



THE ASSYRIAN CONQUEST

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INTRODUCTION

In the work of reconstruction of ancient history and replacement of the conventional scheme by a synchronized version, *The Assyrian Conquest* belongs, in chronological order, after *Ages in Chaos: From the Exodus to King Akhnaton*, and before *Ramses II and His Time* and *Peoples of the Sea*. By offering it to the readers I fill the gap left by publishing the Reconstruction not in the chronological order, and rely on the indulgence of the readers, many of whom urged me to come out with what reaches maturity or a stage satisfactory for presentation.

The period of the Theban Dynasty (labeled “Eighteenth”)—the subject of the first volume of *Ages in Chaos*—was followed by two and a half centuries during which the ancient East lived in the shadow of Assyrian domination. During this period the world experienced repeated outrages of nature, the theme of Part II (“Mars”) of *Worlds in Collision* and to a great extent also of *Earth in Upheaval*, dedicated to the evidence from the domain of the natural sciences.

The Assyrian military state thrust its sword into all four directions—to the north across the Caucasus into Scythia; to the east into Elam; to the west into Asia Minor, dislodging the Chaldeans and closing in on Phrygia and Lydia, but with the greatest tenacity to the south, into Syria, Phoenicia, Israel, Judah, Egypt, even the Sudan, in ancient times called Ethiopia, or Kush.

Although a military state, Assyria developed sculptural art of great power. The hunting scenes with portrayals of lions, wounded or dying, yet still attacking, are unequalled in power of expression in ancient or modern art. The Assyrians, troubled like the rest of the nations by the fear of a repetition of the close cosmic encounters in the disarranged planetary family, excelled in observing the events taking place in the sky. Repeated displacements of orbital planes and even small variations in planetary positions and motions, and abrupt changes in the position and direction of the earth’s axis, and the changes in the times of the equinoxes and solstices—all were registered on clay tablets, numbering in the tens of thousands. Despite this cultural progress at home, the Assyrians carried on wars of unusual brutality, and often wantonness.

In the double shadow of the brutality and wantonness spread by excesses of nature and the Assyrian weapons, the peoples on the land bridge between present Iraq—the home of Assyria and Babylonia—and Egypt, namely the Syrians, Phoenicians,

Israelites and Judeans, acted each in line with their cultural instincts. The Syrians emulated the Assyrians, the Phoenicians heroically defended their maritime cities, but then retreated to build new colonies overseas; yet in parts of the Lebanon of today the proclivity for trade still survives, attesting to the persistence of a national character. To the south, in Israel and Judah, the said double shadow gave birth to a unique brand of prophets, actually a blend of religious reformers and social revolutionaries, who vigorously opposed the priests, the sacrifices, and even the Temple worship as long as the poor were exploited by the rich, and widows, orphans, and the downtrodden were not protected. Further, they were statesmen, trying to select the proper political orientation for the state, going with their message or warning to the people in the market places and in hamlets, but also mounting the steps to the kings' palaces, and even abusing the kings, unafraid of the throne as they were unafraid of the altar. Finally they were poets, since equal poetic prose can be searched for in the old ages and the new, but will not be found. Miracles they did not perform, neither miraculous healings; their prophecies were limited to forebodings of political developments, and to their threatening with the arrival of more natural disasters to be brought about by renewed dislodgements in the spheres, but consistently ascribed to the Creator of man and watcher over his deeds and even over the thoughts of his soul, as if righteousness would keep nature in bonds.

The narrative of this volume comes to its close when the Assyrian conquest ended in a conquest of Assyria and extirpation of that state. There followed not quite a hundred years of Chaldean domination—the theme of *Ramses II and His Time*. After that Persia ruled the ancient world for over two hundred years (-546 to -332)—the theme of *Peoples of the Sea*.

The main and singular purpose of this composition, through all its volumes, was and is to replace what are ages in chaos by a revised, or synchronized, chronology and history. In this respect the present volume is pivotal.

The generations from the Exodus to King Jehoshaphat or, in Egyptian history, from the fall of the Middle Kingdom to King Akhnaton, were shown in the first volume of this reconstruction to be synchronical by mere juxtaposition of events and personalities: it is brought to light by moving in relation to one another the Egyptian and Israelite histories, a generation after generation, along the entire period, and always at the same interval of ca. 540 years, thus setting the two chronological columns at a synchronical level. At first we left the problem open, which of the two histories would require re-adjustment—is the Israelite history in need of finding lost centuries, or does the Egyptian history require excision of unreal ones? Jehospat and his generals and Ahab and his adversaries in Damascus could not have exchanged letters with Amenhotep III and his heir on the throne, Akhnaton, across the centuries. Soon we realized that of the two time tables, the Egyptian and the Israelite, the former is out of step with historical reality by over five centuries.

The Assyrian Conquest is pivotal because the procedure no longer is a mere relative shifting of two chronologies. As I will show, the order of the dynasties, past the conclusion of the Eighteenth (Theban) Dynasty, needs to be altered.

The present volume dealing with the period characterized by Assyrian contest for the domination of the lands of the ancient East completes the narrative part of the reconstruction of ancient history from the end of the Middle Kingdom to the spread of Hellenistic culture after the fall of the Persian Empire.





When the House of Akhnaton Died Out

Stormy and unsettled was the period of the eighth and seventh centuries before the present era. The world was uneasy and in a tumultuous state. Terrifying portents were seen in the sky and were accompanied by great perturbations of nature—among them earthquakes and changes of climate. The nations of the ancient East were in turmoil. Peoples of the steppes of the north crossed mountain barriers and transgressed the boundaries of states. Civilian unrest flared up in many places and armies marched along military roads, engaging one another in strife and wars.

A few decades before this uproar, in the second part of the ninth century, the glorious Theban (Eighteenth) Dynasty of Egypt came to an end and the house of Akhnaton degenerated and was extirpated.

For only a short time did Akhnaton's residence city, Akhet-Aton, enjoy the sounds of agitated life, with messengers and ambassadors coming and going. Soon the place was abandoned by men and desert sands swept over it and buried it, to make place at last for the few poor settlements of el-Amarna. With Akhet-Aton left to decay, Thebes, the old southern residence, once more was made the capital of the land. Two heirs of Akhnaton in quick succession occupied the throne, each reigning for a short while, before dying young. The younger was Tutankhamen, whose tomb was discovered in 1922. Never before had such riches in gold, jewels and furniture been found in the vault of a dead person. He was buried by the last king of the Eighteenth Dynasty, the old Ay, the granduncle of the last two reigning youths.

This much is known: the religious reform of Akhnaton was abolished, his line died out, and his palace and his city were abandoned; but history professes not to know the personal fate of Akhnaton and of the epigoni that followed on the throne of Egypt, nor what happened during the anarchy which followed or which may also have preceded the end of this glorious dynasty.

In *Oedipus and Akhnaton* I undertook the task of reviving the pageant of this era and of illuminating the personal fate of its heroes. I showed also how the tragic fate of the house of Akhnaton gave rise to a legendary cycle that reached to the shores of Greece, took hold of the imagination of generations of poets, and survived in its legendary form till our own days.⁽¹⁾

Paintings on a wooden chest found in the tomb of Tutankhamen show the young king in war against the Ethiopians and Syrians. It appears that in the fraternal war his elder brother Smenkhkare, deprived of his throne, called to his assistance foreign troops; in this war both young princes died. Smenkhkare was buried clandestinely by his sister-spouse, who also placed a song of love, cut into gold foil, at the feet of the dead. His burial was violated by the emissaries of Ay, brother of Queen Tiy, mother of Akhnaton. Ay, assuming the royal power, officiated at the splendid funeral of his protege Tutankhamen. Having reached the throne in his old age, Ay did not occupy it for long. The exact order of events that ended with Ay's elaborate and beautiful sarcophagus being smashed to smithereens, we do not know; but the Eighteenth Dynasty was terminated by invasion. Ay was not followed on the throne by any kin of his—the House of Akhnaton was followed by foreign rule.

References

1. *Oedipus and Akhnaton: Myth and History* (New York, 1960).





The Sequence of Dynasties

With the close of the Amarna period we have reached, according to our revised scheme, the latter part of the ninth century. The eighth century and the beginning of the seventh were the periods of Libyan and Ethiopian dynasties in Egypt. The conventional scheme assigns the Amarna period to the earlier part of the fourteenth century and has the Nineteenth Dynasty, that of Seti and Ramses II, and the Twentieth Dynasty, that of Ramses III, the last great emperor of Egypt, succeed before the Libyans and Ethiopians ruled Egypt.

The transition of power from the Eighteenth to the Nineteenth Dynasty is regarded as an obscure period of Egyptian history. The circumstances under which the Nineteenth Dynasty was established are said to be unknown. This Dynasty is one of the most famous successions of pharaohs—Ramses I, Seti I, Ramses II, and Merneptah. Still another name is preserved, that of Haremhab. He belonged neither to the Eighteenth nor to the Nineteenth Dynasty; he was not a descendant of Akhnaton, nor was he an ancestor of the Ramessides. He is supposed to have ruled Egypt during an interregnum. It is not apparent why he was “chosen to be king” and to administer Egypt. Nothing is known of his end. The idea so often expressed that Haremhab was a successor of Ay is baseless. We shall encounter Haremhab later in this volume—but he lived one hundred and fifty years after Ay.

On the pages to follow I shall endeavor to show that the Libyan and Ethiopian dynasties followed closely the Eighteenth Dynasty and preceded the Nineteenth and the Twentieth. This result of the present reconstruction is probably the most unexpected of all. Yet in *Peoples of the Sea* (1977) the time of Ramses III and with him the entire Twentieth Dynasty have already been shown to belong into the fourth century; and the volume *Ramses II and His Time* (1978) has carried the task of identifying the Nineteenth Dynasty as synonymous with the Twenty-sixth, that of Necho I, Psammetichus, Necho II, and Apries.

The so-called Nineteenth Dynasty will be found to have been displaced not only by the five hundred and forty years of error in the dating of the Eighteenth Dynasty, but also by an additional one hundred and seventy years—the duration of the Libyan and Ethiopian dominations over Egypt: and the total error will be found reaching the huge figure of seven hundred years.

Since the pharaohs of these dynasties waged wars and maintained peaceful relations

with the kingdoms and peoples of the north, the transfer of these Egyptian dynasties to a time much more recent carries an enormous tide into the histories of the entire ancient East, including Asia Minor and Greece.

The evidence of the present volume will lead us to the conclusion that the Libyan Dynasty that superseded the Eighteenth started not about -945, but more than a century later: the Libyan Dynasty has been allotted a longer span of time than it actually occupied. In the chapter dealing with the sack of the Temple of Jerusalem, it was demonstrated that the biblical Shishak, its plunderer, was Thutmose III of the Eighteenth Dynasty, and the objects of his loot, depicted on the bas relief at Karnak, were identified as the vessels, utensils, and furniture of the Temple. His heir Amenhotep II was identified as the Biblical Zerah who invaded Palestine in the days of King Asa at the beginning of the ninth century. Thus they could not have been the Libyan kings Shoshenk and Osorkon. These Libyans reigned later, and the entire duration of that dynasty was shorter than is conventionally assumed.

But we shall also show that Osorkon could not have reigned in the beginning of the ninth century and that Shoshenk could not have been the biblical Shishak because he was the Biblical Pharaoh So referred to in the Scriptures during the closing days of Samaria, in the time of King Hezekiah.

The Libyan Dynasty endured for about one hundred and twenty years and the Ethiopian rule for close to fifty years, the latter being repeatedly interrupted by Assyrian conquests of Egypt. Thus in our view the only Dynasty correctly placed in the conventional scheme is the Ethiopian.

With one period, namely the Ethiopian, torn out of a dislocated order of events and kept in its proper place in time, it happened that causes became consequences and consequences changed to causes, and descendants became ancestors, turning progenitors into offspring.

Before we shall deal with the major problem of identifying the historical time of the origin of the Nineteenth Dynasty, we shall be concerned in a few of the following sections with a comparatively minor re-adjustment—returning Shoshenk and Osorkon of the Libyan Dynasty from the tenth and ninth centuries to their proper places in the eighth century.





The Libyans in Egypt

The period of Libyan domination in Egypt, the Twenty-second Dynasty, is said by Manetho to have lasted for a hundred and twenty years:⁽¹⁾ “But the accepted chronology,” wrote Sir Alan Gardiner, “finds itself compelled to legislate for fully two centuries. . .”⁽²⁾

What is the basis for beginning the time of the Libyan Dynasty of Egypt, that of Shoshenks and Osorkons, as early as -945 or even earlier and for stretching the period for over two hundred years? The end of the period is well established, because ca. -712 the Libyan rule was supplanted by the Ethiopian domination,⁽³⁾ and the latter stands firmly fixed in time in relation to Biblical and Assyrian sources.

The beginning of the Libyan Dynasty was dated to -945 because a synchronical link was claimed to exist between the Biblical references to Pharaoh Shishak who conquered Palestine in the fifth year after Solomon, and Shoshenk Hedjkheperre of the Libyan dynasty. The placing of Shoshenk Hedjkheperre in the second half of the tenth century did not follow from the Egyptian material, But from the supposed synchronism of Rehoboam, who followed Solomon on the throne in Jerusalem, and Shoshenk Hedjkheperre. In *Ages in Chaos* I have pointed out that this alleged synchronism is not supported by the available evidence, and I was able to show that the conqueror of Jerusalem and sacker of its temple was not a Libyan king but Thutmose III of the Eighteenth Dynasty. In the Chapter entitled “The Temple in Jerusalem” I compare Thutmose’s depiction of the booty taken by him with the Biblical description of the vessels and furnishings of Solomon’s Temple to arrive at a positive identification of the sacker of Jerusalem’s temple.⁽⁴⁾

Now to bring Shoshenk Hedjkheperre to the head of the Libyan Dynasty is unnecessary; actually he will be shown to belong to the end of the period of Libyan domination in Egypt, and to be the Pharaoh So of the Scriptures.⁽⁵⁾

During the greater part of the eighth century, when the Libyan Dynasty of Osorkons and Shoshenks ruled over Egypt, the kings of this country vied with the kings of Assyria for influence in Palestine and Phoenicia. Elibaal, king of the Phoenician port-city of Byblos, had an Egyptian artist carve a statue of Osorkon I and cut an inscription on its chest: “Statue of Elibaal, king of Gebal (Byblos) made . . .”⁽⁶⁾ Since

the conventional chronology made Osorkon a contemporary of Asa, who ruled over Israel in the early ninth century before the present era, Elibaal needed also to be placed in the ninth century—nearly a hundred years too early, according to the conclusions reached in this work. Abibaal, another king of Byblos, ordered a statue of Shoshenk Hedjkheperre to be carved and inscribed in his name;⁽⁷⁾ for this reason Abibaal was placed in the tenth century as a contemporary of that king. Placing Elibaal and Abibaal in the tenth and early ninth centuries respectively created problems for epigraphists concerned with the history of the Hebrew script. The inscriptions on the sculptures are in Hebrew characters, and were the subject of much discussion in connection with the development of the Hebrew alphabet. The epigraphists, who must take directives from the archaeologists, tried to reconcile the dates derived from these inscriptions with the characters on the stele of Mesha, the king of Moab, who in the middle of the ninth century revolted against Ahab, king of Israel, and with the ivories from Samaria belonging to the same period—and were rather puzzled. The inscriptions of Elibaal and Abibaal are written in a script that appears to bear the closest resemblance to the eighth-century ostraka from Samaria; yet the conventional historians have them *precede* the stele of Mesha. Evidently, the order of the Libyan kings on the throne of Egypt is not properly put together, and Elibaal and Abibaal belong to the eighth century, just as do Osorkon I and Shoshenk Hedjkheperre, their contemporaries in Egypt.

References

1. W. G. Waddell, *Manetho* (Loeb Classical Library, 1940).
2. *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, (Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 334. Actually, at least 220 years must be allotted to the Twenty-second Dynasty on the conventional time scale.
3. A. Spalinger, “The Year 712 B.C. and its Implications for Egyptian History,” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 10 (1973), pp. 95-101. [For criticism of the monumental evidence traditionally used to assign long reigns to some Libyan kings, see Helen K. Jaquet-Gordon, “The Illusory Year 36 of Osorkon I,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 53 (1967), pp. 63-68, and R. Caminos, “An Ancient Egyptian Donation Stela,” *Centaurus* 14 (1969), pp. 42-46. The first author showed that because of a faulty reading by Flinders Petrie of the year formula on a stela of Osorkon I, this king had been wrongly credited with a thirty-six year reign; in fact it is unlikely that he reigned beyond the fifteen years recorded by Manetho—the highest date mentioned on his documents is twelve years. In a note Jaquet-Gordon contended that the reign of Osorkon I’s successor on the throne, Takelot I, needs to be similarly reduced, for a stela “on the basis

of which a 23-year reign has been meted out to him does not in fact belong to him at all.” She suggested that Takelot only reigned the seven years which are attested on his genuine monuments. The attribution of the stela was definitively clarified by Caminos in an article published two years later, removing an error which “has particularly affected king-lists and discussions of the Libyan period in Egypt.” As a result of the two adjustments the Libyan period becomes shorter by a total of thirty-five years. This did not, however, produce a lowering of the absolute date for the beginning of the Dynasty, which is still held to be firmly tied to the supposed synchronism between Shoshenk Hedjkheperre and Rehoboam. But the shortening of the individual reigns within the Dynasty is putting the entire scheme under increased strain.]

4. [Cf. E. Danelius, “Did Thutmose III Despoil the Temple in Jerusalem?” *Society for Interdisciplinary Studies Review* II:3 (1977/78), pp. 64-79, and Velikovsky’s response in *Ibid.*, p. 80.]
5. See below, section “Pharaoh So.”
6. P. Montet, *Byblos et l’Egypte* (Paris, 1928-29), pl. 36-38.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 53, fig 17 and p. 56, fig. 18. Cf. my *Ramses II and his Time* (1978), Chapter III: “The Tomb of Ahiemhat.”





Libyan and Ethiopian Art & Culture

EVIDENCE FROM LANGUAGE, ART, AND RELIGION

In conjunction with the attempt to bring the period of Libyan and Ethiopian domination in Egypt into correct alignment — within the framework of the history of that land and in proper synchronism with the histories of foreign countries — I shall select several examples from the fields of language, art, and religion to demonstrate that the revised chronology does not contradict the natural evolutionary process we would expect to find in these various fields. To the contrary, the evidence in all these fields will argue *for* the new version of history. Paradoxical finds will no longer be paradoxical and enigmatic solutions will be easily understood. We shall elucidate, on such examples, the close following of the Libyan and Ethiopian dynasties upon the Eighteenth and their precedence in relation to the Nineteenth Dynasty.

On the other hand, the comparison of language, art, and religion of the Eighteenth Dynasty with examples from the same three fields under the Nineteenth Dynasty exhibits a veritable gulf, or break in tradition. With the beginning of the Nineteenth Dynasty, “Egypt was a changed world” . The author of this evaluation, Sir Alan Gardiner, explained: “it is impossible not to notice the marked deterioration of the art, the literature, and indeed the general culture of the people. The language which they wrote approximates more closely to the vernacular and incorporates many foreign words; the copies of ancient texts are incredibly careless, as if the scribes utterly failed to understand their meaning.” ⁽¹⁾

Considering that, in the conventional chronology, between the end of the Eighteenth Dynasty (King Ay) and the beginning of the Nineteenth (counted from Ramses I) only some fifteen to twenty years are available (and Haremhab is supposed to fill them) — and even taking into account the revolutionary tendencies of Akhnaton — a break in all aspects of cultural development marking the transition between the two dynasties, the Eighteenth and the Nineteenth, is more than enigmatic.

THE LITERARY STYLE OF THE LIBYAN PERIOD

The oracular stele of Thutmose IV, father of Amenhotep III and grandfather of Akhnaton, is a famous relic. Thutmose, when still a prince in his teens, visited the

oracle of the Great Sphinx at Gizeh. There he fell asleep and heard in his dream that he, not the eldest among his brothers and not in the line of succession, was destined to follow his father Amenhotep II on the throne. The oracle required Thutmose, upon his ascent to the throne, to clear the Sphinx of the desert sand that had swept in around it; when pharaoh, Thutmose fulfilled his vow and also erected a stele with a description of both the oracular dream and his freeing of the Sphinx from the sand. This stele was found between the paws of the Sphinx when in modern times the sand, that had again buried the huge figure above its paws, was removed under the supervision of archaeologists.

A. Erman, an eminent Egyptologist, tried to prove that the stele is a product of a late dynasty, possibly the Libyan. He presented the evidence of literary style, epigraphy, and spelling, concluding that the stele must have originated between the tenth and sixth centuries, and not in the fifteenth which was the accepted time of Thutmose IV. (2) “Our Sphinx stele is thus to be regarded as a restored inscription, but obviously a careless and free restoration. The time at which it was completed cannot be estimated exactly; it is not in any case later than the Saitic period, but can be placed equally well in the 21st or 22nd [Libyan] dynasty.” (3)

Erman’s position was disputed by another equally eminent Egyptologist, W. Spiegelberg, who presented the argument that the “late style and spelling” are actually not late and that, furthermore, the texts of the Saitic period are conspicuous for their classical style; additionally, no marked difference is evident between the texts of these two periods. “The good archaizing texts of the Saitic period are conspicuous in their use of correct ‘classic’ orthography.” (4)

Spiegelberg concluded that, because of this similarity in the art of writing in these two periods, separated by half a millennium and more, Erman’s argument was unfounded and the stele must have been carved in the days of the pharaoh whose name it bears, Thutmose IV.

