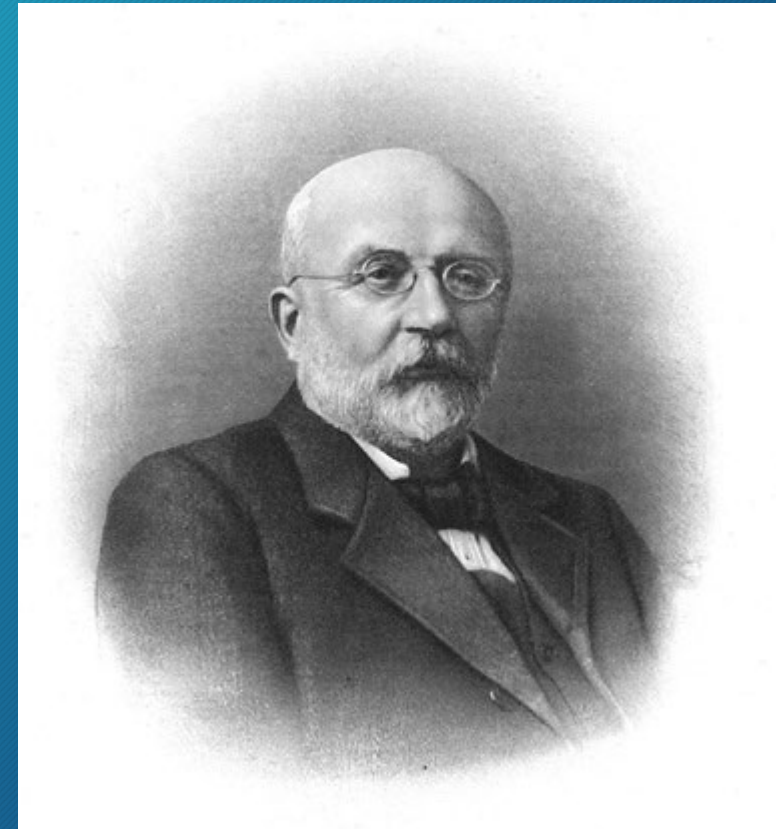
Maspero / “veritable cycle romanesque”

- He made this claim eighteen years before the second relevant text, Papyrus Spiegelberg (*Prebend*) appeared



Maspero / “veritable cycle romanesque”

- He made this claim eighteen years before the second relevant text, Papyrus Spiegelberg (*Prebend*) appeared
- An amazing testimony to the pervasiveness of the then-dominant literary-historical paradigm for traditional, pre-modern story literature



Maspero / “veritable cycle romanesque”

- With Spiegelberg’s publication of *Prebend* (1910):
 - Not a redaction
 - A “new episode” (Spiegelberg) in the *Petubastissage*



Discovery of more texts of the Inaros Cycle

- Maspero's thesis of an entire cycle's existence was overabundantly confirmed

Discovery of more texts of the Inaros Cycle

- Maspero's thesis of an entire cycle's existence was overabundantly confirmed
- Clear differences among the works led scholars to begin considering aspects of their literarization (Stricker, Volten, Bresciani)

Discovery of more texts of the Inaros Cycle

- Volten, “Der demotische Petubastisroman und seine Beziehung zur griechisch Literatur” (1956):

“As far as content is concerned, both texts are closely related. They both describe disputes in Egypt that ended up in civil war.”

Discovery of more texts of the Inaros Cycle

- Volten, “Der demotische Petubastisroman und seine Beziehung zur griechisch Literatur” (1956):

Aarmor and *Prebend* are “epic literature” (*Epos*) that gives literary treatment to a “kernel” (*Kern*) of historical events

Discovery of more texts of the Inaros Cycle

- Volten, “Der demotische Petubastisroman und seine Beziehung zur griechisch Literatur” (1956):

First told perhaps as early as the court of Inaros, but were later episodized

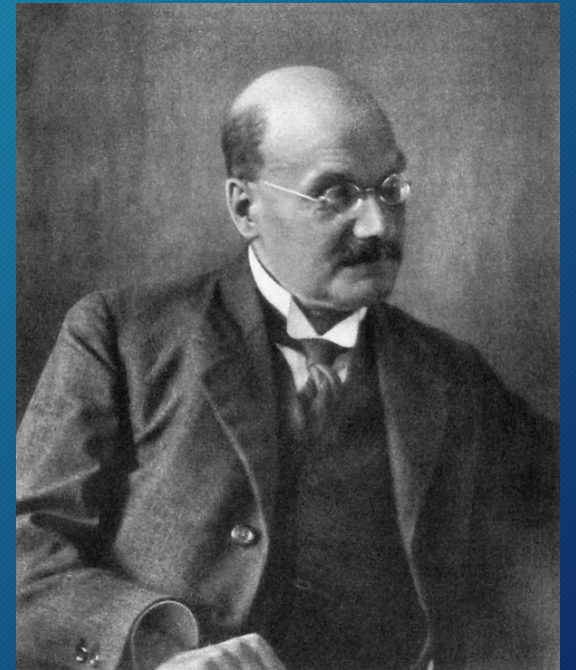
Interpretation

- The prevalence of this literary-historical paradigm created a sort of critical inertia that kept *Prebend* and its relationship to *Armor*, the similarities and differences of these texts, from being considered
- ...from recognizing that *Prebend* in particular is significantly different from *Armor* in important and telling ways