Is it not strange that the style and epigraphy of two periods, thought to be separated by such a large span of time, are so similar as to engage two specialists in such a dispute?

The Eighteenth Dynasty and the Libyan period in Egypt produced very similar literary works. In no language, ancient or new, would four to seven hundred years have passed without very considerable changes: one need think only of the metamorphosis of English between the time of Geoffrey Chaucer and that of Oscar Wilde. It was no different with the Egyptian language; and most likely, the two epochs under consideration show so little change simply because there was so little

time difference. Thus the conflicting opinions are much less conflicting if only scores of years, not five centuries, separate the time of Thutmose IV from the beginning of Libyan rule.

THE ART OF THE EIGHTEENTH AND LIBYAN DYNASTIES

The Libyan Dynasty, following directly upon the Eighteenth, perpetuated not only its literary style, but many of its artistic traditions as well. In some instances, the resemblance was so close that experts mistakenly attributed a work of art to the wrong Dynasty; and while the difference in time actually amounted to not more than a few decades, on the conventional time scale many centuries were involved — centuries which could not have passed without profound changes in the mode of execution of statues, bas-reliefs, and paintings.

Metal sculpture: One such instance is the Carnarvon statuette of Amun, a rare *chef-d'oeuvre* discovered by Howard Carter at Karnak in 1916. When first exhibited in 1922 it was described by Carter as a “Statuette of the God in the Likeness of Thotmosis III” . “This attribution has never been challenged by any of the scholars who have published illustrations of the specimen,” wrote Cyril Aldred in 1956, ⁽⁵⁾ “and the present writer must include himself among those who accepted without cavil a dating to the Tuthmosid period.” But a more detailed examination of the statuette convinced Aldred that “a date in the Eighteenth Dynasty is untenable” . The statue was not of the Eighteenth Dynasty. It was not even Ramesside. “There is, in fact, nothing in this statuette which does not belong to the style of the Third Intermediate Period [the Libyan and Ethiopian dynasties] and everything is in favour of such a date. . . . If a more precise dating within the Third Intermediate Period be insisted upon, then the writer is inclined to place this statuette of Amun early in the Twenty-second Dynasty, since it shows the stylistic features of such metal sculpture in fully developed form. . ⁽⁶⁾

Conventional chronology puts almost six hundred years between the the time of Thutmose III and the early Libyan (Twenty-second) Dynasty kings. Were the changes in the execution of the sculptures so minute in this span of time that they could not be detected by an art expert? Or was the elapsed time much shorter, a century perhaps, as the revised chronology implies?

In trying to explain how a blunder of this magnitude was possible, Aldred goes on to discuss the history of metal sculpture in Egypt. Metal sculpture, introduced under the Eighteenth Dynasty, experienced a setback under the Nineteenth Dynasty, but becomes plentiful again in the Libyan period. With the time of Libyan domination immediately following on the Eighteenth Dynasty, there was no interruption between the introduction of the technique under the Eighteenth Dynasty and its greatest

florescence in Libyan times.

We can cite another instance of misattribution of a sculpture in metal. A bronze figurine of Anubis, dated to the Libyan period in 1963, was only three years later re-dated by half a millennium to the Eighteenth or early Nineteenth Dynasties. ⁽⁷⁾

Sculpture in stone: Problems not unlike those involved in the dating of metal sculpture arose in the attribution of monumental sculpture in stone. In a private communication, the late Egyptologist Walter Federn brought to my attention the case of the sphinxes erected at Karnak in the temple of Mut. According to Federn:

"In the temple of Mut at Karnak stand more than a hundred statues of the lion-goddess Sekhmet. The majority date from [the time of] Amenhotep II, and can be so identified by their inscriptions. Many were dedicated also by Shoshenk I, and are without the inscriptions characteristic of the others; they are notable for their somewhat careless execution. . . . It is remarkable also that one statue, which is the largest of all, and which was formerly taken to be the oldest of them, originates rather from Shoshenk I." ⁽⁸⁾

Was the completion of the Sekhmet sphinxes interrupted for more than six centuries? Why did Seti the Great or Ramses II not complete the work, if, as is generally thought, they followed the Eighteenth Dynasty? It was the Libyan kings who completed the decoration of the temple begun by Amenhotep II, only a few decades after his death; and they did so in a style hardly distinguishable from the original work.

Chalices: Chalices, or drinking vessels with relief decorations, are unique objects; they seem to have been made "by the same group of men over no long period of time" . ⁽⁹⁾ Some of them definitely belong to the Libyan period (Twenty-second Dynasty) because the names of Libyan kings, such as "Shoshenk" , are inscribed on them. These come from Memphis, at the apex of the Delta; but another group of somewhat finer workmanship originates in the town of Tuna in the vicinity of Hermopolis, almost directly across the river from Tell el-Amama. The style of the uninscribed chalices from Tuna recalled so strongly the el-Amarna style of art that several experts ascribed to them a late Eighteenth Dynasty date. The case was argued most forcefully by Ricketts in an article he published in 1918. ⁽¹⁰⁾

In the decoration of one chalice Ricketts found "an almost Asiatic richness of design, a certain lack of severity" which tended to confirm his impression that it belonged "to an age of experiment, even of cross-influences, such as the later years of the Eighteenth Dynasty" . ⁽¹¹⁾ Another cup which he examined made him even more

secure in his attribution: it was “yet richer in aspect and, with its sparse figures, more certainly in the temper of the Eighteenth Dynasty” .⁽¹²⁾ A “spirited fowling scene” on a third chalice, so familiar from Eighteenth Dynasty painted tombs, strengthened his case still more.⁽¹³⁾

The arguments presented in 1918 for a late Eighteenth Dynasty date for some of the chalices were at first accepted by most scholars; and when Sotheby, the renowned art dealer, listed them in his 1921 catalog, he also labeled them as such.

Soon, however, several art experts expressed their unhappiness at such an early attribution, chiefly because of the similar, though somewhat inferior, chalices from Memphis, which could be dated securely to Libyan times on the basis of inscriptional evidence. It was unthinkable that there could have been a gap of over four centuries between the two groups. It was difficult to imagine that the art of manufacturing the objects died out under the Nineteenth, Twentieth, and Twenty-first Dynasties, only to be revived under the Twenty-second or Libyan Dynasty. Scholarly opinion swung toward a Libyan date for all the chalices. Ricketts’ paper of 1918, so carefully argued on the basis of artistic analogies, was termed “misleading”⁽¹⁴⁾ - yet no real reasons were adduced to invalidate the Eighteenth Dynasty attribution of the objects discussed by him.

The solution to the dilemma becomes obvious when the Egyptian dynasties are placed in their correct sequence. The chalices were made as Ricketts deduced, during the Amarna period — the late Eighteenth Dynasty. They continued to be manufactured under the Libyan Dynasty that followed, even while exhibiting the same decline in artistic standards which characterized all Egyptian art in the wake of the civil war and foreign invasion that precipitated the end of the house of Akhnaton. And if they were made, as Tait argued, “by the same group of men over no long period of time” , they appear to have been manufactured in the space of two or three consecutive generations.

SURVIVALS OF THE CULT OF ATON IN LIBYAN AND ETHIOPIAN TIMES

The Eighteenth Dynasty saw, toward its end, the worship of Aton. Akhnaton in his religious reform — or heresy as it is usually called — instituted Aton as the supreme god. His heirs, Smenkhkare and Tutankhamen, having worshipped Aton in their earlier years, reverted again to the worship of Amon, and the circumstances of these religious vacillations are described in my *Oedipus and Akhnaton*. These kings, however, reigned for a few years only and died in their youth; they served as prototypes for Polynices and Eteocles of the Theban cycle of tragedies.

Under the Libyan Dynasty not only the worship of Amon, but even the worship of Aton survived. Amon was a deity through long periods of Egyptian history, but the worship of Aton was very characteristic for the end of the Eighteenth Dynasty only.

A stele, ⁽¹⁵⁾ now in the Cairo Museum, shows a priest in office under king Osorkon II, one of the later Libyan pharaohs. The priest is described in the text as “Prophet of Amonrasonter in Karnak who contemplates Aton of Thebes” , a somewhat peculiar description which H. Kees remarked upon. He noted that it is “as if the priest had lived in Amarna times! “. ⁽¹⁶⁾

At the beginning of this century James H. Breasted drew attention to the fact that the Ethiopian temple-city Gem-Aten, known from the annals of the Nubian kings, carries the same name as Akhnaton’s temple at Thebes, and that the two must be in some relation, despite the great difference in age. A relief in a Theban tomb shows Akhnaton with his family worshipping in the temple of Gem-Aten. “The name of the Theban temple of Aton therefore furnished the name of the Nubian city, and there can be no doubt that Ikhenaton [Akhnaton] was its founder, and that he named it after the Theban temple of his god. . . . We have here the remarkable fact that this Nubian city of Ikhenaton survived and still bore the name he gave it nearly a thousand years after his death and the destruction of the new city of his god in Egypt (Amarna).” ⁽¹⁷⁾

Recently, Alexander Badawy discussed the worship observed by Akhnaton at the Gem-Aten (“Meeting of the Aten”) which stood at Amarna. It is thought that the king used to come to meet the Aton “daily in the eastern open courts of the Gem-Aten” . ⁽¹⁸⁾ “Music and singing, rattling of sistra, presentation of incense and flowers gave a festive note of jubilation to the daily liturgy of Aten. “⁽¹⁹⁾

The Gem-Aten (or Gempaton) of the annals of the Nubian kings was found by F. Addison at Kawa in 1929.

The further excavations of Griffith and Macadam at the site uncovered “two documents of Amenophis III which attested the foundation by this king of the historical Gempaton” . ⁽²⁰⁾ Breasted’s conclusion that the later Ethiopian temple went back to the Amama period was now confirmed by archaeology. ⁽²¹⁾

This only underlines the “remarkable fact” that the city carried, through the many centuries that supposedly elapsed between the Amama period and Ethiopian times, a name recalling a heretical cult and, moreover, remained unnoticed throughout this period in contemporary documents. After Akhnaton’s time the name Gem-Aten is

first referred to in an inscription of Tirhaka in one of the side-chambers of the Gebel-Barkal temple⁽²²⁾ — yet “its earlier history is totally unknown” .⁽²³⁾ Between the Amama period and the time of Tirhaka, the accepted chronology inserts almost 700 years — but we know that in fact only little more than a century elapsed, the period of Libyan domination; and we have seen that the cult of Aton persisted through the Libyan period.

Possibly the cult of Aton was perpetuated for a time by priests who fled south when, about - 830, the tide turned back in favor of the religion of Amon and the Libyan kings from the Delta were pushing toward Thebes. In any case, the religion of Atenism did not survive into Ethiopian times. When Piay (Piankhy) invaded Egypt about - 725 he did so under the guidance of Amon — but even then, ironically, Amon’s chief sanctuary in Ethiopia retained the name it had received from Akhnaton a century earlier.

THE TOMB OF MENTUEMHAT

The Ethiopian period, following the Libyan, came between the Eighteenth and the Nineteenth Dynasties, and its art shows affinities with both. This can be seen for instance in the decoration of the tomb of Mentuemhat, governor of Thebes in the time of Tirhaka and Assurbanipal.

In 1947 the Brooklyn Museum purchased “a fragment of limestone relief of exceptional quality” .⁽²⁴⁾ It was evaluated by John D. Cooney of the Egyptian Department as a product of the late Eighteenth Dynasty. The bas-relief contains scenes already known from paintings in the Eighteenth Dynasty tomb of Menna in the Theban necropolis (tomb no. 69) — a peasant girl sitting on a chair and taking a thorn out of the foot of another girl sitting opposite her; and a second scene of a woman with a child in a sling at her breast arranging fruits in a basket (Plate XIV). Both scenes, of exquisite bas-relief technique, have so many identical details with the paintings of the tomb of Menna that Professor Cooney was not acting inconsiderately when he assumed he purchased objects of art of the late Eighteenth Dynasty.

However, “only a few months later,” Professor Cooney narrates, “two other fragmentary reliefs were offered to the Museum” and were assessed by him as dating from the seventh century.⁽²⁵⁾ They were also purchased at a price appropriate for art of the Saite period, or the seventh and early sixth centuries, which is by far below the value of comparable art pieces of the Eighteenth Dynasty. The two fragments contained a scene depicting musicians and scribes with certain details that “made a Saite date completely certain” ⁽²⁶⁾ (Plates XIII and XVI).

Of the first acquisition Cooney wrote: “I was so convinced of the early date of the relief with peasant scenes that I failed even to consider a relationship between it and the Saite pieces.” ⁽²⁷⁾ Yet when, at the suggestion of a colleague (W. Stevenson Smith), he compared all three reliefs he found that the limestone and the heights and divisions of the registers were the same in all of them; the conclusion became unavoidable that all three had been made in the seventh century, and actually were recognized as being derived from the same tomb (Theban tomb no. 34) — that of Mentuemhat, the governor of Thebes under Tirhaka the Ethiopian. ⁽²⁸⁾

Because of the artistic similarities between the scenes in the tombs of Menna and Mentuemhat, Professor Cooney had to assume that the Eighteenth Dynasty example was still accessible and artistically influential after more than seven hundred years had elapsed. “The lucky preservation of the Eighteenth Dynasty original,” wrote Cooney, “which served as model to the Sai’te sculptor provides an ideal chance to grasp the basic differences between the art of these periods separated by a span of almost eight centuries.” ⁽²⁹⁾ Actually, however, between the time of Menna and the time of Mentuemhat not 800, but ca. 200 years passed, only a fourth of the span noted by Cooney.

Upon having surveyed some of the problems in language (style and trends) and art (including religious art), in comparing the Eighteenth Dynasty with the Libyan and Ethiopian dynasties, the conclusion is irresistible that the logical development of Egyptian culture requires re-ordering the sequence of the dynasties as they are presently known from Manethonian heritage to modern scholarship.

At the same time, the obvious rift between the language, art, and religion of the latter part of the Eighteenth Dynasty and the language, art, and religion evident at the inception of the Nineteenth Dynasty is extremely difficult to explain given the proximity of the two dynasties in the conventional scheme of Egyptian chronology.

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Jeroboam II and Osorkon II

The conventional timetable has Ahab, the king of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, as a contemporary of one of the kings of the Libyan Dynasty, usually Osorkon II. And almost regularly reference is made to archaeological evidence called to substantiate this synchronism; it is worded thus: “Osorkon II. He was a contemporary of Ahab, for in his palace at Samaria an alabaster vase bearing the name of Osorkon II was found.”

[\(1\)](#)

In the chapters VI to VIII of *Ages in Chaos*, dealing with the el-Amarna period, it is demonstrated that Ahab was a contemporary of the later kings of the Eighteenth Dynasty, Amenhotep III and IV (Akhnaton), and that over sixty-five letters on clay tablets addressed by him to these kings are still in existence, in originals, as written by the royal scribes, found in the ground of el-Amarna. Having been a contemporary of these pharaohs, the synchronization of Ahab with Osorkon II of the Libyan Dynasty cannot but be grounded in error. To expose the error of the quoted sentence, we have to check the records of the excavators.

During the years 1908-1910 the Harvard University archaeological expedition at Sebastieh, ancient Samaria, uncovered the foundation of a palace. It was tentatively identified as the palace built by Omri and enlarged by Ahab.

Like the unearthed portions of the city wall of Samaria, the palace was built on virgin rock. The biblical passage about Omri building his capital on an unoccupied hill was regarded as confirmed. The floor of the palace was covered with layers containing the remains of later structures; but no vestige of earlier structures was found under the floor, nor were any signs of settlement prior to the time of Omri, except for a neolithic encampment, unearthed on the site of Samaria.

On the floor of the palace numerous small Egyptian objects were found, among them scarabs (signets). The carvings on the scarabs are mostly decorative designs, but on one of them a cartouche, or royal name, was found engraved. The cartouche was that of Thutmose III. Since there was no plausible explanation for the presence of the cartouche of Thutmose III in the palace at Samaria, presumably built about six centuries after this pharaoh had died, the excavators suggested: “This may be a local imitation of an Egyptian scarab.” [\(2\)](#) As we have seen in the first volume of *Ages in Chaos*, Thutmose III reigned only a few decades before Omri; the cartouche

apparently is genuine.

A jar with the cartouches of Osorkon II was found near the palace of Samaria and it was brought forth as an evidence for the contemporaneity of Osorkon II and Ahab. Scores of ostraca were also found in Samaria. Ostraka, or potsherds inscribed with ink, were less expensive than burnt clay tablets or papyri; they were used when it was not expected that the writing would be preserved in an archive. Wine and oil when delivered were accompanied by these shards.

The ostraca of Samaria are inscribed with the names of persons or towns that delivered oil or wine to the king's palace; they are dated "in the ninth year," "in the tenth year," "in the seventeenth year," of the king, but the name of the king is not mentioned.

In various books and articles it is asserted that the jar of Osorkon, contemporary of Ahab, was found in the *same* debris as the ostraca,⁽³⁾ and it has been concluded that the ostraca of Samaria refer to the ruling years of Ahab. But is it true that these inscribed shards were found in the same debris as the Osorkon jar? And then, is it true that the ostraca of Samaria date from the reign of Ahab?

The report of the excavation gives the location precisely:

The southern wall of the Osorkon House [so-called because of Osorkon's jar] was built in part over the foundations of the north wall of rooms 406, 407, and 408. The foundations of the assumed northern part of the Ostraca House must have been destroyed previous to the construction of the Osorkon House.⁽⁴⁾

It follows that Osorkon's jar came to its location later than the ostraca came to theirs. This nullifies the argument that the jar must be of the same age as the ostraca. Thus even had the ostraca been inscribed during Ahab's reign, Osorkon's jar found its place at a definitely later date. But of what age are the ostraca?

The archaeologists at first reasoned thus: Since Osorkon II is known to have been a contemporary of Omri and Ahab, and since Omri reigned but twelve years, and the ostraca mention the seventeenth year of the king, they must have been written in the days of Ahab. It follows that the ostraca of Samaria are about the same age as the Mesha stele of the middle of the ninth century.⁽⁵⁾

A comparison of the Hebrew signs of the Samaritan ostraca with the Hebrew characters of the Mesha stele shows a definite change in the writing of single letters.

The same characteristics found in the Samaritan letters reappear in the Shiloah inscription of King Hezekiah, dating from close to -700. “How to explain that the characters of the ostraca, a quarter of a century older than the stele of Mesha, are more directly related to the later characters of the Shiloah inscription?”⁽⁶⁾ This compelled the researchers to advance the hypothesis that the Hebrew letters passed through a retrograde stage of development before resuming their progress, or that in Moab the development was slower than in Samaria.

In subsequent excavations at Samaria ivories with Hebrew letters were unearthed. These letters were found to be of the same type as those on the stele of Mesha and to have therefore originated in the ninth century. They are of a more archaic type than the characters of the ostraca of Samaria.⁽⁷⁾

The conclusion has now for some time been generally accepted that the Samaritan ostraca were written not in Ahab’s time, but in the time of one of the last kings of Samaria. Of the kings of Israel after Ahab, only Jeroboam II and Pekah reigned for more than seventeen years. The scholarly opinion arrived at an almost unanimous conclusion that the ostraca were written in the days of Jeroboam II (ca. -785 to -744).⁽⁸⁾ This conclusion appears to be correct.

The house that sheltered the jar of Osorkon II in Samaria was built on the ruins of the house that sheltered the inscribed potsherds. Since the ostraca were written in the days of Jeroboam II, one of the last kings of Israel to reign in Samaria, every ground for making Pharaoh Osorkon II a contemporary of Ahab because of the findings in Samaria vanishes. Judged by these findings, Osorkon II was not only later than Ahab, but also later than Jeroboam II.

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Revolutions in Egypt and Israel

The revolt of Jehu, whose horses tread the dead body of Jezebel, thrown out of a window of the palace in Jezreel (Gubla), was a signal for a change not just in religious allegiance, but equally so in political orientation. The palace revolution in Egypt and the lowering of Egypt's standing in international politics prompted Jehu's pro-Assyrian revolt, which met no true opposition in Israel nor in Judea: at Jezreel he killed the kings of both kingdoms, related by marriage.

At home Jehu started as a cruel tyrant by eliminating all the progeny of Ahab in Jezreel and in Samaria—baskets full of heads of the royal sons were carried to him from Samaria; next he ordered the priests of Baal and his worshippers killed. But against Hazael, king of Damascus, Jehu proved himself a poor opponent.

While the house of Judah and the house of Israel went through a series of revolutions and fraternal wars, the Assyrians, who already in the days of Shalmaneser III towered over other nations of Western Asia, did not cease their penetration into the region of Syria and Palestine, the bridge to Egypt and Ethiopia. The Assyrian expansion which had started under Ashurnasirpal (ca -883 to -859), the father of Shalmaneser III, took a more aggressive form under Shalmaneser, whose inroads into Syria, Phoenicia, Israel, and Judah can be read in the el-Amarna tablets as those of Burraburiash, King of Hatti. At Qarqar he fought a coalition in which also Ahab of Samaria participated, backed by a brigade of Egyptian (Musri) troops.

But besides this direct contact with Egyptian troops, Shalmaneser did not dispatch any military forces past the line Tyre-Qarqar-Damascus, instead employing local princelings in an effort to disrupt the Egyptian colonial domain. The rebellion of Mesha, a vassal king of Moab, against Ahab, the king of Samaria, and the intrusion of desert tribes from across the Jordan toward Jerusalem in the days of Jehoshaphat resulted from this disruptive policy, with the king of Damascus changing more than once his political orientation.

Shalmaneser fought also on several other fronts—he claims to have defeated, among others, Sopalulme of Hattina. We may identify this Sopalulme with Suppiluliumas, King of Hatti, author of one, possibly two, el-Amarna letters—a collection of hundreds of diplomatic missives exchanged between the pharaohs Amenhotep III, and Akhnaton after him, and the independent kings of Asia Minor and Mesopotamia, and also the vassal kings of Syria, Phoenicia, Israel, and Judah. As was shown in the

chapters dealing with the letters of el-Amarna, Shalmaneser of the Assyrian texts is Burreburiash of that correspondence. Burreburiash wrote insulting letters to Akhnaton and demanded gifts in objects of gold, ivory, and other objects of art in quantities amounting to a tribute.⁽¹⁾

On an obelisk Shalmaneser let himself be portrayed in low relief with his entourage, while a kneeling person kisses the ground near his feet. The text names the person Jehu, king of Judah. It is often assumed that the figure represents a messenger of Jehu.

In those days the Lord began to cut Israel short:
and Hazael smote them in all the coasts of Israel.
From the Jordan eastward, all the land of Gilead,
from Aroer, which is by the river Arnon,
even Gilead and Bashan.

At the same time we read in Shalmaneser's detailed annals that he carried on war against Damascus, and though the Assyrian king claimed victory, from the very fact that Shalmaneser's ally Jehu was such a loser, one would conclude that Hazael was much on the offensive.

Under Jehu and his son Jehoaz, Israel was so oppressed by Hazael that Jehoaz' army was reduced to ten chariots, fifty horsemen, and ten thousand footmen. Hope of relief came only in the days of Joash, son of Jehu. The Second Book of Kings gives this vivid picture:

Now Elisha was fallen sick of the sickness whereof he died. And Joash the king of Israel came down unto him and wept over his face. . . . And Elisha said unto him, "Take bow and arrows." And he said to the king of Israel, "Put thine hand upon the bow." And he put his hand upon it: and Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands. And he said, "Open the window eastward." And he opened it. Then Elisha said, "Shoot." And he shot. And he said, "The arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria."

"And Jehoash slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel; and Jeroboam his son reigned in his stead." The sepulcher of the kings of Israel has not been found, even though Samaria was excavated.

Joash's son, Jeroboam II, one of the later kings of Israel and the last of the house of

Jehu, reigned forty-one years in Samaria in the palace built by Omri and Ahab. “He restored the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain.” After many years of “affliction” that beset Israel (II Kings 14: 26), the enlargement of the state toward the north (Hamath is a hundred miles north of Damascus) and toward the south (“sea of the plain” is known today as the Dead Sea), constituted the high point in the history of Israel, only a few decades before the extinction of the state and the final eviction of its people from its land.

“. . . And all that he [Jeroboam] did and his might how he warred, and how he recovered Damascus and Hamath . . . are they not written in the book of Chronicles of the kings of Israel?” (II Kings 14: 28).

The Book of Chronicles incorporated in the Old Testament is not the book referred to in this and several other passages of the Book of Kings. It obviously dealt with the records of the Kings of Israel, whereas the existing Book of Chronicles is a short survey, predominantly of the events in the Kingdom of Judah. Were it extant, such a record, especially of the reign of Jeroboam II, who ruled longer and more successfully than other kings of Israel in the last century of the kingdom, would now be of inestimable value also for the exact synchronization of the political history of Israel with that of neighboring countries, Egypt and others.

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1. This tribute was also found near Kalah, the capital of Shalmaneser. Only a few miles from Kalah, in the early 1950's, a mound was opened, containing Fort Shalmaneser. It was excavated by Mallowan. In large storage rooms were found ivories with Egyptian motifs in great profusion; one of the rooms, ninety feet long, was found filled to the ceiling with objects of art, mainly ivory—the very objects described in an inventory sent by Akhnaton to Burraburiash.





The Last Kings of Israel

Amos, one of the earliest tribunes, called prophets in Judah and Israel, whose words are preserved in writing, lived and spoke, or “saw his words” (Amos 1:1) in the days of King Jeroboam II of Samaria and of King Uzziah of Jerusalem. A herdsman of Tekoah (south of Bethlehem) and gatherer of sycamore fruits, Amos felt the call two years before the *raash* in the days of Uzziah. His are only nine chapters, together not even as many pages. But the Decalogue is even shorter: verbosity is not a sign of inspiration. The Midrashim tell that Amos was a stammerer.⁽¹⁾ Amos’ career was also very short—he was put to death by King Uzziah. He was a firebrand from the hour he heard the call to carry his fivefold message to near and to far: a haranguer in the service of the downtrodden, a religious zealot of monotheism in a world of passionate pagan worship; a statesman or geopolitician with hardly more than a cluster of listeners; a prognosticator of a natural upheaval to come; a visionary of a compassionate reconciliation of Man with his Creator, and above all, of Israel with his Maker, after the dire things he foretold would come to pass.

The upheaval of nature, or “commotion” which shook the nations of the ancient East in the middle of the eighth century before the present era brought, amid the devastation and dislocations caused by nature, political revolutions that swept away long-established dynasties.

Following the earthquake of -747, king Uzziah ceded effective control of Judah to his son Jotham.

It was in the same year, even the very day of the catastrophe according to rabbinical sources,⁽²⁾ that marked the beginning of the prophetic career of Isaiah. In a flash of an intense experience Isaiah understood that the upheaval that the nation witnessed on that day was to be one of many, and that they would not cease “until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate.” (6:11) He spoke to Judah, depicting the catastrophe that had taken place: “Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire” (1:7)—for the Lord “hath stretched forth his hand” against his people “and hath smitten them: and the hills did tremble, and their carcasses were torn in the midst of the streets.” And he warned of new disasters to come: “For all this his anger is not turned away but his hand is stretched out still.” (5:25)

In the northern kingdom the “commotion” brought an end to the house of Jeroboam II; it perished by the sword, as Amos had prophesied. (7:9) Jeroboam’s son Zachariah reigned only six months when “Shallum the son of Jabesh conspired against him before the people, and slew him, and reigned in his stead.” (II Kings 15:10) But within a month the throne was wrested away from the usurper by Menahem, son of Gadi.

In Assyria a revolution also brought a usurper to power—Tiglath-Pileser III, a military man of unusual abilities, climbed the throne and brought about a resurgence of Assyrian power, following several decades of weakness.

Already in his second year the new king marched his armies to the west, and also came up against Israel, demanding of Menachem a heavy indemnity in return for not destroying the land. A thousand talents of silver was the price, and Menachem collected the metal from all the “men of wealth” in Israel. (II Kings 19: 20)⁽³⁾

For ten years Menahem reigned in Samaria. “And Menahem slept with his fathers; and Pekahiah his son reigned in his stead.” Pekahiah’s reign was short: two years later “Pekah, son of Remaliah, a captain of his, conspired against him and smote him in Samaria in the palace of the king’s house.” (II Kings 15:25) Pekah’s seizure of power meant a victory for those who wished to put an end to the heavy exactions of the Assyrian king and the position of vassalage that had become Israel’s lot under Menachem and his son.

While Tiglath-Pileser was absent on campaigns in the north and east,⁽⁴⁾ Pekah concluded an alliance with Rezin king of Damascus (Isaiah 7: 4) and set out against Judah. Ahaz, son of Jotham, was new on the throne in Jerusalem when the armies of Pekah and Rezin marched against his kingdom and laid siege to the city. At this crisis Isaiah, the prophet, called on the young king—Ahaz was but twenty years old when he began to reign—and met him on a road next to a field, away from the palace; and he comforted him, saying: “Take heed and be quiet; fear not, neither be fainthearted”—for the Lord would bring the Assyrians to destroy the power of Damascus and of Israel. (Isaiah 7:4)

Though Jerusalem was not taken, the Book of Chronicles reports that “a hundred and twenty thousand” of the men of Judah perished in the war; Ahaz’s son, Maaseiah, was among those killed. Pekah also “carried away captive of their own brethren two hundred thousand, women, sons and daughters” and brought them, together with much spoil, to Samaria. But a prophet named Oded protested that the children of Judah should stay as bondmen and bondwomen in Samaria and threatened the victors with the Lord’s fierce wrath. And certain princes of Israel “stood up against them that came from the war” and forced them to release the captives. They were clothed, fed,

and returned, “the feeble of them upon asses . . . to Jericho, the city of palm trees.” (II Chronicles 18: 5-15)

Meanwhile Ahaz “sent messengers to Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, saying: “I am thy servant and thy son; come up and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria and out of the hand of the king of Israel, which rise up against me.” He also sent to the king of Assyria gold and silver for presents. And Tiglath-Pileser “hearkened unto him: for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus, and took it.” (II Kings 16: 7-9) In his own annals Tiglath-Pileser III records his war against Damascus, and how he killed Rezin and devastated the country. “The sixteen districts of Aram [Syria] I destroyed [and turned into] mounds [as if] left by a flood.” ⁽⁵⁾ Following Pekah’s defeat, “Hoshea, son of Elah, made a conspiracy against Pekah, the son of Remaliah, and smote him, and slew him, and reigned in his stead.” ⁽⁶⁾

References

1. Of Moses it is said that he was *kvad pe*, “heavy of speech,” that is, with a speech impediment.
2. *Seder Olam*, 20.
3. Cf. the recently published stele of Tiglath-Pileser III in which “Menachem of Samaria” is listed among those who sent tribute to Assyria. See L. D. Levine, *Two Neo-Assyrian Stelae from Iran* (Royal Ontario Museum Art and Archaeology Occasional Paper, 23 [Toronto, 1972], pp. 11-24). The text of I Chronicles 15: 19 calls the invading king “Pul” ; this may have been Tiglath-Pileser’s name in Babylonia.
4. [After about -737].
5. Luckenbill, *Records of Assyria*, I. 815-819.
6. The Assyrian version is almost identical: according to an inscription of Tiglath-Pileser III, the people of Israel “overthrew their king Pekah and placed Hoshea as king over them.”





Pharaoh So

Hoshea began to reign in Samaria in the twelfth year of Ahaz, king of Judah. When Tiglath-Pileser died, Hoshea made some moves towards greater independence. “Against him came up Shalmaneser [V] king of Assyria” (II Kings 17:3); Hoshea submitted and became a tribute-paying vassal. But in his sixth year, weary of the heavy oppression, Hoshea sought protection of the king of Egypt.

And the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea: for he had sent messengers to So king of Egypt, and brought no present to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year: therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison.⁽¹⁾

Who was pharaoh So, to whom the king of Israel gave allegiance? He was not identified by the historians: many efforts were made and no acceptable assumption made.

Since most of the eighth century before the present era Egypt was dominated by the kings of the Libyan Dynasty, and the time when Hoshea dispatched messengers to So, king of Egypt, was about -726, the simple solution is to identify one of the Shoshenks as the biblical So, king of Egypt. And further, since on the walls of the Amon temple at Karnak a bas-relief with Israeli cities depicted as tributaries to Shoshenk Hedjkheperre of the Libyan Dynasty is a well-known and much discussed archaeological relic, the identification of the pharaoh So should be simple. Then why was not this identification made?

It was not made because Shoshenk of the Karnak relief was already identified in the conventionally written history with Shishak, the plunderer of Solomon’s temple and conqueror of Judah over two hundred years before the time of king Hoshea of Samaria.

The Karnak temple has on its walls also a relief of Thutmose III of the Eighteenth Dynasty with the captured cities of Palestine shown as men with shields covering the body, inscribed with the names of the cities. Shoshenk’s relief with its scores of similar men symbolizing cities imitates the relief of Thutmose. But whereas the names of cities claimed by Thutmose are all identifiable names, mainly in Judea, the cities listed by Shoshenk are only partly identified, and those are sites in Samaria and

Galilee, not in Judea.⁽²⁾ With the reliefs of Thutmose (Shishak of the Book of Kings) we occupied ourselves in detail in the fourth chapter of *Ages in Chaos*.

Thutmose left also a description of his campaign accompanying the reliefs; besides, he pictured the booty he brought back from the campaign and presented to the temple of Amon. We have identified this booty, object upon object, with the description of the furnishings and the utensils of the temple of Solomon, and found the designs, the metals, whether gold or silver or brass, from which they were made, and the number of individual objects in the booty (such as the number of golden targets), all in agreement between the biblical and hieroglyphic accounts. Nevertheless it was thought that Thutmose III's booty was from a pre-Israelite Canaan.

On the other hand, Shoshenk left no record of any campaign in Palestine; next to his relief in Karnak there is only a brief mention of tribute from Syria (*Kharu*) received by Shoshenk. Therefore it was also repeatedly said that the relief does not convey anything beyond the fact that cities in the northern part of Palestine were claimed as paying tribute to Shoshenk and that on the basis of his relief we could not learn anything about a military conquest of Palestine.⁽³⁾ While the text seems to show that there was an "oral or written request" from Palestine for the pharaoh to intervene,⁽⁴⁾ there is nothing to suggest that Shoshenk ever acted on it—nevertheless, all historians agreed that Shoshenk's relief serves as a counterpart to the biblical record of the events in the fifth year after Solomon's death when the pharaoh Shishak invaded Judea, took Jerusalem and other fortified cities, and carried away the treasures of the Temple built by Solomon. An omission to refer to such facts on the part of Shoshenk did not provoke the question of the truth in the identification of Shoshenk and Shishak.

Since, in accordance with the conventional scheme, Shoshenk of the Karnak relief was made to Shishak (this in violation of the way Hebrew letters are transcribed in hieroglyphics) there was no way to identify pharaoh So as another Shoshenk of which there were more than one in the Libyan Dynasty: the name Shoshenk could not be transcribed as both, Shishak and So. Thus the identity of So became an unsolved, and in the frame of that scheme, an unsolvable problem. How annoying it became can be judged by the fact that when, some years ago, a scholar offered to dispose of So and to read the biblical text: "for he [Hoshea] sent messengers to Sais, to the king of Egypt," Sais being identified as the village Sa el-Hagar, and called his paper "The end of 'So, king of Egypt,'" ⁽⁵⁾ it was acclaimed with relief as one of the "most important clarifications of biblical history in recent years—precisely because 'So, king of Egypt' was so difficult to identify with any known historical figure." ⁽⁶⁾ Yet were So a geographical name, the Hebrew phrase would be *le So, le melech Mitzraim*—"to So, to the king of Egypt." As the sentence stands, the second "*le*"

being absent, So is clearly the name of an Egyptian king, and in the revised scheme there is no necessity to dispose of So, king of Egypt.

The seemingly complicated problem is very uncomplicated. In the Scriptures there is a record of tribute paid by Rehoboam, son of Solomon, to pharaoh Shishak as a result of his conquest of Judah; and there is a record of tribute paid two hundred years later by Hoshea of Israel to pharaoh So. In Egypt there are two reliefs depicting tribute received from Palestine: by Thutmose III of the Eighteenth Dynasty from the cities of Judah, and by Shoshenk of the Libyan Dynasty from the cities of Israel. We have identified the first of the two pharaohs who received tribute (from Rehoboam) as Thutmose III⁽⁷⁾ and the second, who received tribute from Hoshea, as Shoshenk. Thus two biblical records and two Egyptian documents are in complete agreement. Conventional history, however, by making the Libyan Shoshenk the sacker of Solomon's Temple, has no counterpart to the records of Thutmose III concerning his campaign in Palestine or tribute paid to him; and it has no Egyptian counterpart to the biblical record of a tribute paid by Israel to pharaoh So.

References

1. II Kings 17: 4.
2. B. Mazar in *Vetus Testamentum*, Suppl. 4 (1956), pp. 57ff.
3. J. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, Vol. IV, Sect. 709; J. A. Wilson, "Egyptian Historical Texts" in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, ed. by J. Pritchard (Princeton, 1950), p. 263.
4. D. B. Redford, "Studies in Relations between Palestine and Egypt during the First Millennium B.C." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 93 (1973), p. 10.
5. H. Goedicke, *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 171 (Oct., 1963), pp. 63-66. See also idem., "727 vor Christus" in *Wiener Zeitschrift fuer die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 69 (1977), pp. 1-19.
6. W. F. Albright, "The Elimination of King 'So'" *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 171 (Oct., 1963), p. 66.
7. *Ages in Chaos*, Volume I, Chapter "The Temple in Jerusalem."





The End of Samaria

When Samaria chose to give her allegiance to Egypt, Isaiah regarded it as a political mistake.

Woe to the rebellious children . . . that walk to go down into Egypt . . . to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt. . . . For his princes were at Zoan [Tanis] and his ambassadors came to Hanes. (30: 1, 2, 4)

Because of the tribute Shoshenk received from Hoshea, king of Samaria, the Ten Tribes of Israel were doomed to lose their homeland. Shalmaneser V besieged Samaria, but Shoshenk did not send any military expedition to relieve the siege of Samaria by the Assyrians: there is no mention of it in the books of Kings or Chronicles, nor in the extant Egyptian documents.

Isaiah warned:

Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion.

For the Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose . . . their strength is to sit still. (30: 3, 7)

It was more than confusion: it was an end of national existence for the northern kingdom, or of Israel, the Ten Tribes.

“Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years.” (II Kings 17: 5)

For three long years Samaria withstood the siege; nothing is known of what took place among the besieged, besides that they defended their capital, the last unconquered city; no word of any prophet among the besieged survived, as did the words of Jeremiah from the besieged Jerusalem less than one hundred and forty years later. This is how Sargon II described the conquest of Samaria:

At the beginning of my royal rule, I _ _ _ the town of the Samaritans I

besieged, conquered. ___ for the god ___ who let me achieve this my triumph ___ I led away as prisoners 27,290 inhabitants of it and equipped from among them soldiers to man 50 chariots of my royal corps ___ .⁽¹⁾

In earlier Assyrian conquests by Tiglath-Pileser III and Shalmaneser V, the people of the land had already been carried into exile; those removed by Sargon were the last of Israel—if we do not count those few who, still in time, went over to Judah.⁽²⁾ Hoshea was among those deported.⁽³⁾

The account of the Second Book of Kings is: “In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.”⁽⁴⁾

Sargon, referring to another of his campaigns (against Babylon) wrote: “I bespatted his people with the venom of death.” Of his campaign against Elam he wrote: “Into all their cities I cast gloom and turned all their provinces into deserted mounds.” He did likewise to Israel and to Israel’s land.

The king of Assyria brought throngs of settlers from Babylon, Cuthah, Hamath, Ava, and Sepharvaim and placed them in the city of Samaria. “The town I rebuilt better than it was before and settled therein peoples from countries which I myself had conquered.”⁽⁵⁾

The reign of Sargon II (-723 to -702), the conqueror of Samaria and the Israelite tribes, fell in the midst of a period of great natural upheavals. These upheavals, which marked the century between -776 and -687, I showed in *Worlds in Collision*, part II (“Mars”) to have been caused by perturbations in the celestial sphere—a battleground dominated in the sight of man on Earth by the planet Mars. The Earth was endangered at nearly regular intervals during this century by repeated near-approaches of this planet. Pestilence also broke out in many places and references in the cuneiform literature ascribe the cause of it to Nergal (Mars); earthquakes, overflowing, changes of climate—attested by Klimasturz and the abandonment of lake-dwellings in Central Europe—did not spare a single land. Calendars were repeatedly thrown out of order and re-founded—and the reader will find abundant material in the second part of *Worlds in Collision* and in *Earth in Upheaval*, where no human testimony, but only the testimony of nature, was presented; and my material could be multiplied by any dedicated researcher. these changes moved entire nations to migrations in the hope that beyond the horizon fertile lands, not damaged by unchained forces of nature, awaited the conquerors.

It seems that in one of the earliest waves of the eighth-century migrations the Phrygians moved from Thrace over the Hellespont into Asia Minor. The tradition is that the first king in their new domicile was Gordias, and the story of his selecting the site for his capital Gordion is a well-known legend. Soon he came into conflict with the Assyrians who opposed the penetration of newcomers into central Asia Minor, and Sargon II moved westward to stop the penetration of the Phrygians, by now ruled by Gordias' son Midas.

In the decades that followed the Scythians descended from the steppes of Russia and moved along the Caspican coast. The Scythians at that time worshipped Mars, and a sword as his sign, for a while leaving their ancient worship of Saturn in abeyance—they were called Umman-Manda, or People of Saturn, in the Akkadian and so-called “Hittite” literary texts. The Scythians in their migration displaced the nomadic Cimmerians, pushing them towards the south and west. The Assyrian defenses withstood the Cimmerian onslaught, but at a heavy cost, which included the death of Sargon in battle in -702.

References

1. Luckenbill, *The Records of Assyria*, Vol. II, par 4.
2. [Archaeological evidence attests to a marked increase in the population of Judah at this time, presumably caused by a large influx of refugees from the northern kingdom.]
3. Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* XIV.1.
4. [See I. Velikovsky, “Beyond the Mountains of Darkness,” in *KRONOS* VII.4 (1982)].
5. Luckenbill, *Records of Assyria*, Vol. II, par. 4. (Sargons's annals).