Interpretation: neglect of literary merit

- Spiegelberg, “Die Novelle im alten Ägypten” (1898) and “Die demotische Literatur” (1930):

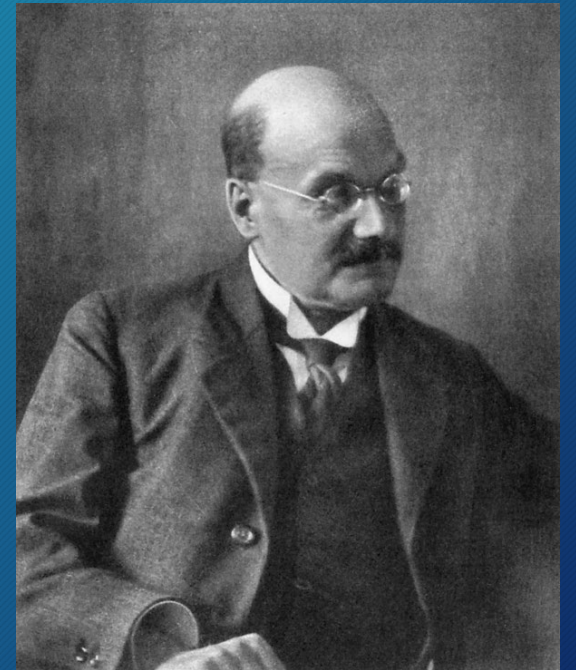
Demotic literature is “epigonic,” is monotonous and characterized by “fatigue” (*Müdigkeit*) compared to earlier literature



Interpretation: neglect of literary merit

- Spiegelberg, “Die Novelle im alten Ägypten” (1898) and “Die demotische Literatur” (1930):

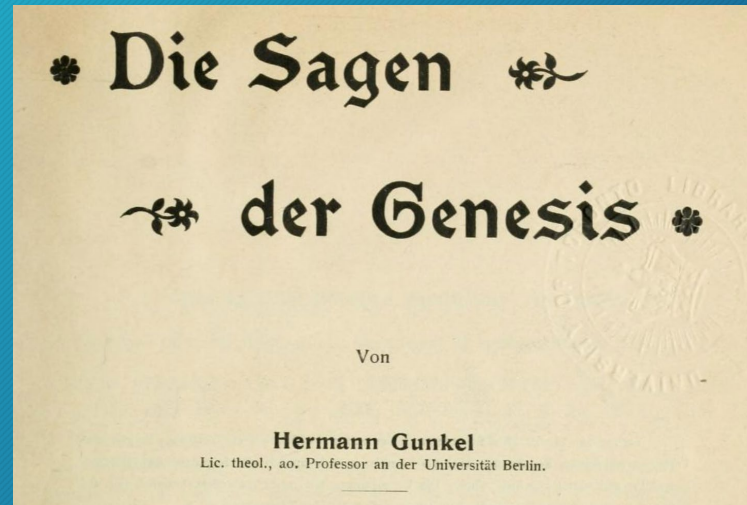
Explanation: characteristics of its authors: priests
Relied on folklore



Interpretation: neglect of literary merit

- Spiegelberg, “Die Novelle im alten Ägypten” (1898) and “Die demotische Literatur” (1930):

Criticism paralleled in Hermann Gunkel (1862-1932)



Armor and Prebend today

- Inaros Cycle is grounded in its generic features: exploits and heroic deeds of warriors from the Assyrian Period, with scenes of battle and combat abounding within

Armor and Prebend:
a “véritable cycle romanesque?”

Armor vs. Prebend: characterization

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- Petubastis in *Prebend*
 - More prominent
 - Anti-hero
 - Focal point of narration

Armor vs. Prebend: characterization

- Petubastis in *Prebend*

- More prominent
- Anti-hero
- Focal point of narration

- Pami in *Armor*

- More prominent
- Traditional hero: risk, anguish

Armor vs. Prebend: characterization

- *Armor* focuses on trials and ultimate success of hero protagonist
- *Prebend* relishes in portrayal of a character's struggles, but not as tragedy

Armor vs. Prebend: characterization

- Petubastis of *Prebend* is similar to Setna of *First Setne*

Armor vs. Prebend: characterization

- Petubastis of *Prebend* is similar to Setna of *First Setne*
- Comparison with Judean literature: audience's enjoyment resting in protagonist's misadventures (Jonah, Tobit, Haman)

Armor vs. Prebend: characterization

- An inference:

Audiences in certain literary circles in the wider southeastern Mediterranean world in the Achaemenian and Hellenistic periods enjoyed not only characters who do things and overcome, but who are primarily acted *upon*, are experiencers, taking the brunt of events beyond their control.

Armor vs. Prebend: enough?

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- Starker difference in their depiction of combat

Armor vs. Prebend: enough?