The Conquest of Ashdod

With Samaria's fall, the last stronghold of opposition to Assyria was extirpated; not only did Egypt lose all of its remaining influence in Asia—its last Libyan rulers were themselves compelled to submit to Assyrian overlordship. By Sargon's seventh year "Pir'u the king of Musru" (Pharaoh, king of Egypt) is listed among those sending tribute to Assyria. Later in the same year a certain Yamani⁽¹⁾ seized power in Ashdod, an independent principality next to Judah on the coast; trying to organize an anti-Assyrian league and to enroll the help of Egypt, he, as Sargon recounts in his annals, "sent bribes to Pir'u king of Musru, a potentate incapable to save him—and asked him to be an ally." The rebellious prince tried also to involve Judah (Ia-u-di) in the conspiracy: but Hezekiah, probably at Isaiah's urging, refused to risk the nation's fate on so doubtful a venture. Informed of Yamani's revolt, Sargon gathered chosen troops and sent them against the rebel: "In a sudden rage I marched quickly . . . against Ashdod, his royal residence."⁽²⁾ Without Egyptian help, the outcome was not long in doubt—the Assyrian king looted the rebellious city, along with other towns on the Philistine coast. Yamani "fled into the territory of Musru [Egypt] which belongs (now) to Ethiopia."⁽³⁾

The rebel king of Ashdod, however, did not find a safe haven with the Ethiopian king: "The king of Ethiopia, who lives in a distant country, in an inapproachable region . . . whose fathers never—from remote days until now—had sent messengers to inquire after the health of my royal forefathers, he did hear, even that far away, of the might of Ashur, Nebo, and Marduk. The awe-inspiring glamor of my kingship blinded him and terror overcame him." The Ethiopian king, anxious to conciliate the powerful king of the north, extradited the rebel Yamani: "He threw him in fetters, shackles and iron bands, and they brought him to Assyria, a long journey." No mention is made of "Pir'u king of Musru" whose aid Yamani had sought only a few months earlier, and it must be assumed that he had been deposed by the king of Ethiopia.⁽⁴⁾

This episode marks the first appearance of the Ethiopians in the Assyrian annals.

The same events are described by Isaiah, a contemporary. The short twentieth chapter of Isaiah opens with the verse: "In the year that Tartan came to Ashdod, when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him, and fought against Ashdod, and took it." Isaiah continued and warned: "So shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptian prisoners

and the Ethiopians captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, even with their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt. And they shall be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia their expectation, and of Egypt their glory.”

It is not spelled out whom the prophet had in mind by saying “they”: Israel had already been exiled in Sargon’s first year; Isaiah apparently had in mind a party in Judah which saw rays of hope in the recent replacement of the Libyan masters of Egypt by an Ethiopian overlordship.

Displaying a sense of statesmanship, Isaiah, in the manner of a dervish, walked unclothed and barefoot to emphasize the significance and possible consequences of an erroneous orientation.


The quoted first verse of the twentieth chapter of Isaiah contains the only mention of Sargon in the Scriptures. Tartan, sent by Sargon to fight against Ashdod, is not a private name; it is a high military and administrative title.⁽⁵⁾

We have already read of the circumstances of the fall of Ashdod in the cuneiform inscriptions of Sargon II.

References

1. The name Yamani was understood by several scholars as meaning “The Greek.”
2. Luckenbill, *Records of Assyria*, vol. II, par. 62.
3. *Ibid.*, II.
4. A. Spalinger, “The Year 712 B.C. and its Implications for Egyptian History,” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*, 10 (1973), pp. 95-101.
5. See J. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton, 1950), p. 285, n. 4: “The Assyrian word [‘turtan’] refers to a high military and administrative official second in rank only to the king. . . . Besides ‘turtannu’ also ‘tartanu’ is attested.





Sennacherib: the Year - 701

The empire Sennacherib, son of Sargon, inherited was enormous: “The god Assur has intrusted in me an unrivalled kingship . . . from the upper sea of the setting sun to the lower sea of the rising sun, all mankind he has brought in submission at my feet—and mighty kings feared my warfare, leaving their abodes and fleeing. . . .” On climbing the throne, Sennacherib embarked on a series of campaigns aimed at expanding it further still. He wrote of his marching troops: “With the dust of their feet they covered the wide heavens like a mighty storm with masses of dense clouds,” and he boasted: “The tents of the steppe . . . I turned into a mass of flames . . . I swept like a hurricane. I besieged, I captured, I destroyed, I devastated, I burned with fire.”

After two campaigns against his enemies in the north, and still early in his reign, Sennacherib led his forces toward Syria and Palestine. The Assyrian army swept along the coast. It attacked Sidon and Luli, its king, fled into the sea and perished. Sennacherib appointed a new king and received tribute from him. Arvad and Ashdod, Ammon and Edom, brought him gifts and “kissed [his] feet.”

Sennacherib encircled Beth-Dagon, Jaffa, and Bne-Brak and conquered them. “The people of Ekron became afraid and called upon the Egyptian king, the bowmen, chariots and horses of the king of Melukha [Ethiopia], a boundless host, and these came to their aid.” The Assyrian army met them at Eltekeh, a small town on Palestine’s Mediterranean coast. “In the plain of Eltkekeh (*Al-ta-qu-u*), their battle lines were drawn up against me, and they sharpened their weapons.” Sennacherib “fought with them and brought about their defeat. The Egyptian charioteers and princes, together with the charioteers of the Ethiopian king my hands took alive in the midst of battle.” the Egyptian-Ethiopian army was defeated at the walls of Eltekeh; neighboring Ekron was stormed and its inhabitants killed, their corpses hung on poles around the town.

“As to Hezekiah, the Judean (*Ha-za-qi-(i)a-u Ia-u-da-ai*), he did not submit to my yoke.” Sennacherib besieged the “strong cities” of Judah and the “walled forts” and “countless small villages in their vicinity,” and took them by assault, sending the surviving population into exile: “200,150 people, young and old, male and female.” Then he turned against the capital: “I made (Hezekiah) a prisoner in Jerusalem, his royal residence, like a bird in a cage.” Nevertheless, Jerusalem held out and Sennacherib withdrew, though not before exacting a heavy ransom. “Hezekiah himself, whom the terror-inspiring filendor of my lordship had overwhelmed . . . did

send me, later, to Nineveh, my lordly city, together with 30 talents of gold, 800 talents of silver, precious stones . . . couches (inlaid) with ivory . . . elephants hides . . . and all kinds of valuable treasures, his own daughters, concubines, male and female musicians. In order to deliver the tribute and to do obeisance as a slave he sent his (personal) messenger.” Having agreed to the ransom, Jerusalem was not entered by the Assyrian army. The corresponding Biblical record in the Second Book of Kings (18:14) differs only in the quantity of silver in the ransom. It, too, mentions thirty talents of gold, but only three hundred talents of silver.

Besides this record on a clay prism, Assyrian bas-reliefs show the siege of Lachish in southern Palestine, on the way from Jerusalem to Egypt. From the Biblical narrative (II Kings 18:14) we know that Sennacherib was at Lachish, pressing the siege, when he received Hezekiah’s submission. Lachish must have fallen not long afterwards; the reliefs depict the fall of the city and a procession of its inhabitants being taken away to Assyria, some on donkeys, some on foot, carrying their meagre possessions.

Did Sennacherib press further south toward Egypt? In the extant inscriptions Sennacherib did not mention a specific campaign in Egypt and Ethiopia. Since early times the question has occupied the historians: Did Sennacherib subdue Egypt, or did he not?

Herodotos wrote that Sennacherib came against the land of Egypt “with a great host” and encamped at Pelusium near its northeastern frontier.⁽¹⁾ Berosus, who wrote a history of Chaldea, said that Sennacherib conducted an expedition against “all Asia and Egypt.”⁽²⁾ Jewish tradition tells of the conquest of Egypt by Sennacherib and of his march towards Ethiopia: “Sennacherib was forced to stop his campaign against Hezekiah for a short time, as he had to move hurriedly against Ethiopia. Having conquered this ‘pearl of all countries’ he returned to Judea.”⁽³⁾

It appears that after the battle of Eltekeh in southern Palestine, where he was victorious over the Ethiopian-Egyptian army, and having broken the resistance of Hezekiah and reduced the fortified city of Lachish on the approaches to Egypt, Sennacherib crossed the border of Egypt proper and at Pelusium received a declaration of submission.

References

1. Herodotos II. 141.
2. Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews* X. i. 4.
3. L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia, 19xx), vol. VI, p. 365; cf.

Seder 'Olam 23. Talmudic sources also relate that after conquering Egypt Sennacherib carried away from there the throne of Solomon (Ginzberg, *Legends*, IV, p. 160).





Sethos

Herodotus in his history of Egypt placed Sennacherib's invasion in the reign of "the priest of Hephaestos, whose name was Sethos." At that time, he wrote, "king Sanacharib (came) against Egypt with a great host of Arabians and Assyrians."⁽¹⁾ It is generally assumed that Herodotus or his informants made a mistake: "In the popular tradition preserved by Herodotus the name of the Egyptian king is given as 'Sethos' . . . the true appellation of the monarch has disappeared in favor of the great Seti. . . . It is impossible to reject the whole story to the actual period of Seti in face of the direct mention of Sennacherib (Sanacharaibos)."⁽²⁾

In the conventional scheme of history Seti the Great lived in the latter part of the fourteenth century; the events with which we are now concerned took place in the final years of the eighth century. Sethos of Herodotus was now, however, Seti the Great, as was surmised by the historian quoted above: he was his grandfather. To keep the narrative free from misunderstandings, I shall call the first of that name the way Herodotus called him, "Sethos," retaining for the more famous grandson the name Seti.⁽³⁾ If we can prove our thesis then the confusion of history, for which Herodotus is not to be blamed, put the grandson six hundred years before his grandfather.

Sennacherib invaded Egypt twice. His first campaign resulted in a victory for the Assyrians and Egypt's submission; his second, fifteen years later, as it will be told, ended in disaster. Sennacherib's records speak only of his first campaign and are silent about the second; the Scriptures do not distinguish between the two campaigns; and in the Egyptian record, transmitted by Herodotus, only the second campaign was remembered.⁽⁴⁾ Each of our sources has preserved only a part of the story, and to obtain the complete picture we must draw on each of them in turn.

References

1. Herodotus, *The Histories*, transl. by A. D. Godley (London, 1938), II. 141.
2. H. R. Hall, *The Ancient History of the Near East*, p. 492. See also idem in *The Cambridge Ancient History* (1925), Vol. III, p. 279: "It is simpler to suppose that it is merely a traditional confusion of the old name Seti in a wrong

setting.”

3. The more complete name of the grandfather, Sethos, was Userkheprure-setpenre Seti-merenptah, and of his famous grandson *Seti-merenptah - menmaat* re, or Seti Ptah-maat. Merenptah means “beloved of Ptah.” The Greeks identified Ptah with Hephaestos. In describing Sethos as a priest of Hephaestos, Herodotos was evidently referring to Seti’s second name. Cf. F. Ll. Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests of Memphis* (Oxford, 1900), p. 8, note 1.
4. Herodotus is likewise silent about the conquest of Egypt by Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal; nor does Manetho record Egypt’s humiliation by Assyria.





The Three Brothers

Egyptian traditions recorded by Manetho and preserved by Josephus contain some intriguing facts about Sethos and his contemporaries. The heroes of the story are Sethosis and his two brothers Ramesses and Harmais. Sethosis was the king of Egypt. His name is like that of king Sethos who, according to Herodotus, went to war against Sennacherib. The text, familiar to all who read Josephus, is as follows:

The last-named king [Sethosis], who possessed an army of cavalry and a strong fleet, made his brother Harmais viceroy of Egypt and conferred upon him all the royal prerogatives, except that he enjoined upon him not to wear the diadem [and] not to wrong the queen . . . He then departed on a campaign against Cyprus and Phoenicia, and later against the Assyrians and the Medes . . . meanwhile, sometime after his departure, Harmais, whom he had left in Egypt, unscrupulously defied all his brother's injunctions. He violated the queen . . . put on a diadem, and rose in revolt against his brother. . . . Sethosis instantly returned to Pelusium and recovered his kingdom.⁽¹⁾

This is the opening of the story as Josephus gleaned it from Manetho. Manetho, in his Sethosis, amalgamated the Sethos mentioned by Herodotus who went to war against the Assyrians under Sennacherib, and Seti the Great, who two generations later fought against the Scythians, Babylonians, and Medes as ally of Assyria, the subject of a later chapter of this volume. Harmais is Haremhab of the monuments; his being a brother of the king probably reflects the true situation. Like Sethos, he was educated to be a priest.

The work of Josephus Flavius which contains the above-quoted passage, *Contra Apionem* ("Against Apion"), a polemical work of the first-century Jewish historian, was copied repeatedly by hand; the earliest version that reached us dates from the eleventh century and is called the "Laurentinian" manuscript, so named for the monastery of St. Laurence where it was preserved; other extant versions are but copies of the Laurentinian manuscript. In that earliest extant manuscript of the work, where the story of the two brothers Sethos and Harmais starts, there is an interpolation in the form of a marginal note, worded as follows: "In another copy was found this reading: 'After him⁽²⁾ Sethosis and Ramesses, two brothers. The former [Sethosis] . . . slew Ramesses and appointed Harmais, another of his brothers, viceroy

of Egypt.””

In Egypt, since ancient times, the royal succession was supposed to follow the female line—an heir to the throne usually legitimized his claim by marrying a sister of his. The exhortation by Sethosis when he left for the front, made to his brother Harmais, not to wrong the queen and not to wear the diadem, we understand now is but one exhortation. Taking over the supreme power in the country was conditional on “violating” the queen, or marrying her while she was still the wife of another.

References

1. Josephus, *Contra Apionem*, transl. by Thackeray, pp. 201ff; cf. Diodorus Siculus I. 28. 2; 97. 2.
2. An unidentified king named Amenophis.





Queen Tworse

There now comes upon the scene a remarkable woman by the name of Twosre.”⁽¹⁾ Jewelry found in a nameless *cache* in the Valley of the Kings shows her to have been Sethos’ principal wife; “a silver bracelet depicts her standing before her husband and pouring wine into his outstretched goblet.”

“Remarkable” Twosre is claimed to have been not because of what is known about her life and reign—and very little is known—but for circumstances that are baffling. Why did she have a separate tomb in the same valley as her husband? The honor of having her own tomb in the Valley was a distinction previously accorded “to only one other royalty of female sex, namely Hatshepsowe [Hatshepsut]”⁽²⁾ however, Hatshepsut was not a queen by virtue of having married a king, but in her own right, as a suzerain.

Besides the very fact of having her own tomb in the Valley, separate from that of her husband Sethos, the contents of the tomb are “even more intriguing.” Gardiner describes the perplexing circumstances: she bears the title of “King’s Great Wife” by virtue of her marriage to Sethos, but one scene⁽³⁾ shows her standing behind another king who is making an offering; the name of this king, Merneptah-Siptah, has been plastered over and that of Sethos cut into the same space. “Since there are excellent reasons for thinking that Sethos was the earlier of the two kings, this replacement [the substitution of Sethos’ name for Merneptah-Siptah’s] must have been due to Twosre’s later preference to be depicted with the king who had been her actual husband.”⁽⁴⁾ With this motive Gardiner sought to explain why the name of Sethos, Twosre’s presumably deceased husband, had been carved over the name of the other king, Merneptah-Siptah, who is depicted standing next to her.

Twosre and her consorts intrigued the historians since the early days of modern Egyptology. In her tomb in the Valley of the Kings, on various places on the walls, she is called *King’s Great Wife*—but immediately we will be confronted with the problem of who were here husband-kings and in what order. Further, she is called *Lady of the Two Lands* and *Mistress of Upper and Lower Egypt*, which is the same as being a pharaoh herself; and another title is attested: *Hereditary Princess*.

For the present effort to resolve the vagaries surrounding Twosre and her time the last of the mentioned titles is of import. Twosre had claims to a pedigree from a royal

house—and in the frame of this reconstruction it must have been the house of the Thutmoses and Amenhoteps of the Theban (Eighteenth) Dynasty that came to its end over a hundred years earlier, with the advent of Libyan rule.

A genealogical evidence of Twosre's pedigree must have survived and must have been rather unique. In Egypt, traditionally, the throne was inherited through a royal princess and marriage of a royal son to such an heiress legalized the succession. Her consort, whoever he was, would be elevated to kingship.

The evidence from the tomb of Twosre and from the other scattered archaeological finds, instead of offering a clear answer, presents a confused and much debated state of affairs. What follows is an attempt at a reconstruction of the sequence of events.

As we see it, a clue to the strange facts of Twosre having a tomb separate from that of her husband, and of her being pictured there with another king whose name was subsequently replaced with that of her husband Sethos, can be sought in the legend about the three brothers. Ramses Siptah appears to correspond to Ramses of the legend, and to have died at the hands of Sethos.

When Sethos killed his brother Ramses Siptah, he did not replace him yet on the throne of Egypt; his action was in the nature of a guerrilla assassination, he being an insurgent leader opposing the Assyrian domination of his country.

At some period of her career Twosre claimed the title of Pharaoh, not just royal wife or queen. All points to the time immediately following the assassination of her husband, Ramses Siptah. At the death of her husband she was pregnant and Bey, the Assyrian plenipotentiary, set to pronounce her issue as the occupant of the throne upon birth, would not leave the pharaoh's seat vacant in the interim. This Bey, who was not of Egyptian origin, but possibly "a Syrian by birth" let a tomb be excavated for himself in the Valley of the Kings; even though this tomb is not spectacular, still it was most inappropriate for anybody not of the royal house to be entombed in the Valley of the Kings. "It is a strange and unprecedented thing that three contemporaries should have possessed tombs in the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings," the other two being Sethos and his wife Twosre.

This order of events explains the otherwise enigmatic state of things with Twosre called "Hereditary Princess," then "Royal Wife," with a different husband holding the scepter and donning the crown of upper and lower Egypt. Her claiming the Pharaoh's role and title is attested by the fact that she took a throne name⁽⁵⁾

and called herself "Lady of the Two Lands" and "Mistress of Upper and Lower

Egypt” ;⁽⁶⁾ later even “King of Upper and Lower Egypt.”⁽⁷⁾ She is associated with Bey, who refers to himself as “Great Chancellor of the Entire Land.”⁽⁸⁾ As soon as Twosre bore a son, he was made the pharaoh; he received the name Merneptah Siptah. Bey, according to his own words, “establishes the king on the seat of his father.”⁽⁹⁾ Whereas Ramses Siptah provened from a not princely family and gained his kingdom thanks to marrying Twosre, in the case of his infant son Merneptah Siptah, Bey could base his action on the fact that the deceased father had been a pharaoh.

In 1962 a scholar discerned a certain figure of Merneptah-Siptah, showing him as a small boy sitting on the lap of his mother Twosre, who is referred to as a protectress of the boy-Pharaoh.⁽¹⁰⁾ Thus the throne was ceded to the infant, and he occupied it for several years, possibly six. Twosre’s new title was “protectress of the pharaoh.”

Ramses Siptah was buried in a tomb of his own in the Valley of the Kings, and in his funerary temple at Thebes Bey’s name was found in the foundation deposits.⁽¹¹⁾ His tomb was discovered by Theodore Davis in 1~~~. He suffered in life from the effects of polio—one leg was found shorter than the other. At his death he was in his early twenties.⁽¹²⁾

In the same volume Davis published also find he made in an unnamed tomb—it was a *chache* with treasures of Queen Twosre. Among other bracelets and jewelry, a silver bracelet, mentioned earlier, is most significant—she is shown pouring wine into a goblet held by her husband Sethos. The engraved scene bears similarity to a scene adorning the throne of Tutankhamen—with him sitting, holding a goblet, and Ankhesenpaaten, his young wife, standing before him and pouring wine. This, and several other scenes and statements, make clear that Twosre at some time became the royal wife of Sethos. This way he, too, established in the eyes of the clerics and the people his right to mount the throne. Like his brother Tamses Siptah, he was of rather undistinguished origin.

By the size of the boy, Merneptah Siptah, compared with the lap of his mother and the part of the hand still surviving on the sculpture, it can be judged that Merneptah Siptah remained “in power” or in the position of a puppet of Sargon and Bey for a number of years. An inscription found in Nubia refers to his sixth year.⁽¹³⁾

Sargon’s ruling years are given as -722 to -705 when he was killed battling against the Cimmerians on his northern frontier, and his son Sennacherib grasped the scepter. During these seventeen years Ramses Siptah counted a year or so on the throne, Twosre less than a year, Merneptah Siptah six years. From then on the count of

Sethos' years starts. He survived Sargon. Since his occupation of Thebes, the Assyrian influence in Egypt was quickly abating. Of Bey nothing is heard again, nor of any other Assyrian functionary. With the advent of Sethos, no longer an insurgent, but an occupant of the throne, Twosre being now his wife, of the boy pharaoh nothing is heard. Was he banned, did he die a natural death, was he killed, or was he only deposed and exiled, or even imprisoned?—we do not know. But there are indications that the marriageable Twosre had some more romantic or tragic experiences in her matrimony. We shall retake the detection effort before long.

References

1. Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, pp. 277f.
2. *Ibid.*, loc. cit.
3. Right wall of the entrance corridor (A); see R. Lepsius, *Denkmaeler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien*, III, pl. 201b.
4. Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, pp. 277f.
5. *Sitre merit-Amen*: see Petrie, *Six Temples at Thebes* (London, ~~~~), pl. 16, 1-7; 17, 2; 19, 2; cf. J. von Beckerath, "Die Reihenfolge der letzten Koenige der 19. Dynastie," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlaendisches Gesellschaft* 106 (1956), p. 249.
6. Gardiner, "The Tomb of Queen Twosre," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 40 (1954), p. 42.
7. J. von BEckerath, "Queen Twosre as Guardian of Siptah," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 48 (1962), p. 70.
8. Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, p. 277.
9. *Ibid.*,
10. Von Beckerath, "Queen Twosre as Guardian of Siptah," pl. 3.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
12. J. E. Harris and K. R. Weeks, *X-raying the Pharaohs* (New York, 1973), p. 159.
13. J. Reisner, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 6 (1920), pp. 47-50.





Haremhab Appointed to Administer Egypt

It is regularly admitted that it is not known how and when Haremhab became king of Egypt. Some think that he was the last king of the Eighteenth Dynasty; some place him at the beginning of the Nineteenth Dynasty.⁽¹⁾ He was not the son of a king, nor was he the father of Ramses I, who followed him.⁽²⁾ “Nothing is known of his antecedents.”⁽³⁾ He was appointed by a king to rule the country, and some time after a campaign of conquest or re-conquest against Ethiopia he was designated by the king to be crowned. Nowhere is found the name of the king who appointed him to this extraordinary office. Who could the appointing monarch have been? It was often surmised that he was Akhnaton. But Akhnaton had sons-in-law who followed him on the throne, Smenkhkare and Tutankhamen. Often this role is ascribed to Tutankhamen—but the youthful king was followed by an old general, Ay, the maternal grandfather of the two young princes. Was it Ay who appointed Haremhab to administer the land for him, and then, in his own lifetime, crowned him? But “of Haremhab’s relation to Ay we know absolutely nothing.”⁽⁴⁾ And if there is no historical link between Haremhab and Ay, the last known king of the Eighteenth Dynasty, does any compelling reason exist, or even any ground whatsoever, to place Haremhab immediately after Tutankhamen or after Ay, where we usually find him in books on history? A likely ground is not only non-existent, but everything confounds such placement of the “appointed pharaoh.”

Had Haremhab been a prominent official in the days of el-Amarna, he, like other generals and courtiers, would have had a sepulchral chamber built for him in the necropolis of Akhet-Aton (el-Amarna).⁽⁵⁾ But no tomb, nor any other monument of his, was found there. However, while yet a general, he built for himself a tomb near Memphis, a place rather neglected during the Eighteenth Dynasty; later he prepared another tomb for himself at Thebes.⁽⁶⁾

The finely sculptured Memphite tomb of the “Great Commander of the Army” Haremhab was discovered early in the nineteenth century. At that time it was dismantled and its blocks with inscriptions and bas-reliefs were scattered among many private and public collections. Through subsequent decades scholars spent

efforts in trying to trace the parts and collate the pictures and texts. Some blocks described in older publications have since been lost—a block seen many years ago in a private collection in Alexandria is such a case. The museums of Leyden, Vienna, Bologna, and Berlin preserve disunited portions of the tomb. More sculptured blocks have been retrieved in the newly-resumed excavations by the Egypt Exploration Society, beginning in 1975.⁽⁷⁾

Haremhab's own statement of his title at the time his sepulcher near Memphis was being prepared is:

Chosen of the king, Presider over the Two Lands [Egypt], in order to carry on the administration of the Two Lands, general of generals of the Lord of the Two Lands.⁽⁸⁾

Such titles no officer under the king had ever borne. Under what ruler he thus served is not certain, but whoever he was, such power in the hands of a subject must necessarily have endangered his throne.”⁽⁹⁾ On another fragment from his tomb he is called “The commander-in-chief of the army, Haremhab,” and on still another, “Deputy of the King, presiding over the Two Lands.”⁽¹⁰⁾ But in the pictures next to these inscriptions he wears the diadem with the uraeus, a cobra, the emblem of royal power in Egypt.

The scholars are thus compelled to the conclusion: “Incongruity in the tomb: Throughout its reliefs the figure of the general Haremhab wears the uraeus.”⁽¹¹⁾ It is unique in Egyptian representational art that a uraeus should crown the head of a person who does not occupy the throne. An explanation was offered that the uraeus must have been added to the diadem at some later time, after Haremhab was crowned.⁽¹²⁾

The bas-reliefs in the tomb in various scenes show Haremhab in a pose of submission before a king, but the figure of the king is regularly erased on the surviving fragments; the figure of the king was deliberately destroyed in ancient times. On one bas-relief Haremhab is shown with his right arm lifted in adoration of the king whose figure, probably much larger than that of Haremhab, is not preserved; in his left hand Haremhab holds a fan, and throughout the texts he carries the honorific title “the fan-bearer to the right of the king.”

On another block (Berlin fragment), Haremhab is shown in front of another group of Egyptian dignitaries; he and the rest of them display obeisance by bending their bodies before the king whose likeness is not preserved; Haremhab, though in front of those who pay homage, is not depicted larger than the others in the group: nor does

he wear a diadem on this bas-relief.

Dignitaries of foreign lands, Syrians being prominent among them, are shown as paying homage and affirming their role of vassals to the king, whose likeness is destroyed.

The text, reconstructed by Gardiner, makes it appear that the foreign chiefs availed themselves of Haremhab's good standing with the king to assure him of their loyalty.

Words spoken to His Majesty ___ when ___ came the great ones of all foreign lands to beg life from him, by the hereditary prince, sole friend and royal scribe Haremhab, justified. He said, making answer (to the king ___ foreigners) who knew not Egypt, they are beneath thy feet forever and ever; Amun has handed them over to thee. . . . Thy battle cry is in their hearts.” (13)

Despite the lacunae it is clear that “the king is addressed with flattering words and is assured that his might extends over all lands.” (14)

In front of a huddled group of foreigners, none shackled, a personage proclaimed by a group to be an interpreter, speaks to them; Haremhab, also present and shown larger than the interpreter, attentively listens to him. A raised surface above the head of that man had been prepared for the words spoken by him, but was never filled. The foreigners, by their arms lifted in adoration, document the royal presence; the figure of the king, however, as in the rest of the bas-reliefs, is not preserved. Like Haremhab, “the great ones of all lands who came to beg life” listen to what the interpreter has to say. “The words of *all lands* are of importance,” observes Gardiner, and makes a point also of the fact that Haremhab is seen “in converse with the interpreter,” but he draws no further conclusion from these texts.

On many bas-reliefs of the Eighteenth Dynasty, like those of Hatshepsut, Thutmose III, Amenhotep III, or Akhnaton, foreigners are shown in the presence of the pharaoh either as prisoners or as vassals, but never is a person designated as interpreter depicted; nor do the bas-reliefs of the Nineteenth Dynasty, with foreigners depicted, show interpreters. Was the king whose likeness we miss not versed in Egyptian?

Another fragment from the Memphite tomb of General Haremhab (no. 1889 from Bologna) has a scene chiseled in low relief showing a horse rider between groups of what appear to be soldiers and laborers, possibly in an armed camp. A horserider is practically unknown from Egyptian art—the Egyptians used horses to draw chariots or wagons, but not to ride horseback. The rider in the scene sits on the horse with no saddle under him. “A person is shown mounted on a horse without a saddle—a

representation most unique *rarissime*) in Egyptian art, and the person has not the appearance of an Egyptian, though he holds in his hand an emblem of a dignitary. . .”
(15) But this was the Assyrian way of riding horses—never with a saddle, for the most placing a rug or cloth on the horse’s back to sit upon.

The way the horses are depicted on Assyrian baw-reliefs differs greatly from the ways they are presented in Egyptian, Mycenaean, or Scythian reliefs, and each of these differs also from all others. The design of the horse with its rider on the stone plate in the Bologna collection from the Memphite tomb of Haremhab is not Egyptian, but clearly Assyrian. the prancing horse under a rider with one of the front legs raised from the ground, and also its mane arrangement, and the way the artist generally treats the horse, are eminently Assyrian. The Egyptian steed, never for horseback riding and regularly drawing a chariot whether in war or in hunt, has traditionally two forelegs raised, thus charging in gallop, differs in every detail from the horse under the rider on the Bologna fragment from Haremhab’s bas-relief. The Assyrians are credited with the development of cavalry; in the words of a Hebrew prophet, “Assyrians . . . horsemen riding upon horses.” (16)

The fact that throughout the texts the name of the king is not given is strange, and does not follow established practice, or, one may say, an otherwise unalterable rule: in Egyptian texts the native Pharaoh is always named by his royal names and cognomens, not just as “His Majesty.” Together with the presence of a translator to interpret the words of the king to his vassals, the Egyptian commander-of-the-army among them, and likewise the employ of cavalry, must impress ever stronger that the king whose likeness is absent and whose name is not given was a foreign monarch, and more concretely, an Assyrian king.

In the same tomb the enigmatic king is called “The Great of Strength [who] will send his mighty arm in front of [his army _ _ _ and will] destroy them and plunder their towns and cast fire into _ _ _ and _ _ _ foreign countries will set others in their places.” (17)

In Egyptian texts of conquest, the expression “plunder their towns” is not infrequently met with; but “cast fire into [their lands]” is not usual. In the records of Sennacherib and of his son Esarhaddon, as also in those of earlier and later Assyrian kings, the graphic descriptions of their “scorched earth” tactics make clear that casting fire was a never absent feature of their warfare. “I besieged, I captured, I destroyed, I devastated, I burned with fire,” wrote Sennacherib in the record of his second campaign, and similarly of his fifth, sixth, and seventh campaigns. (18) He called himself “the flame that consumes the insubmissive.” (19) This epithet of the great king—“the flame”—is also used by Haremhab: not in describing himself, but in

addressing the king who appointed him: “Thy name is flame.” ⁽²⁰⁾ It was a fitting cognomen of Sennacherib, and Harmhab used it too in offering an epithet in lieu of a name to designate the Assyrian king.

The removal of entire populations from their lands was a practice peculiar to the Assyrians and their warfare (later also adopted by the Chaldeans); the Egyptians never transferred conquered peoples from one country to another. Yet the last line of the above quoted text from the tomb of Haremhab (“___ foreign countries will set others in their places”) refers to such measures. Breasted’s reading of the passage was: “___ Asiatics; others have been placed in their abodes.” ⁽²¹⁾ Sargon, father of Sennacherib, removed the last of the Ten Tribes from Samaria and her cities and settled others in their place (II Kings 17:24), and according to his prism inscriptions Sennacherib removed large numbers of people of Judah, over two hundred thousand, from their land to exile. ⁽²²⁾

On a stone from Haremhab’s tomb, discovered serving as a doorpost in a building in Cairo, Haremhab is described as “a henchman at the feet of his lord on the battle field on this day of slaughtering the Asiatics.” ⁽²³⁾ On another fragment (at Alexandria) he is said to have been “sent as the King’s envoy to the sun-disc’s rising, returning in triumph, his attack having succeeded.” ⁽²⁴⁾ Many times in his tomb he is entitled “Great Commander of the Army,” also one who was “chosen by the king to carry on the administration of the Two Lands [Egypt].”

All leads to the conclusion that Haremhab served under an Assyrian king as an appointed military administrator of Egypt.

References

1. “It is difficult at the present day to know what position to assign him [Haremhab] in the pharaonic lists: while some regard him as the last of the XVIIIth Dynasty, others prefer to place him at the head of the XIXth.” Maspero *The Struggle of Nations*, p. 369; cf. A. K. Philips, “Horemheb, Founder of the XIXth Dynasty?” *Orientalia* 46 (1977).
2. E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums* Vol. II, pt. I, p. 247; R. Hari, *Horemheb et la Reine Moutnodjemet* (Geneva, 1964), p. 412.
3. G. Martin, “Excavations at the Memphite Tomb of Horemheb, 1975: Preliminary Report,” *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 62 (1976), p. 9.
4. A. H. Gardiner, “The Tomb of the General Haremhab,” *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, vol. 39 (1953), note 3.
5. “An individual of the importance of Harmhabi, living alongside the king,

- would at least have a tomb begun for him at Tell el-Amarna.” Maspero, *The Struggle of Nations*, p. 342, note.
6. G. Maspero, *The Tomb of Harmhabi and Toutankhamanou* (London, 1912).
 7. Annual preliminary reports appear in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*.
 8. James Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, Vol. III, Sect. 20
 9. Breasted, *History of Egypt*, pp. 399f.
 10. The Leyden and London fragments.
 11. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, Vol. III, sec. 12.
 12. Breasted, *Zeitschrift fuer Aegyptische Sprache* 38 (1900), pp. 47-50; Martin, “Excavations at the Memphite Tomb of Horemheb, 1976,” *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 63 (1977), p. 14: “The uraeus has been carefully added. . . .”
 13. Gardiner, “The Memphite Tomb of the General Haremhab,” *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 39 (1953), p. 5
 14. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
 15. Hari, *Horemheb et la Reine Moutnodjemet*, p. 74.
 16. Ezekiel 23:112. Cf. Sargon II’s reference to his mounted troops as “my cavalry which never, even in friendly territory, leaves my side.” (Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, p. 286.) For representations of horses of Sennacherib, see Sidney Smith, *Assyrian Sculptures in the British Museum from Shalmaneser III to Sennacherib* (London, 1938).
 17. Gardiner, “The Memphite Tomb of the General Haremhab,” *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 39, p. 7.
 18. Luckenbill, *Records of Assyria*, II, 238-250.
 19. *Ibid.*, II.
 20. The hieroglyphic sign for “fire” or “flame” is a noun. Gardiner (*op. cit.*, p. 5) translates not literally “Thy name flares” ; Breasted (*Records*, III.) renders the phrase more accurately as “Thy name is fire.”
 21. Breasted, *Records*, III, sec. 11.
 22. A total of 200,125 according to the Taylor Prism.
 23. K. Pfluger, *Haremhab und die Amarnazeit* (1936), p. 16; also Hari, *Horemheb et la reine Moutnodjemet*, p. 89 and plate XIV.
 24. The so-called Zinzinia fragment: Breasted, *Records*, III, sec. 8. Hari, *Horemheb et la reine Moutnodjemet*, p. 66 and pl. XI.





Haremhab Crowned

After a period of time during which Haremhab officiated as the head of the army and administrator of the land, he was crowned. The coronation inscription is preserved on the back of a double statue—of himself sitting with his queen.⁽¹⁾ This statue, now in the Turin Museum, is of fine workmanship; the head of the king, however, is broken off. The queen's name survived: Mutnodjme; and her position next to Haremhab at his coronation and the titles she bore indicate that she played an important part in the ceremony. When we study the text of the inscription it will become evident that Haremhab was in fact crowned at the wedding ceremony at which he married Mutnodjme; he was thus obliged to her for his elevation to the throne.

It would be not usual, but not unthinkable, that a commoner or a military man, having climbed in his career, should become a pharaoh when the throne turned vacant; or that a usurper should put the crown on his head after murdering the rightful pharaoh. But the case of Haremhab mounting the throne followed neither of these models. He was crowned by the king who did not abdicate at the occasion, nor remained as a co-ruler. Further, as just said, he was crowned at a wedding ceremony.

The inscription on the statue gives the story of Haremhab's grown in the king's favor and an account of the coronation ceremonial. "Now he acted as vice-regent of the Two Lands [Upper and Lower Egypt] over a period of many years." With his councillors Haremhab was "doing obeisance at the gates of the King's House." It also happened that "He being summoned before the Sovereign when the Palace fell into rage, and he opened his mouth and answered the King and appeased him with the utterance of his mouth." Haremhab had to assuage the King in his rage. Was the raging king the teenager Tutakhamen?⁽²⁾

In order to shorten the process of unravelling before the reader the meaning of the coronation text, let us substitute the proper person for the anonymous king. Sennacherib was the sovereign. He had Haremhab, a scribe, priest, and military man—a not unusual combination of offices in ancient Egypt—as the commanding officer in charge of an expedition against Ethiopia (Nubia) and as his regent over Egypt. In this capacity Haremhab succeeded to weather the rages of the wrathful overlord; by this, he claims, he won also the appreciation of his own people ("the people were happy").

Then the king, according to the inscription on the double statue,

knew the day of his good pleasure to give him his kingship. Lo, this god distinguished his son in the sight of the entire people. . . . The heart of the King being content with his dealings, and rejoicing at the choice of him.

In this and other passages “king” and “this god” are designations of the sovereign who crowned Haremhab.

The scene of the coronation starts when “his father Horus placed him [Haremhab] behind himself.” The translator of the text, Gardiner, comments in wondering: “but the place of a protective deity was behind the protected person” and he refers to various known instances when the falcon Horus or goddesses with protecting wings place themselves behind the royal figure they protect. Assuming a textual error and thinking of Horus as a deity, Gardiner corrects the sentence and makes of it: “His father Horus placed himself behind him [Haremhab].” The text however makes it clear that it was the much-feared monarch who stood in front of Haremhab and led him through the ceremony. “The form of a god was his aspect in sight of him who beheld his dread image,” is in the text, and once again Gardiner stumbles on the adjective “dread,” not usually applied to divine statues.⁽³⁾

“Lo, this noble god Horus of Hnes, his heart desired to establish his son upon his eternal throne and he commanded _ _ _ [lines broken].” It was usual in Egypt to call the king “god” and also “noble god Horus” apparently in appreciation of the syllable *hr* in the name Sennacherib; more specifically, the Assyrian king is referred to as “this noble god Horus of Hnes.” Haremhab calls himself “god Horus of Hnes’ son.”

Then did Horus proceed amid rejoicing to Thebes, the city of the lord of Eternity, his son in his embrace, to Ipet-Isut (Karnak), in order to induct him into the presence of Amun for the handing over to him of his office of king.

The god-king inducted him “to his office and his throne.” From now on Haremhab is “Hereditary Prince, Chieftain [King] over the Two Lands” and his future issue is supposed to inherit the title and the throne. he proceeded to the palace, to “his [the king’s] noble daughter the Great of Magic, her arms in welcoming attitude, and she embraced his beauty and established herself in front of him.”⁽⁴⁾

Mutnodjme is here identified as daughter of Sennacherib. She brought the crown to Haremhab: the coronation and the marriage ceremonies took place one following the

other, on the same day. Haremhab became son-in-law of Sennacherib and for this reason he was called “son” of “this god”—the Assyrian king. The royal crown was placed “upon his head” and the populace acclaimed Haremhab as their savior. From now on, as the text makes it known, his titulary would be “Horus of Gold, Satisfied with Truth, fostering the Two Lands, King of Upper and Lower Egypt Djeserkheprure-setpenre, son of Re, Haremhab-Miamun, given life.”

Haremhab’s wife is called “Great Wife of the King, Lady of the Two Lands, Mutnodjme, beloved of Isis.” Queen Mutnodjme is also spoken of as a “great hereditary princess” and as “regent of Egypt”—and even “of all the countries.” ⁽⁵⁾ Thus the queen occupied the throne not just because she was the king’s spouse, but in her own right. Her exalted position is also reflected in her scarabs or signets. They were made of gold. The queens of the preceding ages, those that had scarabs of her own, had them made of various materials, mostly minerals, but not of gold; not even from Hatshepsut who occupied the throne as “king” or from Tiy, the exalted queen of Amenhotep III, do we possess scarabs of gold. “Scarabs of gold are extremely rare—of the scores of thousands found in the soil of Egypt, not more than four examples are known.” ⁽⁶⁾

The cause of this unusual status of the queen Mutnodjme as a regent of Egypt and also the reason for her having her scarabs molded in gold are no longer obscure—she was given as a wife to the administrator of Egypt by his suzerain, the king of Assyria, and at the same time her husband was promoted from the position of “King’s Deputy” in Egypt to the status of a pharaoh, yet still dependent on his suzerain and even subordinate to his own queen.

References

1. A. Gardiner, “The Coronation of King Haremhab,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 39 (1953), pp. 13-31.
2. So Gardiner in “The Coronation of King Haremhab,” p. 21: “[Haremhab] also dwells upon the confidence that had been reposed in him by the king, doubtless Tut’ankhamun, on whose behalf he had ruled over a long period of years—a time . . . when the temper of the Palace was not always as cool as it might have been, and needed the wisdom and moderation of a man as astute as himself to steer the ship of state aright.”
3. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
4. “Established herself in front of him” is Breasted’s translation (*Ancient Records of Egypt*). Gardiner amends it to “established herself upon his forehead”—which seems to make little sense unless she is metaphorically thought of as the uraeus, sign of royal power, with which Haremhab is now

endowed.

5. Hari, *Horemheb et la reine Moutnedjemet*, p. 190.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 199.





Haremhab's Great Edict

Having assumed royal powers, Haremhab composed and published a decree, his Great Edict. The fragmentary text is inscribed on the largest stele ever found in Egypt. G. Maspero discovered it in Karnak in 1882.

“Hear ye these commands which my majesty has made for the first time, governing the whole land, when my majesty remembered these cases of oppression. . . .” And he gave his edict to deliver “the Egyptians from the oppressions which were among them.” [\(1\)](#)

The king who bestowed the crown on Haremhab was exalted by him, and called “god” and Haremhab called himself his “son” ; at the same time the rule of the land preceding that of Haremhab was branded by him as a wicked rule. Here again is an incongruity, unless the king who gave him the crown was not the king who ruled Egypt as a native ruler. The rule of Haremhab was that of a king named to administer Egypt by the decree of the foreign king.

Haremhab's Great Edict is a manifesto of his policy for keeping the state in order. The language of the Edict differs from the usual mode of expression of Egyptian edicts. It is a dry juridical document, clear and, apart from the introduction, free from the usual verbosity and figurative exaltations of Egyptian inscriptions. In such language were the legal documents of the Assyrians written.

Throughout the Edict of Haremhab emphasis is placed on the principle of justice. The Edict “might be entitled ‘The Justice of the King.’” [\(2\)](#)

Sennacherib wrote of himself as one “who likes justice, who established order.” [\(3\)](#) Haremhab used the same sort of language.