- Starker difference in their depiction of combat
- → It is inaccurate to say that *Armor* and *Prebend* are merely narratives about combat

Combat in *Armor*

- Defined by portrayal of combat

Combat in *Armor*

- Defined by portrayal of combat
- Nearly half of the entire text

Combat in *Prebend*

- Duel between Ankhhor and priest of Buto: first time the motif appears

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- Audience expects renewed conflict between Petubastids and Inarids after Heliopolis

Combat in *Prebend*

- Duel between Ankhhor and priest of Buto: first time the motif appears
- Audience expects renewed conflict between Petubastids and Inarids after Heliopolis
- Appearance of Buto party is surprise and introduces the combat motif at an unexpected juncture in the story

Combat in *Prebend*

- Ankhhor to the priest of Buto (3.2-6)

“Have you come to take (tʿy) this prebend lawfully (*n hp*), or have you come to take (tʿy) it in a fight (*n qnqne*)?”

Combat in *Prebend*

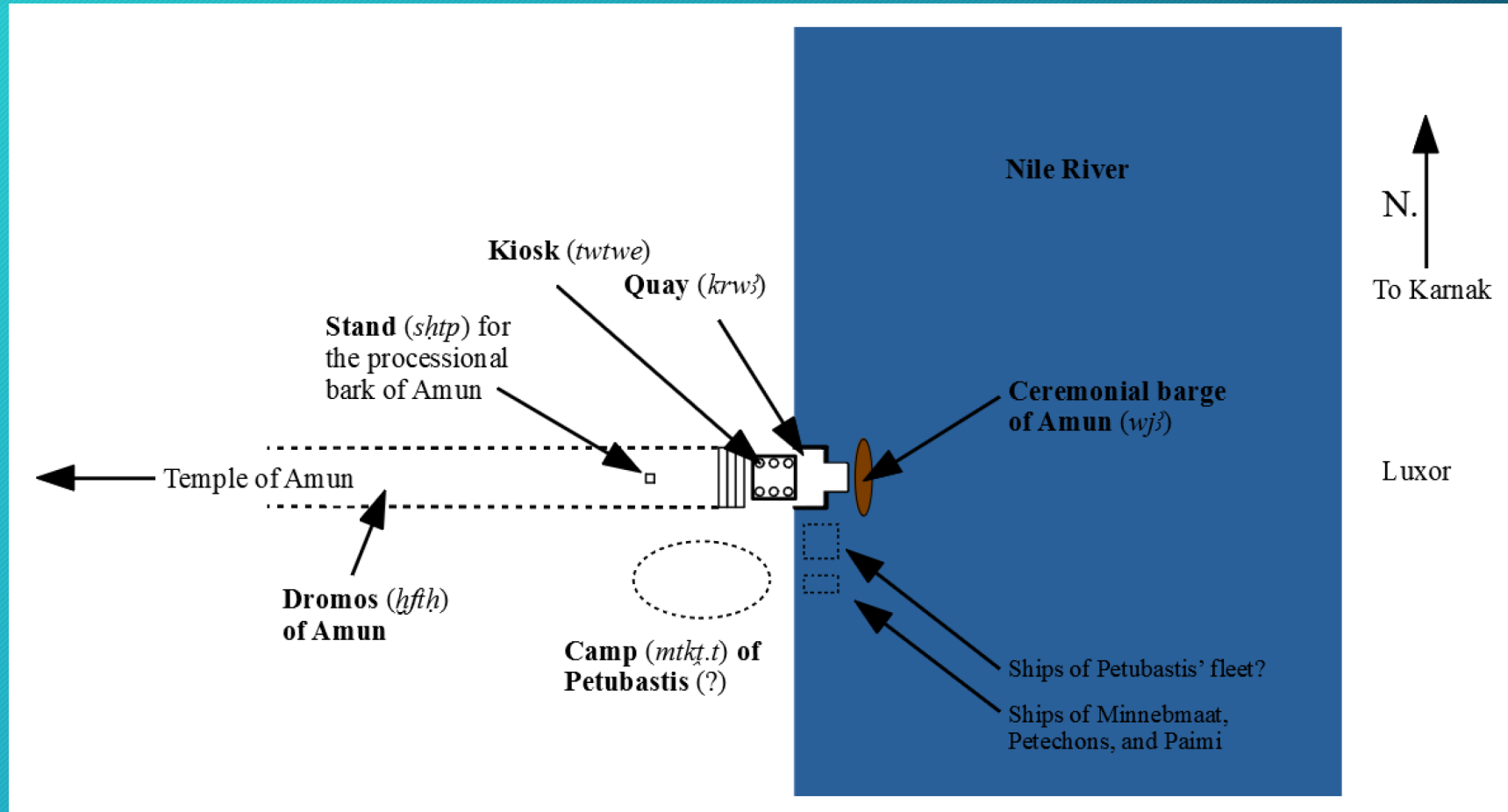
- Cf. Pami in *Armor* 9.27-30:

“Even if they give me the armor, I will not take it to Heliopolis without taking it in a battle ($\underline{t}(\beta y) . \underline{t} \neq s n qnqn$). It is on its account that the spear stands in Egypt, that the whole populace of the land understands it! I will go in the name of my god Inaros and take ($\underline{t}(\beta y)$) his armor to Heliopolis!”

The framing of the combat scene in *Prebend*

- Framed as *ersatz* ritual action

The framing of the combat scene in *Prebend*

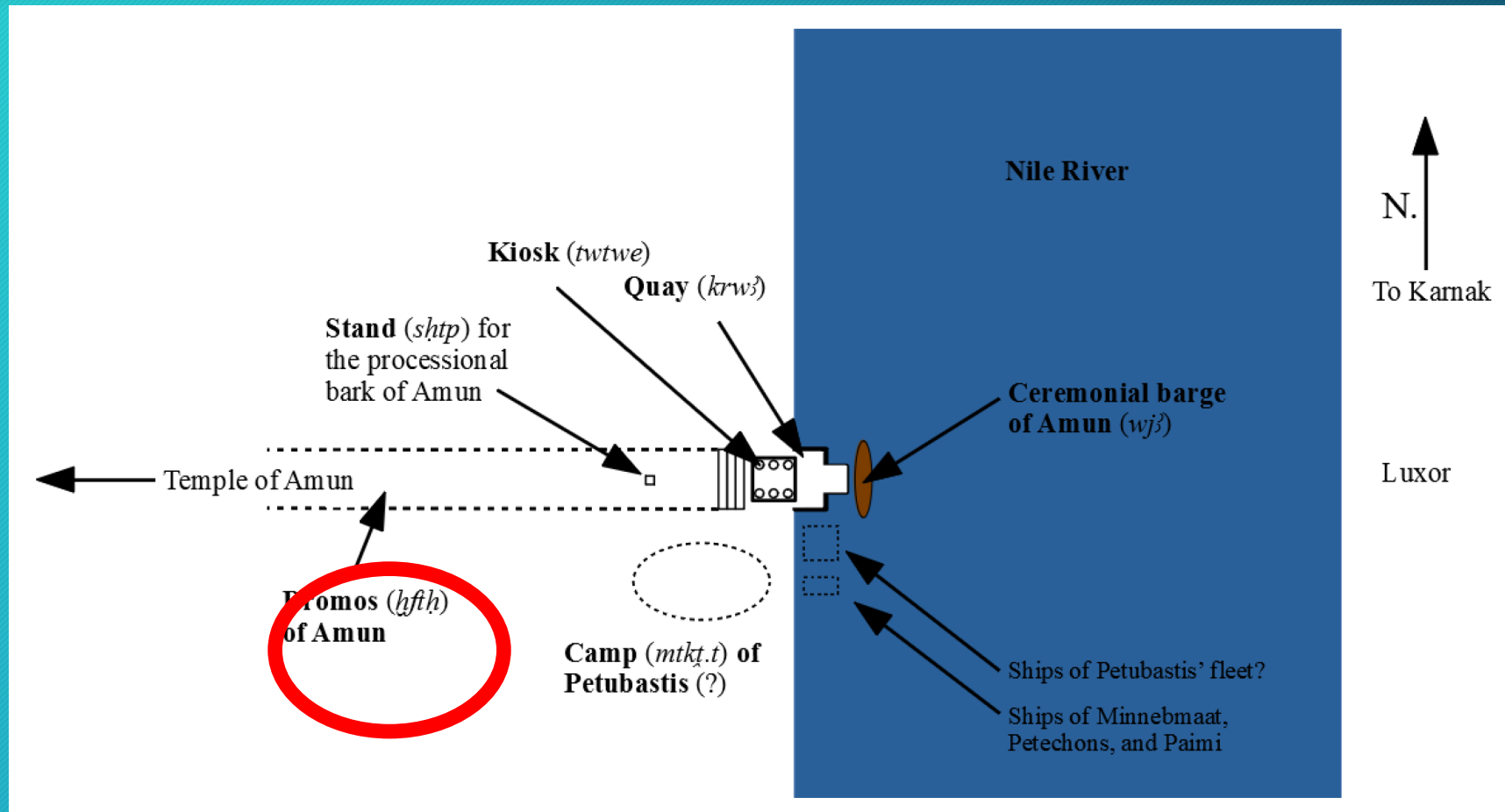


The framing of the combat scene in *Prebend*

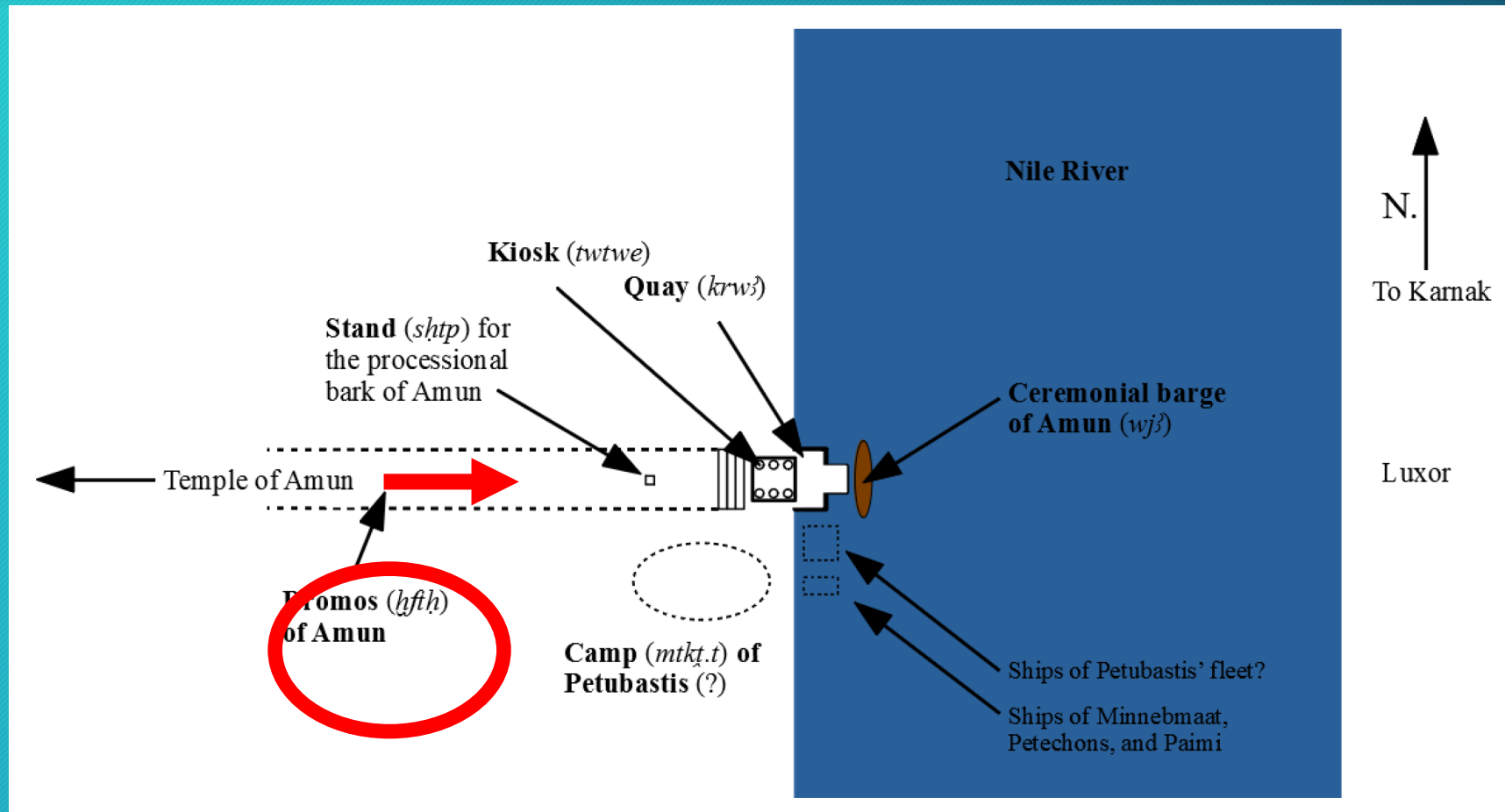
“Prince Ankhhor turned his face to the [kio]sk. He