The Edict of Haremhab contains provisions for martial law. Punishment for offenders was severe: anyone interfering with boat traffic on the Nile, “his nose shall be cut off and he shall be sent to Tharu.” [\(4\)](#) This penalty was not known in Egypt before Haremhab; [\(5\)](#) but in the time of Sennacherib it was a customary punishment inflicted by the Assyrians on vanquished peoples. Sennacherib wrote in the annals of his eighth campaign, against Elam: “With sharp swords I cut off their noses.” [\(6\)](#)

For this reason Tharu, the place of exile of the mutilated offenders, was called Rhinocorura or Rhinocolura by Greek authors, meaning “cut-off noses.” ⁽⁷⁾ Rhinocolura is el-Arish on the Palestinian border of Egypt. ⁽⁸⁾

Another punishment prescribed in Haremhab’s Edict is for a soldier accused of stealing hides: “one shall apply the law to him by beating him with 100 blows and 5 open wounds.” ⁽⁹⁾

Egyptian justice was traditionally marked by its humane treatment of criminals. From the first legal text that became available under the Old Kingdom, through the Middle Kingdom and much of the New Kingdom—in fact, until the time of Haremhab and the Great Edict—the punishment for most crimes involved the confiscation of a person’s property and removal from office, in some cases forced labor. Only high treason, directed against the person of the king, was punishable by death. Although kings had themselves portrayed as killing prisoners of war, the maiming of Egyptian prisoners by disfiguring their faces is so uncharacteristic of the Egyptian idea of justice that some scholars have looked for a foreign influence to explain the introduction of these practices in the time of Haremhab. ⁽¹⁰⁾ Punishments reminiscent of those mentioned in Haremhab’s Decree—beatings, cutting-off of ears, nose, lips, and pulling out of the hair—are prescribed in Assyrian law codes of the second millennium. There are no Assyrian law codes extant from the time of Sennacherib—but clearly, there was a tradition and practice of harsh punishments in Assyria. Its introduction into Egypt, however, was only possible at the time that Egypt fell under direct Assyrian domination, and this occurred for the first time in the days of Sennacherib.

The Edict confirms what we have already deduced from the study of the Memphite tomb of Haremhab and of his coronation text: the pharaoh was an appointee of his Assyrian overlord. He refers to himself in terms not dissimilar from those with which Sennacherib, on the Taylor Prism, refers to his august person, stressing love of justice and support of the needy, but vengeance upon the offenders and the insubmissive. Sennacherib introduces himself in the opening passage as “The wise ruler (literally, “shepherd”), favorite of the great gods, guardian of the right, lover of justice, who comes to the aid of the needy, who turns (his thoughts) to pious deeds, perfect hero, mighty man; first among the princes, the flame that consumes the insubmissive . . .” ⁽¹¹⁾ We have already noted Haremhab’s comparison of his overlord to a “flame.” ⁽¹²⁾

References

1. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, III. sec. 67. Cf. the translation by Maspero in Davis, *The Tombs of Harmhabi and Toutankhamanou* (London, 1912), pp. 45-57, and by Pflueger in *The Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 5 (1946), pp. 260-268.
2. Petrie, *History of Egypt*, II. 251.
3. Sennacherib's Taylor Prism inscription, the first campaign. Luckenbill, *Records of Assyria*, II.
4. Breasted, *Records*, Vol. III. sec. 51. W. Helck ("Das Dekret des Koenigs Haremheb," *Zeitschrift fuer Aegyptische Sprache* 80 (1955), 118, translates *Abschneiden der Nase und Verbannung nach Sile.*"
5. D. Lorton, "The Treatment of Criminals in Ancient Egypt," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 20 (197~), 24.
6. Luckenbill, *Records of Assyria*, II. [While punishments inflicted upon prisoners and those meted out to prisoners of war are not strictly comparable, it must be remembered that Egypt was, under Haremhab, in the position of a subjugated country, and under thus under a form of martial law.]
7. Strabo, XVI.ii.31; Diodorus, I.60; see the discussion on the identification of Tharu with Avaris in Volume I of *Ages in Chaos*, pp. 86-89.
8. For a discussion of the location of Tharu and Avaris, see A. Gardiner in *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 3 (1916), p. 101.
9. Lorton, "The Treatment of Prisoners in Ancient Egypt," p. 56.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 50ff. Only one case of punishment by beating is known earlier, from the time of Thutmose III (pp. 23f).
11. Luckenbill, *The Annals of Sennacherib*
12. In a text from his Memphite tomb. See above, section: "Haremhab Appointed to Administer Egypt: By Whom?"





Haremhab's Contemporaries

Haremhab and the Crown Prince Sheshonk. According to this reconstruction, Haremhab began his career under the last kings of the Libyan Dynasty. We get a first glimpse of him in the tomb of the prince Sheshonk, son of Osorkon II and his wife Karoma. The prince, named as successor to his father, died young, still during his father's reign, and never assumed the royal diadem. The king built for him a funerary chamber in Memphis, where the prince had served in his lifetime as the high priest of Ptah. The excavations of Samaria, discussed [above](#), revealed that the Libyan king Osorkon II was not a contemporary of Ahab, as is usually asserted, but reigned after the time of Jeroboam II—i.e., after ca. -744, which marks the death of Jeroboam II, but before the destruction of Samaria by the Assyrians in -722.

The tomb was discovered in 1942, and its clearance and publication were entrusted to Ahmad Badawi.⁽¹⁾ At the entrance to the tomb, on the lintel of the doorway, Badawi found an incised relief showing Haremhab kneeling in front of a talbe bedecked with offerings; behind Haremhab can be seen the deceased prince, also in a kneeling position. Haremhab's cartouche is somewhat damaged; a deliberate attempt had been made to erase it. But from what remains Badawi could identify the figure in front of the crown prince as that of Haremhab.

In the accepted scheme of history Haremhab is supposed to have reigned some six hundred years before the funeral chamber for Prince Shoshenk, son of Osorkon II, was built. But what incentive would the builder of the tomb have to decorate the monument with the figure of Haremhab and his cartouche? This king did not enjoy such reputation that six centuries after his death a Libyan prince should prominently show himself and Haremhab in an offering scene. There was nothing in the memory of Haremhab that an occupant of a tomb of about -725 would consider as bringing salvation or possessing magic against unclean spirits. Therefore Haremhab's figure and cartouche in a Libyan tomb made historians wonder and grope for a solution.

One detail needs an explanation: Haremhab is depicted as a king, his name enclosed inside a cartouche, sign of royal power—this at least twenty-five years before his appointment as king by Sennacherib. One could assume from this that he was a viceroy of Memphis under the last Libyan kings, continuing in that position under the Ethiopians, until his defection to the Assyrian side in -702. As such he could well have enjoyed the privilege of using the insignia of royalty.

Haremhab and Tirhaka. In this reconstruction Haremhab and Tirhaka, the Ethiopian, are contemporaries; in the conventional version of history they are separated by more than six centuries, Haremhab being dated to the late fourteenth and Tirhaka to the early seventh. A certain scene, carved on one of the walls of a small Ethiopian temple at Karnak, shows them together. The scene proves not only the contemporaneity of Haremhab and Tirhaka, but also permits to establish a short period in their relations from which it dates. De Rouge in his 1873 study of the monuments of Tirhaka, describes the relief:

Tirhaka is standing and takes part in a paneguric. An important personage, named Hor-em-heb, a priest and hereditary governor, addresses to the people the following discourse in the name of the two forms of Amon: “Hear Amon-ra, Lord of the Thrones of the World and Amon-ra, the husband of his mother, residing in Thebes! This is what they say to their son, the king of Upper and Lower Egypt [Neferatmukhure] son of the sun, Tirhaka, given life, forever: ‘You are our son whom we love, in whom we repose, to whom we have given Upper and Lower Egypt; we do not like the kings of Asia _ _ _ ’”⁽²⁾

The monument must be dated to the time early in Haremhab’s career when he was acting as priest and governor under his brother Sethos. Egypt was then allied with Ethiopia, actually under Ethiopian domination, and was bracing itself to meet the armies of Assyria; for Sennacherib had shut up Hezekiah in Jerusalem “like a bird in a cage” and was advancing to the border of Egypt. The Egyptian-Ethiopian army which had gone to block him had suffered a crushing defeat at Eltekeh in Palestine. The declaration “We do not like the kings of Asia” was appropriate for the moment. The ways of Tirhaka and Haremhab would soon part: Tirhaka would flee to Ethiopia and become the bitterest enemy of Haremhab, who would go over to the side of Sennacherib and campaign against the Ethiopian king and his own brother Sethos.

The Tomb of Petamenophis. Of the hundreds of rock-cut tombs crowding the Theban necropolis, the Valley of the Kings, one bearing the name of Petamenophis, a high official of the Ethiopian time, early attracted the attention of Egyptologists by its large size and ambitious layout. It was first described in detail by Lepsius in his pioneering work *Denkmaeler aus Aegypten und Aethiopen*.⁽³⁾ To have occupied a spacious tomb in this prestigious location, Petamenophis must have been a person of distinction. In his inscriptions he describes himself as “Sealbearer and Sole Beloved Friend, Lector and Scribe of the Records in the Sight of the King, Petamenophis.”⁽⁴⁾ The king is not named, but his identity is revealed by an inscription, also reproduced by Lepsius, on a wall in the northern part of the great outer courtyard. Though much damaged in the course of time it contains two names, still clearly legible:

Petamenophis, and next to it a cartouche of King Haremhab.⁽⁵⁾

The tomb was later visited and described separately by Wilkinson, by Duemichen, and others, before Maspero, seeing its deteriorating condition and realizing the necessity of protecting it from despoliation, had it sealed at the end of the last century. It remained closed until 1936 when W. F. von Bissing obtained permission to re-open it with the purpose of performing a definitive survey and publication. Braving the “billions of bats” infesting the place and the thick air (the ventilation shafts “left much to be desired”) he persevered, and within two years (1938) published a detailed description of the finds.

Rudolf Anthes and ~. Grapow were entrusted with making a cast of the inscription with Haremhab’s cartouche and found that “the name [Haremhab] stands out quite clearly” “*steht der name völlig deutlich da*”).

Next arose the question of the tomb’s date and the time of Petamenophis’ career. The archaeologists were unable to agree, except that on stylistic grounds it could not be earlier than Ethiopian time. “Unfortunately,” von Bissing wrote, “in the entire vast tomb, not a single indication was found that would directly yield a date.”⁽⁶⁾ But was not the cartouche of Haremhab just the sought-for indication? In the context of the accepted chronology Haremhab’s named carved next to that of the tomb’s owner was rejected as an anachronism, and since no other royal name was found, the date of the tomb was held to be in doubt. Anthes nevertheless arrived at what appears to be the correct estimate when he placed it in the time of Tirhaka.⁽⁷⁾

Year 59 Under Haremhab. A legal document in hieroglyphics composed under Ramses II refers to a contract concluded under Haremhab, and gives, without any further amplification, the “fifty-ninth year.”⁽⁸⁾

Haremhab did not rule Egypt anywhere that long. No era is known in Egyptian history to which the figure could apply. Much was written on the subject, but without a satisfying solution.

It was proposed that Haremhab counted as his own the years of the heretical pharaohs of the Eighteenth Dynasty: Akhnaton, Smenkhkare, Tutankhamon and Ay.⁽⁹⁾ But it is now admitted that such a solution would require the sole reign of Haremhab to have lasted not less than twenty-seven years, while his dated monuments cease after year eight,⁽¹⁰⁾ indicating that he reigned but eight years after being crowned.

In the light of the understanding here presented of the true time and role of

Haremhab, the thought must come that the “fifty-ninth year” refers to an Assyrian era. On February 26, -747 started the era of Nabonassar; this era was still in use in the second Christian century when Claudius Ptolemy, the Alexandrian scholar, wrote his astronomical treatises. ⁽¹¹⁾

The year 59 in the era of Nabonassar is the year 689 or 688 before the present era. About this time Tirhaka came from Ethiopia and occupied Egypt. This leads us to the conclusion that the document in question was written at the very end of Haremhab’s reign, just before he was expelled by the Ethiopian king and fled by sea. A few months later Sennacherib embarked on his second campaign against Judah and Egypt.

References

1. A. Badawi, “Das Grab des Kronenprinzen Scheschonk, Sohnes Osorkon’s II. und Hohenpriesters von Memphis,” *Annales du Service des Antiquités*, vol. 54 (1956), p. 159 and pl. IV.
2. M. le Vicomte de Rouge, “Etude sur quelques monuments du regne de Taharka,” *Melanges d’Archeologie*, Vol. I (1873). The text was published by Prisse d’Avennes, *Monuments egyptiens* (Paris, 1847), pl. XXXII (Wall D of the small building of Tirhaka at Karnak). De Rouge’s article is reprinted in *Bibliothèque égyptologique* 28 (1918), p. 268.
3. (Berlin, 18~~) Text, pp. 244-245.
4. F. W. von Bissing, “Das Grab des Petamenophis in Theben,” *Zeitschrift fuer Aegyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* LXXIV (1938), p. 2.
5. Lepsius, *Denkmaeler*, Text 245 middle.
6. Von Bissing, “Das Grab des Petamenophis,”
7. Anthes, *Zeitschrift fuer Aegyptische Sprache*, 73 (1937), 30f.
8. The so-called inscription of Mes. See V. Loret and A. Moret, “La grande inscription des Mes,” *Zeitschrift für Aegyptische Sprache* 39 (1901), pp. 1-39; A. Gardiner, “The Inscription of Mes, A Contribution to Egyptian Juridical Procedure,” *Untersuchungen* IV, pt. 3 (Leipzig, 1905); G. Maspero, *The Tombs of Harmhabi and Toutanlhamanou* (London, 1912), p. 33; Revillout, *Revue Egyptologique* 9 (19~~), 177-187.
9. This thesis was first formulated by Loret; see above, note 1.
10. J. R. Harris, “How Long Was the Reign of Horemheb?” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 54 (1968), 95ff.
11. It is often asserted that the Era of Nabonassar was Ptolemy’s invention; but it is a fact that one of the most important of the Babylonian historical texts, the so-called “Babylonian Chronicle” (B.M. 92502), starts with the reign of Nabonassar, or the year -747. See H. Winckler and J. N. Strassmeier, *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, II (1887), pp. 163-168. Cf. D. J. Wiseman,





The Later Campaigns of Sennacherib

In the last century scholars became aware that there were two invasions of Palestine by Sennacherib and that it is possible to discern in the scriptural record an early and a late campaign against Hezekiah.⁽¹⁾ The first campaign to Palestine took place about -701. The second campaign is dated by modern historians to -687 or -686.⁽²⁾

The annals of Sennacherib record only eight campaigns. The second march into Palestine, which ended disastrously and which probably was his last military undertaking, was not recorded by the Assyrian king, who had no intention of preserving for posterity the story of his reverses.

The last two campaigns memorialized by Sennacherib on the eight-faced Taylor Prism were against Elam. Elam, occupying roughly the territory of modern Iran, was already the goal of earlier Assyrian kings, Sargon II, father of Sennacherib among them. During the seventh campaign Sennacherib succeeded to invade only a marginal part of the country; he recorded reducing to ashes thirty-four strong cities together with their “countless” surrounding towns. “I besieged, I conquered, I despoiled, I destroyed, I devastated, I burned with fire; with the smoke of their conflagration I covered the wide heavens like a hurricane.”

But “extreme cold” and heavy storms with “rain upon rain and snow” set in. “I was afraid of the swollen mountain streams; the front of my yoke I turned and took the road to Nineveh.”⁽³⁾

But before long Sennacherib returned to Elam to continue the orgy of destruction. To the king and people of Elam went an alarm from the people of Babylon, who still warred for independence, asking for aid. Without delay Sennacherib set out on his eighth campaign: “My great battle chariot . . . I hurriedly mounted.” Defeating the Elamites in battle,

I cut their throats like lambs . . . My prancing steeds, harnessed for my riding, plunged into the streams of their blood. . . . The wheels of my war chariot . . . were bespattered with blood and filth. . . . Their testicles I cut off and tore out their privates . . . their hands I cut off . . .

Next Sennacherib turned towards Elam's allies, the Babylonians, and brought them to a panicky flight: "They held back their urine, but let their dung go into their chariots" and in hot pursuit "150,000 of their warriors I cut down with the sword."

After this feast of carnage Sennacherib again, as before the campaign against Elam, seized "the mighty bow which Assur had given me . . . in my hands; the javelin I grasped" and faced to road to Jerusalem.

References

1. The first to realize that there were two Palestinian campaigns by Sennacherib was Henry Rawlinson. While some scholars continued to maintain a one-campaign hypothesis, recent studies by Albright (*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* no. 141, Feb. 1956, pp. 23-26) and John Bright, (*A History of Israel* [Philadelphia, 1962], *Excursus I*, "The Problem of Sennacherib's Campaigns to Palestine," pp. 296-308) support the view that there were indeed two campaigns. Bright's conclusion is that "a two-campaign theory seems at present to satisfy the evidence best." He suggests a date ca. - 688 for the second (unrecorded) campaign of Sennacherib.
2. H. R. Hall, *The Ancient History of the Near East* (New York, 1913), pp. 490f.; D. N. Freedman, "The Chronology of Israel and the Ancient Near East," *Essays in honor of William Foxwell Albright* (New York, 1961); Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* (Chicago, 1951), p. 156.
3. Luckenbill, *Records of Assyria* II. 260.





The Siloam Aqueduct

In the years that Sennacherib was carrying on wars against Babylon and Elam, Hezekiah fortified his cities, repaired the citadel of Millo at Jerusalem, prepared arrows and shields, ordered that the fountains and brooks in the land be stopped at the first sign of invasion, and with the help of the prophet Isaiah, heartened the people. Once more he concluded an alliance with the Egyptians and the Ethiopians, and waited for Sennacherib to come again.

Hezekiah realized the importance of an adequate water supply in case of siege. Harboring in his heart the thought to resist Sennacherib should he try to continue to reduce Jerusalem and the surrounding towns to vassalage and exploit the people's resources and the royal treasury, once the appetite of the conquerors was awakened, Hezekiah was prepared to sacrifice the cities outside Jerusalem and was set upon to part with life, but not to open once more the gates of the capital before the ravenous pillager from the banks of the Tigris. He planned to secure water for the inhabitants of Jerusalem and executed the plan.

. . . Hezekiah also stopped the upper watercourse of Gihon and brought it straight down to the west side of the city of David. (II Chronicles 32: 30)

And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his might, and how he made a pool, and a conduit, and brought water into the city, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah? (II Kings 20: 20)

The book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah must have been a much more extensive work than the just quoted book of Chronicles.

In the Old City of Jerusalem, inside the walls, in the Christian sector, till today the large stone pool serving as a reservoir is shown; it carries the name Breikhat Hezekiah, or the Reservoir (pool) of Hezekiah. In 1880, south of the Temple area in Jerusalem, in the rock wall of the lower entrance to the tunnel of Hezekiah, an inscription was discovered. It actually occupied the lower part of a prepared stone surface and is therefore judged to be but the last half of the planned (or even executed) inscription. Six lines remain. For the upper part the mason could have planned the date of the execution and the purpose, possibly referring to its value in

war time.

The source of water lies lower than the reservoir and it needed to be raised to adequate height by mechanical means—an engineering feat solvable by means whether primitive or more sophisticated. But a real engineering achievement was in digging the conduit simultaneously from two ends, especially considering the substantial distance from the spring to the reservoir and the depth from the surface of the rock to the conduit beneath.

The inscription—in biblical Hebrew—slightly damaged, in its six lines tells:

[.. when] (the tunnel) was driven through. And this was the way in which it was cut through: >_ While [..] (were) still [..] axe(s), each man toward his fellow, and while there were still three cubits to be cut through, [there was heard] the voice of a man calling to his fellow, for there was *an overlap* in the rock on the right [and on the left]. And when the tunnel was driven through, the quarrymen hewed (the rock), each man toward his fellow, axe against axe; and the water flowed from the spring toward the reservoir for 1,200 cubits, and the height of the rock above the head(s) of the quarrymen was 100 cubits. ⁽¹⁾

The two teams of excavators of the channel for the conduit, one working in the rock formation beginning from the end designated for the reservoir, the other standing at a distance of 1,200 cubits at the underground spring, heard each other when they were separated by the last intervening three cubits of rock. Even in modern times, with all the developed surveillance methods, road tunnels running under mountain passes, when dug from two ends with the two teams not bypassing each other, are a cause of celebration—a deviation of even a fraction of a degree would result in a failure.

For supplying Jerusalem with water and for security reasons, Hezekiah, as already quoted, “stopped the upper watercourse of Gihon and brought it straight down to the west side of the city of David.”

When the feared moment arrived and “Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib was come, and that he was purposed to fight against Jerusalem,” the governors were summoned to the city.

He took counsel with his princes and his mighty men to stop the water of the fountains which were without the city: and they did help him.

So there were gathered much people together, who stopped all the fountains, and the brook that ran through the midst of the land, saying, Why should the kings of Assyria

come, and find much water? (II Chronicles 32: 3-4)

But Sennacherib—Isaiah speaking for him—said: “I have digged and drunk water; and with the sole of my feet I have dried up all the rivers of the besieged places.” [\(2\)](#)

References

1. “*The Siloam Inscription,*” transl. by W. F. Albright in James b. Pritchard ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton, 1950), p. 321.
2. Isaiah 37: 25.