threw [to the gr]ound the byssos which had been on him and the golden jewelry with which he had been adorned.” (3.21-24)

“He came to the dromos of Amun[, turning his face] to the young priest, to the kiosk itself.” (4.5-6)

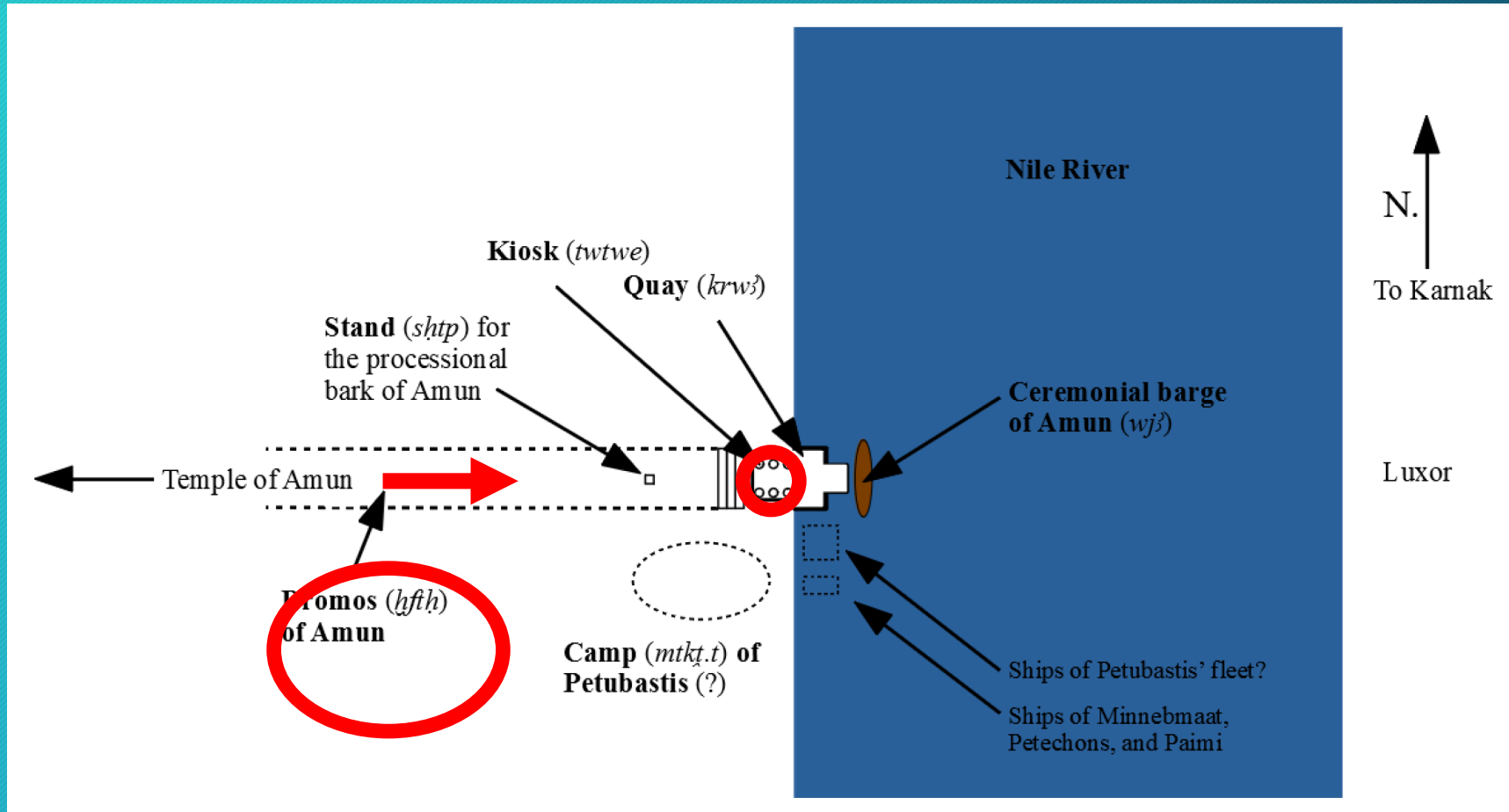
The framing of the combat scene in *Prebend*



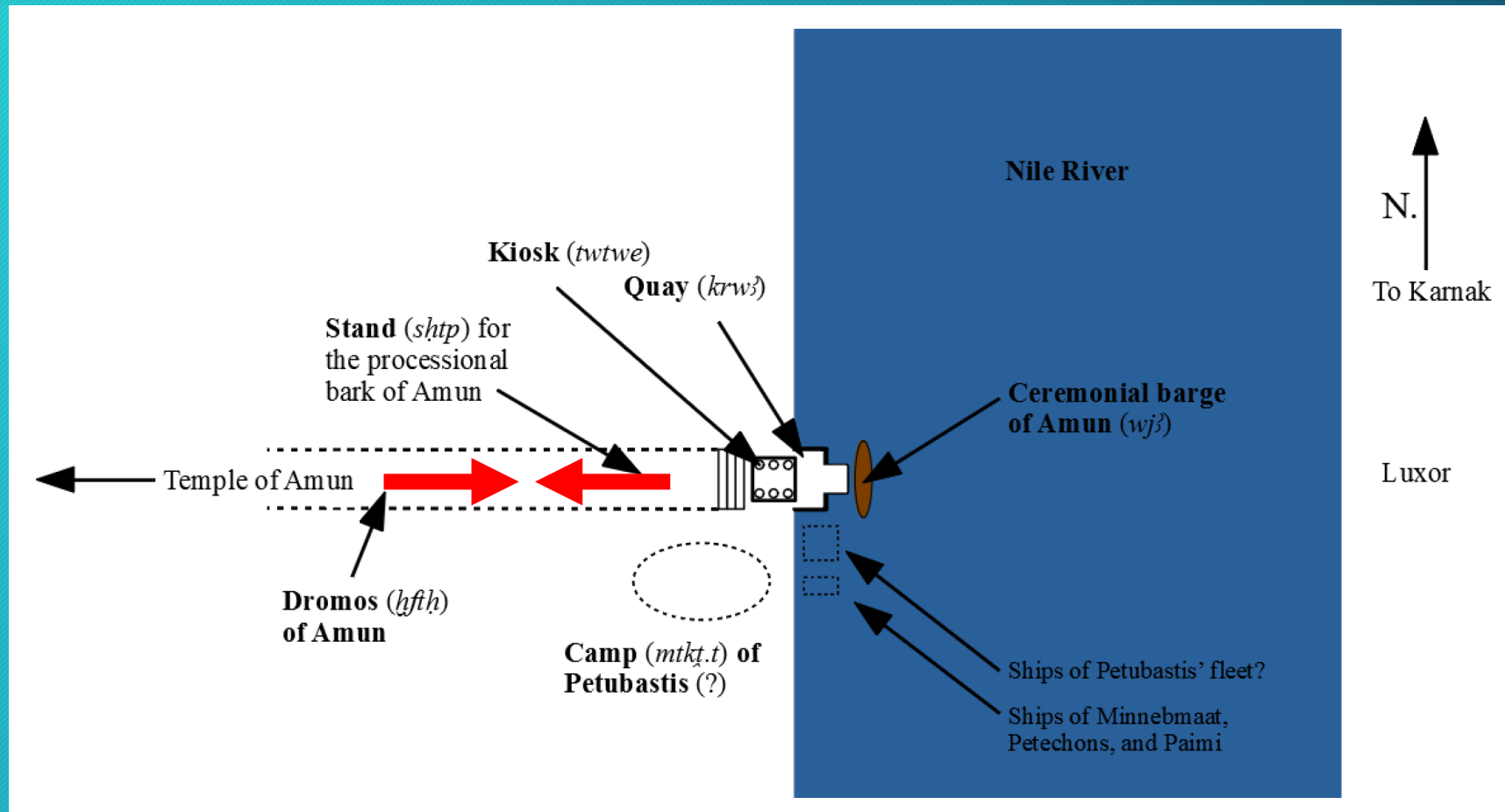
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