The Reign of King Hezekiah

The thirty-eighth chapter of Isaiah, or the next-to-last of what is regarded as Isaiah I, starts with the words: “In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death.” There follows the story of Isaiah coming to Hezekiah with the words: “Set thine house in order—for thou shouldst die and not live.” Hezekiah, upon hearing the message, turned his face toward the wall, and prayed to the Lord. “The grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee, they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.” In a little while Isaiah returned, brought a lump of figs to place on the boil erupted on the body of the sick king, and said in the name of the Lord: “I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria: and I will defend this city.”

Hezekiah asked the seer: “What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the Lord?” Isaiah’s answer was:

And this shall be a sign unto thee from the Lord, that the Lord will do this thing that he hath spoken. Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun-dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down.

I have discussed the nature of the event in *Worlds in Collision* (“The Year -687”) and do it again in the present volume. Here, however, the concern is with a chronological problem, albeit minor, dealing with the reign of Hezekiah and the order of the events of that time.

It is stated that Hezekiah reigned twenty-nine years (II Chron. 29:1; II Kings 18:2); that Hoshea, the last king of Israel, started to reign in Samaria in the twelfth year of Ahaz, father of Hezekiah (II Kings 17: 1); that Ahaz reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem (II Chron. 28: 1); that in the third year of Hoshea, Hezekiah began to reign (II Kings 18: 1); that Hoshea reigned in Samaria nine years (II Kings 17: 1); but that already in the fourth year of Hezekiah “which was the seventh year of Hoshea” Shalmaneser came against Samaria and besieged it (II Kings 18: 9); that the siege of Samaria endured three years (II Kings 17: 5); that at the end of these three years, in the ninth year of Hoshea, which was the sixth of Hezekiah, Samaria fell (II Kings 18: 10); that in the ninth year of his reign Hoshea was captured, fettered, and put in prison (II Kings 17: 9), probably in Assyria.

The accepted date for the fall of Samaria is -722. The calculations, mostly based on cuneiform data, by which this was figured out, were not retraced in the course of this reconstruction. Sargon reigned seventeen years, beginning with the fall of Samaria in his first year. Consequently if Samaria fell in -722, Sennacherib mounted the throne in -705. This is also the accepted date for the beginning of his reign.

In the fourteenth year of Hezekiah Sennacherib came “against all the fenced cities of Judah and took them” (II Kings 18: 13). It was during Sennacherib’s third campaign, or his first against Judah. Sennacherib ceased to write his annals (Taylor Prism) after his eighth year.

The Scriptural data cited here are generally in good agreement one with others, and if there is any possible disagreement it amounts to no more than one or two years, and this could be adjusted by one of the devices usually applied by commentators for minor discords in texts.

But a problem amounting to a decade or even decades comes to light if Hezekiah was already on the throne in Jerusalem three full years before the fall of Samaria, or in -725. Reigning for twenty-nine years, he must have ended his reign and life in -696.

These figures, or small variants of them, are also accepted by a few scholars.⁽¹⁾ But if Sennacherib invaded Judah in -701, and this should be Hezekiah’s fourteenth year, then this king of Jerusalem must have started to reign in -715, or seven years after the accepted date for the fall of Samaria⁽²⁾, and there is a disagreement of ten to eleven years. Could it be that Hezekiah after the fall of Samaria was not yet a sole ruler but a co-ruler with Ahaz, his father, and those years should not count in the twenty-nine, assigned to him as king? Or should the date of the fall of Samaria be lowered? The problem connected with Hezekiah’s reign is not limited to this issue alone.

When Hezekiah fell sick he was promised a grace of fifteen years. The figure fifteen is not arbitrarily chosen. In *Worlds in Collision* it was brought out that the turbulent events of that time were caused by repeated close approaches of the planet Mars that repeat themselves till today at the same fifteen-year period, called “favorable opposition” (favorable for observation); only twenty-seven centuries ago this phenomenon was much more pronounced—the opposing celestial bodies were at such encounters closer to each other.⁽³⁾

As elsewhere in this volume the nature of the paroxysms and the subsequent calendric changes are discussed (and in *Worlds in Collision* records of these phenomena were collected from many ancient civilizations, in East and West), I will keep here to the subject only insofar as it concerns the chronological problems under scrutiny. The *midrashim* explain that on the memorable day of Hezekiah the sun

retarded to set by the same amount, namely ten degrees (*maaloith* in Hebrew is preferably “degrees” and more so when applied to the sundial) by which it speeded up to descend on the sundial built by Ahaz—and, further, that this phenomenon of acceleration of the sun reaching the horizon took place on the day Ahaz was brought to the grave. Since Sennacherib came toward all the fenced cities in Hezekiah’s domain in his (Hezekiah’s) fourteenth year, and Sennacherib, according to his own descriptions and reliefs, was tarrying in Palestine, besieging Lachish and reducing many places one by one to his yoke, it is well thinkable that Jerusalem under the “proud Judean, Hezekiah” besieged like “a bird in a cage” submitted to pay tribute when nearly fifteen years of Hezekiah on the throne had passed (Sennacherib records that before the campaign he consulted astrologers and was told to be sure of the protection of the gods; rabbinical sources also tell that he consulted astrologers before going toward Jerusalem, and he was cautioned to hurry, and not to tarry, but he tarried. The promise to the sick Hezekiah of a fifteen year period of grace intends to convey to the reader of the Scriptures that such grace came really into fulfillment. But that would mean that Hezekiah was permitted to live another fifteen years, and to stay altogether twenty-nine on the throne, or reach his fifty-fourth year—he mounted the throne at twenty-five.

Everything just told seems in good agreement but for several things. First, three separate texts in the Scriptures, and so also Herodotus in his history of Egypt, tell of an unusual debacle suffered by the Assyrian army under Sennacherib. He won the battle of Eltekeh, close to Jaffa on the Mediterranean coast, against Sethos and Ethiopian generals, and properly recorded it; he continued warfare and carried it east into Elam, southeast into Babylon, west into Anatolia, north into the Caucasus, and beyond.

The realization that Sennacherib came again to Palestine on his ninth campaign was initially made by Rawlinson in 18~~, and with years gained an almost universal acceptance. It means that the Scriptural records in its versions of II Kings, II Chronicles, and Isaiah, needs to be regarded as an amalgam of reports of two campaigns by the same king to the same country, but nearly fifteen years apart. I have dwelt on this in *Worlds in Collision* and again elsewhere in the present volume. The debacle that overtook the Assyrian host occurred at the second invasion of Palestine, it being also the second confrontation with the Egyptian allies of Hezekiah together with Tirhaka, king of Ethiopia.

Herodotus, too, told of only one campaign of Sennacherib, met by Sethos on the Palestinian frontier, when nature intervened. In *Worlds in Collision* I brought out the fact, neglected by the commentators of the Scriptures and of Herodotus alike, that the story of the sun having changed the rising and setting points four times since Egypt became a kingdom is included in Herodotus immediately following the story of the debacle Sennacherib’s army suffered. The phenomenon of the sun returning on the

sundial is described in all three biblical sources in the same context of Sennacherib's debacle. The Assyrian king for his part refrained from all military activity in the last seven or eight years of his life, and spent his time prostrated before the image of the god Nergal, the planet Mars, and was assassinated in that position by two of his sons.

It appears that the descriptive chapters in the book of Isaiah, and, accordingly, the passages in Kings and Chronicles, require an emendation in the sense of transposition of chapters or passages.

The sickness of Hezekiah from which he was healed by Isaiah belongs to the time of the first invasion by Sennacherib. Should this episode be retained for the second invasion, Hezekiah's life and reign would extend to fifteen years past -687, and even starting the reign at the lower date of -715, he would need to remain on the throne much longer than the twenty-nine years, given both by Kings and Chronicles. This means that Hezekiah died during the second invasion by Sennacherib, or shortly thereafter. The words "In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death" which start chapter 38 of Isaiah would make more sense if the chapter were placed earlier and generally if the Scriptures discerned between the two campaigns of Sennacherib to Palestine.

The visit of the ambassadors of Merodach-Baladan of Babylon, who sent presents to Hezekiah on the occasion of his having recovered from his illness, seems to have occurred not after Sennacherib's debacle, but much earlier. As the political situation suggests, the visit of the ambassadors and Hezekiah's showing them his treasures in gold and otherwise seems misplaced: Hezekiah paid tribute in gold (30 talents) and silver (300 or 800 talents) to Sennacherib on his first campaign to Palestine, and he stripped his palace and the temple—besides, he must have remained in awe of Sennacherib to entertain ambassadors of the king of Babylon, Sennacherib's enemy. It would look better if the arrival of Merodach Baladan's envoys took place after the solar disturbance that coincided with Hezekiah's mounting the throne—the funeral day of Ahaz, his father. At that time Hezekiah had not yet impoverished his treasury by the tribute to the Assyrian king.

The scholarly opinion held that the second campaign of Sennacherib against Palestine-Egypt could not have occurred before -689, the year Tirhaka mounted the throne.⁽⁴⁾

References

1. See for instance, Nadav Na'aman in *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* (April, 1974), p. 32, note 28: "I have adopted here the dates of 727 - 696 B.C. [or -726 to -695] for the reign of Hezekiah."

2. This is the solution proposed by Thiele, who regards the source used by the compiler of the Second Book of Kings to have erred in relating the fall of Samaria with the beginning of Hezekiah's reign.
3. At $14\frac{1}{2}$ year intervals, now more than 15 year.
4. If to harmonize the involved chronological problems the debacle of Sennacherib's army needs to be placed fifteen years earlier (not in -687 but in -701), and the first invasion in -715, and the beginning of Hezekiah's reign in -729, then I would need to change the date for the last global catastrophe from -687 to -701 or -702.





Sennacherib's Last Campaign

The last campaign of Sennacherib was directed not only against Jerusalem, but also against Egypt and Ethiopia (Sudan)—an enterprising warrior, Tirhaka, who invaded Egypt from the Sudan, reinstated Sethos, and put the occupant of the throne of Egypt, underling of Sennacherib, to flight.

When Sennacherib came to Palestine for the second time, Hezekiah refused to submit or to pay tribute. The Ethiopian king Tirhakah (Taharka) stood together with his Egyptian confederate, Sethos, at the border of Egypt, prepared to meet the threat. Sennacherib sent his messengers to Hezekiah from Lachish and once more from Libnah to demand submission; he also wrote him an ultimatum, and blasphemed the Hebrew God.

Then in a single night the Assyrian host, about 185,000 warriors, perished, destroyed by some natural cause. ⁽¹⁾

Herodotus (II. 141) relates this event and gives a version he heard from the Egyptians when he visited their land two and a half centuries after it happened. When Sennacherib invaded Pelusium, the priest-king Sethos went with a weak army to defend the frontier. In a single night hordes of field mice overran the Assyrian camp, devoured quivers, bowstrings and shield handles, and put the Assyrian army to flight. Another version was given by Berosus, the Chaldean priest of the third century before the present era.

This event and the writings relating to it have been investigated in *Worlds in Collision*, Part II, which deals with the natural history of the period. A sequence of natural phenomena that bewildered the world for almost a hundred years during the eighth century and the beginning of the seventh is investigated and described in that volume. With knowledge of the precise character and time of these physical phenomena, an exact synchronism can be established; for the purposes of the present book I borrow from *Worlds in Collision* the exact date: Sennacherib's army was annihilated on the night of March 23, -687. The calculations of modern historians who place the second invasion of Judah by Sennacherib in -687 are correct. However if to harmonize the involved chronological problems the debacle of Sennacherib's army needs to be placed fifteen years earlier (not in -687 but in -701) and the first invasion in -715 and the beginning of Hezekiah's reign in -729, then I would need to

change the date for the last global catastrophe from -687 to -701 or -702.

References

1. II Kings 19: 35; Isaiah 37: 36; cf. Josephus quoting Berosus in *Jewish Antiquities* X. i. 4-5.





Political Turmoil Around - 687

The natural events of March -687, a final recurrence of earlier such disasters that had taken place during the eighth century, were once more followed by renewed migrations of peoples, political revolutions and economic dislocations. Climatic change was again very significant and oscillations of climate marked the ninety years from -776 to -687.⁽¹⁾ In many places cultivated lands grew barren, strata were dislocated, water sources became in numerous sites sealed off, many river courses changed, glaciers melted, some overflowed streams caused inundations, and altogether contributed to “wolf-time, sword-time” in the words of the Edda, the Icelandic epic, or internecine wars.

In -687 the Cimmerians, a nomadic people from southern Russia—the basin of the Don and the Crimea—moved along the coastal route round the eastern shores of the Black Sea and descended on Anatolia in their westward sweep. The same year saw the horde reaching Gordion. Their incursion marked the end of the short-lived Phrygian kingdom, founded by Gordias, who supposedly had migrated from Thrace, and who was followed by his son Midas. The Cimmerians had earlier (-707/-706) clashed with the armies of Urartu and of Assyria, as is shown from the Assyrian state correspondence. The young Sennacherib, still a crown prince under his father Sargon, sent dispatches to Dur-Sharrukin, Assyria’s capital, about the movements of the Cimmerians. This time they were repulsed, but some twenty years later, in -687, they succeeded to penetrate into Anatolia. Soon after their passage the Cimmerians become lost to history, possibly having crossed the Bosphorus into Thrace. The remnants left behind in Asia were destroyed by Esarhaddon in alliance with the Scythians in -679.

About the time of the sack of Gordion, Sardis, capital of Lydia, close to the Aegean shore, experienced a palace revolution: in -687 or about that year Gyges overthrew the Heraclid Dynasty, probably so called for its ruling under the aegis of Mars (Heracles) and its worship of this planet.

The end of the Heroic Age, or the final stage of the Mycenaean Age, was due not to the onslaught of the Sea Peoples—nor were the Mycenaeans themselves the Sea Peoples: this myth, created by the historians and related to ca. -1200 is refuted in the volume *Peoples of the Sea*. Violent earthshocks and other perturbations of nature destroyed the Mycenaean citadels and left their defenders exposed to the assaults of migrant tribes, dislodged in the same upheavals, and calling themselves the Children

of Heracles, or Mars.

The seventh century opened with the migration of the Cimmerians followed by the Scythians who came also by way of the Caucasus and by the route of the Caspian sea coast. These nomadic peoples from the Asiatic steppes, displaced by upheavals of nature, injected themselves into the policies of the warring nations in the ancient East, and changed the course of history.

References

1. See *Earth in Upheaval*, chapter “Klimasturz.”





Esarhaddon's Reconquest of Egypt

Several years after Sennacherib returned from his ill-fated campaign against Judah and Egypt, he was slain by two of his sons while worshipping in the temple of Nergal (Mars).⁽¹⁾ Esarhaddon, his heir, pursued his brothers, but they escaped over the mountains to the north.⁽²⁾ Then he tried to re-establish the shattered authority of Assyria in Syria and on the Phoenician shore.

“I besieged, I captured, I plundered, I destroyed, I devastated, I burned with fire,” wrote Esarhaddon.⁽³⁾ I hung the heads of the kings upon the shoulders of their nobles and with singing and music I paraded.”⁽⁴⁾ He threatened Tyre whose king “had put his trust in his friend Tirhakah (Tarku), king of Ethiopia.” He “threw up earthworks against the city,” captured it, and made a vassal of its king Ba’lu.⁽⁵⁾ He also marched into the desert “where serpents and scorpions cover the plain like ants.”⁽⁶⁾ And having thus ensured the safety of his rear and flank along the roads to Egypt, he moved his army against that country.

In the sixth year the troops of Assyria went to Egypt; they fled before a storm.” This laconic item in the short “Esarhaddon Chronicle”⁽⁷⁾ was written more than one hundred years after his death; if it does not refer to the debacle of Sennacherib, one may conjecture that at certain ominous signs in the sky the persistent recollection of the disaster which only a few years earlier had overtaken Sennacherib’s army, threw the army of his son into a panic.

Thereafter, “in the tenth year, the troops of Assyria went to Egypt.”⁽⁸⁾ Esarhaddon marched along the military road running across Syria and along the coast of Palestine. He conquered Sidon and “tore up and cast into the sea its walls and its foundations.” This ancient Phoenician city was situated on a promontory jutting into the sea. Its king Abdimilkute tried to escape on a boat, but was “pulled out of the sea, like a fish.”⁽⁹⁾ The Assyrian king cut off the head of this Sidonian king and sent off to Assyria a rich booty, to wit: “gold, silver, precious stones, elephant hides, ivory, maple and boxwood, garments of brightly colored wool and linen.”⁽¹⁰⁾ He took away the king’s wife, his children, and his courtiers: His people from far and near, which were countless . . . I deported to Assyria.”⁽¹¹⁾

Following the fall of Sidon, he “called up the kings of the country of Hatti”—namely Ba’lu, king of Tyre, Manasseh (Me-na-si-i), king of Judah (Ia-u-di), also kings of Edom, Moab, Gaza, Ashkelon, Ekron, Byblos, Arvad, Beth-Ammon and Ashdod, all named by their names and spoken of also as “twelve kings of the seacoast.” ⁽¹²⁾ Esarhaddon summoned also ten kings from Cyprus (Iadnana)—their names are given, too—altogether “twenty-two kings of Hatti, the seashore, and the islands.” he made them “transport under terrible difficulties, to Nineveh as building material for my palace” logs and beams of cedar of Lebanon “which had grown for a long time into tall and strong timber” ; the vassal kings had also to deliver to Nineveh slabs of stones from the quarries of the entire region. ⁽¹³⁾

The king of Tyre “bowed down and implored me as his lord.” He “kissed my feet” and was ordered to pay heavy tribute, and to send “his daughters with dowries.” ⁽¹⁴⁾ “As for Hazail, king of Arabia, the splendor of my majesty overwhelmed him and with gold, silver, precious stones he came into my presence” and also “kissed my feet.” ⁽¹⁵⁾ Into Arabia Esarhaddon sent “bowmen mounted on horseback” and brought the villages of the desert under his yoke.

The road to Egypt and the flanks having been made secure, Esarhaddon wrote: “I trod upon Arzani [to] the Brook of Egypt.” ⁽¹⁶⁾ We had already occasion to explain the geographical term Arzani as the Hebrew Arzenu, “our land” by which the Scriptures (Joshua 9:11, Judges 16:24, Psalms 85:10, Micah 5:4) repeatedly refer to Israel and Judah; by the same term (*'rezenu*) this land was known to the rulers of the Eighteenth Dynasty, Thutmose and others. ⁽¹⁷⁾ “Brook of Egypt,” or in the Assyrian text Nahal Musur, is Nahal Mizraim of Hebrew texts; it is Wadi el-Arish, the historical frontier of Egypt and Palestine. The “town of the Brook of Egypt” in Esarhaddon’s inscription is el-Arish, the ancient Avaris. ⁽¹⁸⁾

It was in his tenth year, or -671, that Esarhaddon entered Egypt: he marched unopposed only as far as a place he calls Ishupri: there he met his adversary, Tirhaka, king of Ethiopia (Nubia) and Egypt. The progress from here on was slow; it took fifteen days to advance from Ishupri to Memphis, close to the apex of the Delta a few miles south from present-day Cairo.

“From the town of Ishupri as far as Memphis, his royal residence, a distance of fifteen days’ march, I fought daily, without interruption, very bloody battles against Tirhakah, king of Egypt and Ethiopia, the one accursed by all the great gods. Five times I hit him with the point of my arrows, inflicting wounds from which he should not recover, and then I laid siege to Memphis, his royal residence, and conquered it in half a day by means of mines, breaches, and assault ladders; I destroyed it, tore down

its walls, and burned it down.” (19)

Before we go on to recount the events that followed, we should examine more closely the question which was the “town of Ishupri” that Esarhaddon mentions as the starting point in his confrontation with Tirhaka. Its name was not known from the list of cities compiled from hieroglyphic texts of the imperial age of Egypt, and it intrigued the Orientalists. When their efforts to find its derivation were crowned with success, the solution raised a rather grave question.

Ishupri was understood as an Assyrian transcription of the throne name of pharaoh Sethos (Wesher-khepru-re) and meaning “Sethosville” or the like. The leading German Orientalist Albrecht Alt came to this conclusion, (20) and the solution was accepted by other Orientalists. The question raised by this solution was in the enormous time span between Sethos and Esarhaddon on the conventional time-table. Sethos (in the conventional history Seti II) is placed in the second part of the thirteenth century, and Esarhaddon ruled Assyria from -681 to -668, invading Egypt in -671; in between there lie some five hundred and seventy years. The survival of the name Sethosville (Ishupri) was estimated by Alt as “remarkable,” and even more remarkable (*um so bemerkenswerter*) is the fact that for these almost six hundred years this locality remained unmentioned in the hieroglyphic texts and appeared for the first time in the annals of Esarhaddon. In his inscriptions he refers to Ishupri not less than three times. How did an Assyrian king of the seventh century come to call a fortress or a locality east of the Delta, possibly at Kantara of today, (21) by the name of an obscure pharaoh of an age long past? Or why did this city name, familiar to Esarhaddon, escape mention in all texts, Egyptian or others, prior to -671? Should it not have been preserved on some document belonging to the king who built it or the following generations, if the city was called after him?

In the present reconstruction Sethos is recognized as the grandfather of Seti the Great; we found him in the history of Herodotus as the adversary of Sennacherib, father of Esarhaddon. He was considered a savior of Egypt and it was therefore only natural to find that a city or fortress guarding the Asiatic frontier was named after him: Esarhaddon on his campaign to recover Egypt, only a few years after the events of -687, called it by the name it then carried “House of Sethos,” or “Sethosville.” Sethos, the adversary of Esarhaddon’s father, could even have been still alive.