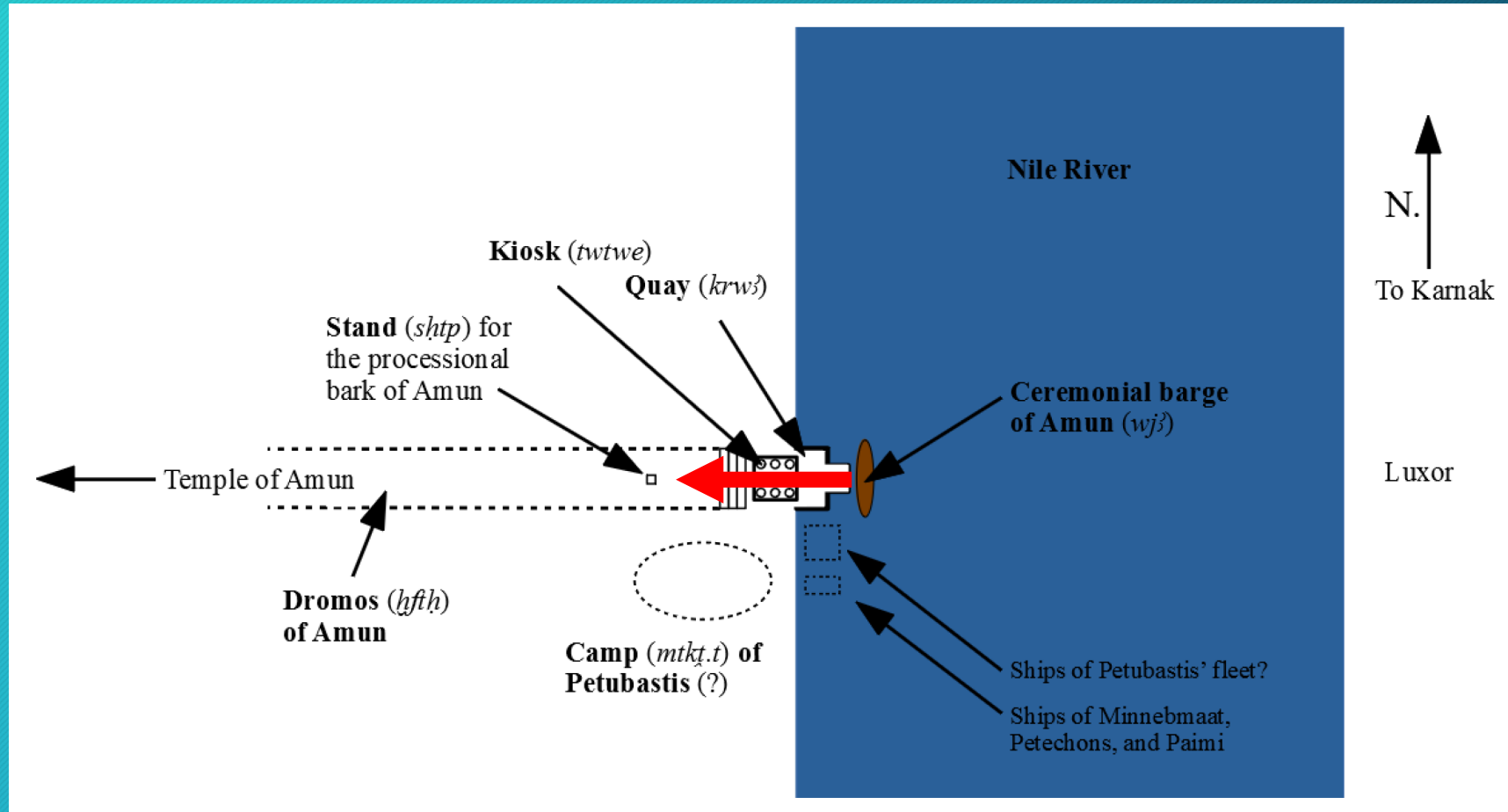


The framing of the combat scene in *Prebend*

“They set their faces towards the barge of Amun” (5.8)

“They washed themselves for the festival. They brought out the bread, the meat, and the wine which was on board. They brought it before themselves. They drank. They celebrated with their faces set towards the quay, towards the processional bark (lph!) of Amun, the great god, making offerings and incensing before it” (5.12-16)

The framing of the combat scene in *Prebend*



The framing of the combat scene in *Prebend*



Pharaoh offering
incense to the
processional bark of
Amun

Granite bark chapel
of Phillip Arrhidaeus,
Karnak

Oriental Institute, Epigraphic
Survey negative 5184

Armor vs. Prebend reconsidered (again)

- The storyteller has to count on a familiarity with literary conventions, a competence in the expectations of genre, specifically, the “normal” portrayal of the combat motif found in *Armor*

Armor vs. Prebend reconsidered (again)

- This allows the combat scene to be presented with irony, a complex concept in narrative literature describing a playful and usually learned staging and control of knowledge of both characters and of readers

Armor vs. Prebend reconsidered (again)

- In the first combat scene in *Prebend*, the preparation for a duel, the duel itself, and the aftermath are depicted in a certain way, but the point of what is depicted is more than the sum of the parts: it is that a combat scene, with manifold resonance to ones played straightforwardly in works like *Armor*, is knowingly played differently

Armor vs. Prebend reconsidered (again)

- “detached knowingness” (*Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*)

Armor vs. Prebend reconsidered (again)

- “detached knowingness” (*Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*)
 - the object of knowledge being genres and their conventions, and, perhaps even, actual literary texts like *Armor*

Armor vs. Prebend reconsidered (again)

- *Prebend* demonstrates irony like that of other contemporary works (*First Setne*)

Armor vs. Prebend reconsidered (again)

- Contemporary Judean literature: irony is found throughout works like Jonah, Ruth, Esther, and Tobit

Armor vs. Prebend reconsidered (again)

- Ironic play with textual convention

Armor vs. Prebend reconsidered (again)

- Ironic play with textual convention
- In *Prebend*: the theological description of the barge of Amun

Armor vs. Prebend reconsidered (again)

- Ironic play with textual convention
- In *Prebend*: the theological description of the barge of Amun
→ a parody of exegetical discourse

Armor vs. Prebend reconsidered (again)

- Ironic play with textual convention
- In *Prebend*: the theological description of the barge of Amun
 - a parody of exegetical discourse
 - couched in technical terminology drawn from contracting

Prebend as learned storytelling literature

Prebend as learned storytelling literature

- Enjoyment is predicated in a thorough way on high levels of textual competency on the part of its audience, a textual competency that touches not only different dimensions of knowledge of the priestly audience, but of their enjoyment of narrative literature

Prebend as learned storytelling literature

- *Prebend* presumes a willingness to participate in its ironic portrayal

Prebend as learned storytelling literature

- Storytelling literature in Ptolemaic Egypt could be associated with reading culture, with circles of readers, that were professionals who simultaneously had the time, and the willingness, to devote to ironic treatments of their *line of work*

Prebend as learned storytelling literature

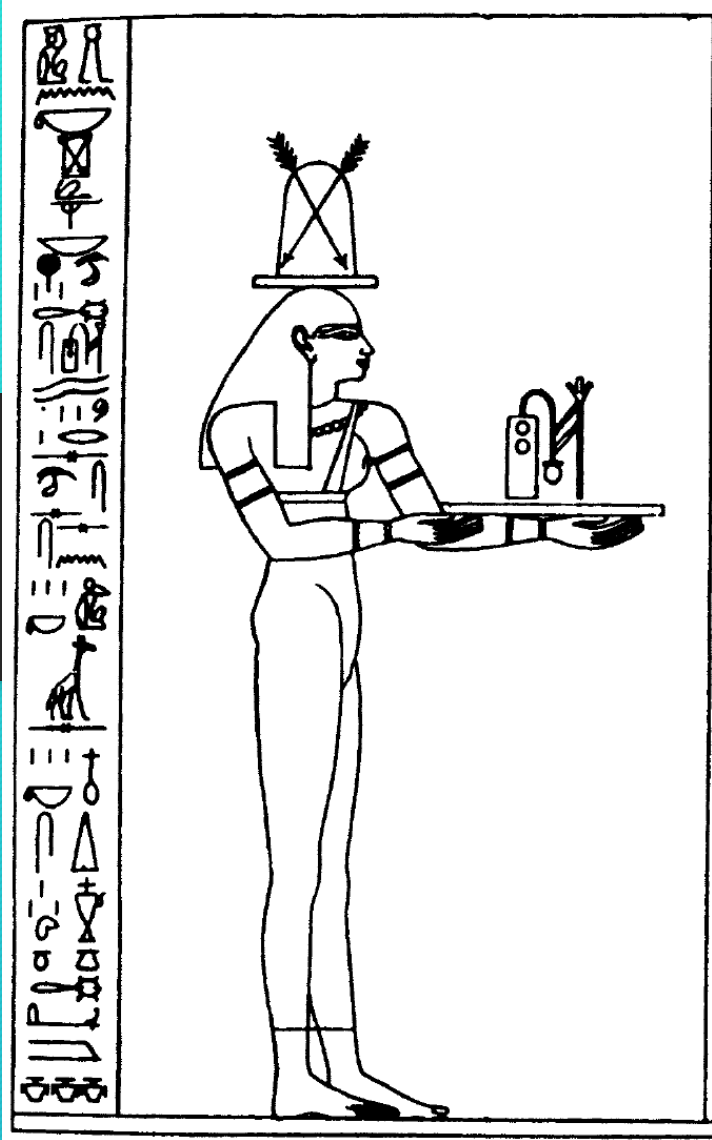
- Parallels with Judean literature:

Prebend as learned storytelling literature

- A type of scholarly individual who engages in learned literature, while preserving traditional culture and, in various ways, working for or interacting with the hegemonic, foreign power, should be reconstructed for this period

Distilling down the contribution

- Taking for granted the similarities between *Aarmor* and *Prebend* as crown jewels of the Inaros Cycle has inadvertently covered up evidence for the expressive potential of literature in this period



Robert K. Ritner (1953-2021)