Upon seizing Memphis Esarhaddon captured Tirhaka’s queen, his children, the women of his palace, “as well as horses and cattle beyond counting,” and all this he sent as booty to Assyria.

“All Ethiopians I deported from Egypt, leaving not even one to do homage to me. Everywhere in Egypt I appointed new kings, governors, officers.” The word “new”

means that the kings and governors had already once been appointed by his father Sennacherib—but Haremhab was not among those who were now re-appointed. The Assyrian king obliged Egypt with sacrificial dues “for Ashur and other great gods my lords, for all times.” He also imposed tribute to the Assyrian crown to be paid “annually without ceasing.” Besides the prisoners of war, Esarhaddon sent to Nineveh also civilians, namely physicians, divination experts, goldsmiths, cabinetmakers, cartwrights, and shipwrights.

Esarhaddon continued along the Nile towards the Sudan (Ethiopia). “From Egypt I departed, to Melukha (Ethiopia) I marched straightway.” ⁽²²⁾ He described briefly the march of thirty days from Egypt to Melukha—on none of the existing steles, however, have the details of this part of his campaign remained preserved. Tirhaka retreated before the Assyrian king who already covered an immense distance from Nineveh to the cataracts on the Nile.

Summing up the campaign of his tenth year, Esarhaddon wrote: “I conquered Egypt, Upper Egypt, and Ethiopia (Musur, Patursi, and Kusi). Tirhakah, its king, five times I fought with him with my javelin, and I brought all of his land under my sway, I ruled it.” ⁽²³⁾ Esarhaddon called himself “king of Sumur and Akkad, king of the kings of Egypt, Upper Egypt, and Ethiopia, the son of Sennacherib, King of Assyria.”

Egypt reconquered, Esarhaddon returned home. He erected at Sendjirli, in eastern Anatolia, a memorial stele to glorify his lord Ashur by recounting his own mighty deeds when he marched against the enemy “upon the trustworthy oracles” of his lord Ashur.

Not many years passed and Tirhaka again emerged from Nubia and once more took possession of Egypt. Esarhaddon put his army on a hurried march.

References

1. II Kings 19:36-37; Luckenbill, *Records of Assyria* II. 502, 795 & 796. In the Biblical account the temple is identified as that of Nisroeh, apparently the same as Nergal, or Mars.
2. Esarhaddon’s text runs as follows: “. . . They heard the march of my expedition and deserted the troops who were helping them, and fled to an unknown land.” R. C. Thomson, *The Prisms of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal Found at Nineveh, 1927-8* (London, 1931), p. 12. Though younger than his two brothers-parricides, Esarhaddon had been chosen for the kingship by an oracle, and was made crown prince already in Sennacherib’s lifetime.
3. Referring to his Cilician campaign. See Luckenbill, *Records of Assyria* II.

- 516; Thompson, *The Prisms of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal*, p. 18.
4. Referring to the execution of Abdi-milkuti of Sidon and Sanduarri of Kundi. See Luckenbill, *Records of Assyria*, II. 528.
 5. Luckenbill, *Records of Assyria*, II. 556.
 6. *Ibid.*, II. 520.
 7. "The Esarhaddon Chronicle" in Sidney Smith, *Babylonian Historical Texts Relating to the Capture and Downfall of Babylon*, (London, 1924), p. 14.
 8. *Ibid.*,
 9. Luckenbill, *Records of Assyria*, II, 527.
 10. Luckenbill, *Records of Assyria* II. 527.
 11. *Ibid.*
 12. It is worth noting tha Esarhaddon refers to these rulers and to their lands as kings and lands of Hatti, which is nearly synonymous with the designation "the other side of the Euphrates." Hatti is obviously a broad geographical term. Luckenbill, *Records of Assyria* II. 690.
 13. *Ibid.*, II. 627.
 14. *Ibid.*, II. 547.
 15. Luckenbill, *Records of Assyria* II. 551.
 16. *Ibid.*, II. 710.
 17. See *Ages in Chaos*, Vol. I, section "God's Land and Rezenu."
 18. See *Ages in Chaos*, Vol. I, section "The Location of Avaris."
 19. The Sendjirli Stele, translated by Luckenbill, *Records of Assyria*, II. 580.
 20. "Ishupri," *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* (1925), Nr. 9/10.
 21. Alt, "Ishupri," p. 578.
 22. The campaigns of Esarhaddon in Egypt and Ethiopia are recorded on his steles, particularly on that found in Sendjirli; his stele at Nahr el-Kalb, close to Beirut, also describes the campaign against Egypt and the capture of Memphis. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria*, II, Secs. 557ff.
 23. *Ibid.*, Sec. 710.





From Nineveh to Ni

“I am powerful, I am all-powerful, I am a hero, I am gigantic, I am colossal . . . I am without an equal among all kings,” wrote Esarhaddon.⁽¹⁾ He died after a reign of not full twelve years. “In the twelfth year the king of Assyria went to Egypt, fell sick on the road, and died on the tenth day of the month Marcheswan.” “Esarhaddon exercised sovereign power in Assyria twelve years,” narrates a chronicle of his reign, written more than one hundred years later.⁽²⁾

In his lifetime Esarhaddon appointed his son Assurbanipal Crown Prince of Assyria, and another of his sons, Shamash-shum-ukin Crown prince of Babylonia. At a great assembly in Nineveh in -672 Esarhaddon made a proclamation to the governors of the provinces and vassal rulers:

When Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, dies, you will seat Assurbanipal, the Crown Prince, upon the royal throne~.~.~ you will help to seat Shamash-shum-ukin, his co-equal brother, the Crown Prince of Babylon, on the throne of Babylon.

At Esarhaddon’s death the plan of succession went into effect and Assurbanipal, in accordance with his father’s will, assumed the crown of Assyria.

Despite the impression of full manhood conveyed by muscular bodies, heavy-set, and full beards, the Assyrian kings, at least Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, and Assurbanipal, must have mounted successively the throne in their primes. The time of the Sargonids, from the beginning of Sargon II’s reign in the year of the fall of Samaria till the time of the fall of Nineveh in the days of Sin-shar-ishkun, successor of Assurbanipal, amounted to only 110 years (722 to -612). They were married early and became fathers in their teens. Being young did not keep them from exhibiting cruelty of character. When Assurbanipal replaced his father Esarhaddon, who reigned but twelve years, he sought out anybody who possibly could have been implicated in the temple assassination of his grandfather Sennacherib and, according to his own words,

I tore out the tongues of those whose slanderous mouths had uttered blasphemies against my lord Assur and had plotted against me, his god-fearing prince; I defeated them (completely). The others, I smashed

alive with the very same statues of protective deities with which they had smashed my own grandfather Sennacherib—now (finally) as a (belated) burial sacrifice for his soul. I fed their corpses, cut into small pieces, to dogs, pigs, *zibu* birds, vultures, the birds of the sky and (also) the fish of the ocean. After I had performed this and (thus) made quiet (again) the hearts of the great gods, my lords, I removed the corpses of those whom the pestilence had felled, whose leftovers (after) the dogs and pigs had fed on them were obstructing the streets, filling the places (of Babylon), (and) of those who had lost their lives through the terrible famine.⁽³⁾

Immediately upon asserting his kingship, Assurbanipal made preparations for a campaign to recover Egypt. The sudden death of Esarhaddon had given a respite to Tirhaka, and for a number of years the Ethiopians ruled the land unopposed. Assurbanipal in his account of the events that led to his Egyptian campaign narrates how “Tirhakah (*Tarqu*) without permission of the gods, marched forth to seize Egypt~.~.~. the evil treatment which my father had given him had not penetrated his heart~.~.~. He came and entered Memphis. That city he took for himself.”⁽⁴⁾

There is no word of any resistance on the part of the Assyrian-appointed kings and governors: When Tirhaka “sent his army to kill, to plunder, to despoil” Egypt, they appealed to Assyria for aid. “I was walking round in the midst of Nineveh,” recounts Assurbanipal, “when a swift courier came and reported to me.” And “my heart was bitter and much afflicted.” There and then Assurbanipal vowed “to make the greatest haste to aid the kings and governors, my vassals.”

For the reconquest of Egypt Assurbanipal relied heavily on foreign troops from his dependencies on the Phoenician coast and the vassal kings of Cyprus.⁽⁵⁾

In the year -667 a great army was assembled and set out on the road to Egypt. “With furious haste they marched.” Assurbanipal did not personally participate in the campaign, but entrusted this task to his generals. “Tirhaka, king of Kush, heard of the coming of my armies in Memphis.” The Ethiopian king sent his men to meet the enemy, but they were no match for the Assyrian army, made up of the assembled troops of a score of nations. Assurbanipal wrote simply: “On the wide battlefield I accomplished the overthrow of his [Tirhaka’s] army” ; “his fighting men [my troops] destroyed with the sword.” When the news of the defeat reached Tirhaka in his residence in Memphis, “terrible fear struck him.” He made up his mind to flee: “To save his life in a ship he sailed; his camp he abandoned and fled alone.” Tirhaka retreated up the Nile to Thebes (Ni), while the Assyrians took Memphis together with the ships of the Ethiopian fleet. “A messenger of good tidings hastily returned and told me.” For the Assyrians this was an important strategic gain, for it enabled them

to quickly press their attack southward; they were joined by the local kings who had been suppressed under the Ethiopian domination.

It took but ten days for the Assyrian-led army to reach Thebes—yet on their arrival the soldiers found that Tirhaka was no longer there. He had forsaken the city and, crossing the Nile, established for himself on the opposite bank a fortified place. The Assyrian generals were content for the time being to leave Tirhaka in peace.

References

1. Luckenbill, *Records of Assyria*, II, par. 577.
2. S. Smith, "The Esarhaddon Chronicle," *Babylonian Historical Texts*, p. 15.
3. Luckenbill, *Records of Assyria*, Vol. II, pars. 795, 796.
4. S. Smith, *History of Assurbanipal* (London, 18~~).
5. The twenty-two kings on who Assurbanipal called for support for his Egyptian campaign (Cyl. A, col. I, 1. 71) are apparently the same twelve kings from the seacoast and ten kings from Iadnana (Cyprus), named in the annals of Esarhaddon.





Dakhamun

In the course of the brief reign of Ramses I (Necho I), Tirhaka, who had fought against Sennacherib, Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal, died at his capital of Napata. In Assurbanipal's words, "The night of death overtook him." ⁽¹⁾ He left behind, widowed, his chief wife Duk-hat-amun, but no sons—a son and another wife had been captured years earlier by Esarhaddon in Memphis and deported to Assyria. The succession to the Ethiopian throne would pass through Duk-hat-amun if she could find a husband of royal blood; if not, Tirhaka's nephew, Tandamane, was next in the line of succession.

In the biography of Suppiluliumas, compiled by his son Mursilis, there is quoted a letter from a queen of Egypt named Dakhamun: "My husband died," she wrote, "and I have no son. People say that you have many sons. If you were to send me one of your sons, he might become my husband." ⁽²⁾ She added she did not wish to marry a commoner from among her subjects. Since the reign of Suppiluliumas has been placed about 600 years before the reign of Tirhaka, the identity of Dakhamun has remained a mystery. She is usually identified as one of Akhnaton's daughters. But of all the queens of ancient Egypt, only one had a name that corresponds to Dakhamun of the annals of Mursilis—namely, Duk-hat-amun, the widow of Tirhaka.

A request of this kind was unheard of, and Suppiluliumas sought the advice of his consellers, exclaiming: "Since of old such a thing has never happened before me!" They advised caution: He should first assure himself that no deception was being planned. It was decided that the royal chamberlain should be sent to Egypt to find out "whether perhaps they have a prince" and "do not really want one of my sons to take over the kingship."

Dakhamun answered in a letter: "Why do you say: 'They may try to deceive me' ? If I had a son, would I write to a foreign country in a manner which is humiliating to myself and to my country? You do not trust me and tell me even such a thing. He who was my husband died and I have no sons. Shall I perhaps take one of my servants and make him my husband? I have not written to any other country, I have written only to you. People say you have many sons. Give me one of your sons and he is my husband and king in the land of Egypt."

At this, Suppiluliumas "complied with the lady's wishes," and sent her a prince.

But a few weeks later the news arrived that the prince had been assassinated. Whether this was done by the Assyrians, who held control over Syria-Palestine, as well as northern Egypt, or whether a court intrigue by the opponents of Duk-hat-amun caused the prince's death is not known.

References

1. Luckenbill, *The Records of Assyria*, II.
2. H. G. Guterbock,





The Sack of Thebes

The assassination of Suppiluliuma's son frustrated Dakhamun's hopes of retaining royal power, and the reigns of government passed on to Tirhaka's nephew, Tandamane.⁽¹⁾ On Tandamane's accession the Ethiopians renewed their drive to dominate Egypt. Tandamane fortified Thebes and Heliopolis, and besieged the Assyrian garrison of Memphis.

We know from Herodotus that Necho I, called by him Necos, was killed by the Ethiopians after a very short reign.⁽²⁾ His son, a youth, escaped to Palestine and lived there in exile. But "when the Ethiopian departed by reason of what he saw in a dream, the Egyptians of the province of Sais brought him [the son of Necho] back from Syria."

The Ethiopian left Egypt not so much because of a dream, but because of Assurbanipal, who was marching against Egypt and Ethiopia in all haste. "Against Egypt and Ethiopia I waged bitter warfare and established my might." This was the second campaign of Assurbanipal against Egypt. "Tandamane heard of the approach of my expedition (only when) I had (already) set foot in Egyptian territory." The Assyrian troops "defeated him in a great open battle and scattered his (armed) might." Tandamane abandoned Memphis, "fled alone and entered Thebes, his royal residence." But Assurbanipal's army followed in close pursuit. "They marched after him, covering a distance of one month in ten days on difficult roads as far as Thebes." The Ethiopian did not risk another confrontation with Assurbanipal: "He saw my mighty battle array approaching, left Thebes, and fled to Kipkipi." Never again did the Ethiopians transgress the frontier of the Sudan.

Thebes now lay prostrate before Assurbanipal's troops and was "smashed (as if by) a floodstorm." Its chief citizens were led into captivity. Isaiah's prophecy about Egypt was fulfilled: "So shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptian prisoners, and the Ethiopian captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, even with their buttocks uncovered" (20:4). Assurbanipal boasted of having carried away "inhabitants, male and female." Besides, he wrote, "I carried off from Thebes heavy booty, beyond counting," and he listed silver, gold, precious stones, fine horses; even two obelisks covered with "shining copper" were pulled down and carted off to Assyria. "I made Egypt (*Musur*) and Nubia (*Kush*) feel my weapons bitterly and celebrated my triumph. With full hands and safely I returned to Nineveh." Many years later the

prophet Nahum recalled “populous No (Thebes) that was situate among the rivers~.~.~ Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength and it was infinite~.~.~. Yet was she carried away, she went into captivity: her young children were dashed into pieces at the top of all her streets: and they cast lots for her honorable men, and her great men were bound in chains.”

Seti-Psammetich, the young exile, returned to Egypt following the chariot of Assurbanipal.

References

1. Assurbanipal calls him “the son of his [Tirhaka’s] sister.” See Luckenbill, *Records of Assyria, II*.
2. Herodotus II. 152. Herodotus’ statement calls for a correction. Not Sabacos (Shabaku) but Tandamane, son of Sabacos, killed Necos. See E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alten Aegyptens* (Berlin, 1887), p. 325; also A. Spalinger, “Assurbanipal and Egypt: A Source Study,” in *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 94 (1974), p. 323.





Necho I

The new administration set up in Egypt at Assurbanipal's behest consisted again of the twenty governors and vice-kings appointed earlier by Esarhaddon. At the head of the list was Necho, who received Memphis and Sais as his share—two of the most important cities of the period.

But the governors were not content with their subordinate position under an Asiatic overlord. As told by Assurbanipal, “their hearts plotted evil.” They sent mounted messengers to Tirhaka, saying: “Let brotherhood be established among us, and let us help one another. We shall divide the land in two, and among us there shall not be another lord.” But soon the Assyrians caught wind of the plot: “An officer of mine heard of these matters and met their cunning with cunning. He captured their mounted messengers together with their messages, which they had dispatched to Tirhaka, king of Ethiopia.” ⁽¹⁾ The Assyrian reaction was characteristically swift and decisive: The governors were arrested, bound in chains, and sent to Nineveh to face the wrath of Assurbanipal.

There followed a wave a savage reprisals in the cities of Egypt against the civilian population. The soldiers “out to the sword the inhabitants, young and old~.~. they did not spare anybody among them. They hung their corpses from stakes, flayed their skins, and covered with them the wall of the towns.” ⁽²⁾ It happened as Isaiah had prophesied when he warned that the Egyptians would be given “into the hand of a cruel lord; and a fierce king shall rule over them.” (19:4).

When the twenty governors reached Nineveh, all save one were put to death: only Necho, vice-king of Memphis and Sais, was allowed to live. Assurbanipal, in need of a reliable ally to govern Egypt and keep it safe from the Ethiopians, chose Necho to be sent back to the country as its sole king. “And I, Assurbanipal, inclined towards friendliness, had mercy upon Necho, my own servant, whom Esarhaddon, my own father, had made king in Kar-bel-matate [Sais].” The king of Assyria secured Necho's allegiance by “an oath more severe than the former. I inspired his heart with confidence, clothed him in splendid (brightly-colored) garments, laid upon him a golden chain as the emblem of his royalty~.~. Chariots, horses, mules, I presented to him for his royal riding. My officials I sent with him at his request.” ⁽³⁾

This Necho lives in history as Ramses I of the Nineteenth, and Necho I of the Twenty-

sixth Dynasties. He was installed by Assurbanipal in ca. -655, a score of years after Haremhab's final expulsion. We shall continue, in this reconstruction of history, to refer to him as Ramses I, although an earlier king of that name, Ramses Siptah, held the throne briefly decades earlier, in the time of Sargon II, and might therefore have a better claim to that title.

It is sometimes surmised that it was Haremhab who appointed Ramses I to the throne; but the course of this reconstruction makes it evident that some twenty-two years passed from the time of Haremhab's expulsion by Tirhaka (ca. -688) and the accession of Ramses I (ca. -665). Historians have wondered that none of the extant inscriptions of Ramses I contains any reference to Haremhab, and that no traceable relation of Ramses I to the family of Haremhab has been found.⁽⁴⁾ Instead, Ramses I calls himself "Conductor of the Chariot of His Majesty," "Deputy of His Majesty in North and South," "Fanbearer of the King on His Right Hand."⁽⁵⁾ The similarity of these titles to those borne earlier by Haremhab has been noted⁽⁶⁾—as we saw, both Haremhab and Ramses I were appointees of Assyrian kings: Haremhab of Sennacherib and Ramses I of Assurbanipal.

Assurbanipal also elevated Necho's son to the position of co-rulership with his father, and let him reign in Athribis. The Assyrian called him Nabushezibanni, but the Greek authors knew him as Psammetichos. In his own inscriptions he names himself Seti Meri-en-Men-maat-Re, or Seti Ptah-Maat. It is known from Egyptian sources that Seti was co-regent with his father Ramses I.⁽⁷⁾

In both his existences, Ramses I--Necho I lived only one year and a few months after being crowned.⁽⁸⁾

References

1. A. C. Piepkorn, *Historical Prism Inscriptions of Assurbanipal* (Chicago, 1933), pp. 13-15.
2. Luckenbill, *Records of Assyria*, II. 876, in Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, p. 295.
3. Luckenbill, *Records of Assyria* II, 905, in Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, p. 297.
4. R. Hari, *Horemheb et la Reine Moutnodjemet* (Geneva, 1964), p. 412.
5. *Ibid.*, p.
6. Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, p. 248.
7. *Bulletin de l'Institut Francais d'Archeologie Orientale au Caire*.
8. [Ramses I reigned, according to Manetho, for one year and four months; This

is confirmed by a stele dated to his second year (Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, p. 248. The length of Necho's reign can be determined from the Assyrian documents: It began ca. -655 when he was installed by Assurbanipal, and ended in -664/663 with his assassination by Tandamane. The Egyptologists, looking for Necho's monuments apart from those of Ramses I, have failed to find any inscriptional evidence whatsoever for the reign of Necho I.]





The First Greeks in Egypt

When upon the death of Necho Assurbanipal reconquered Egypt he re-established the system of numerous vice-kings, who “came to meet me and kissed my feet.”

We are informed by Assurbanipal that this governmental organization was discontinued a few years later, when one of the vice-kings took all the power to himself, accomplishing this with the help of the soldiers who arrived in Egypt from Sardis on the Aegean shore of Asia Minor. Gyges was at that time king of Sardis in Lydia.

At first Gyges sent messengers to Assurbanipal: “Guggu (Gyges), king of Lydia, a district of the other side of the sea, a distant place, whose name the kings, my fathers, had not heard, he dispatched his messengers to bring greetings to me.”⁽¹⁾

But after a few years, Gyges ceased to ally himself with Assurbanipal. “His messengers, whom he kept sending to me to bring greetings, he discontinued.”

According to Assurbanipal, Gyges sent his forces to the aid of the king of Egypt,⁽²⁾ “who had thrown off the yoke of my sovereignty.”

Herodotus wrote that Psammetichos, one of the twelve vice-kings, deposed his eleven co-rulers, and he did it with the help of Ionian and Carian mercenaries. According to Herodotus, the Greek and Carian mercenaries arrived in Egypt in the days of Psammetichos, brought by a gale.

. . . Certain Ionians and Carians, voyaging for plunder, were forced to put in on the coast of Egypt, where they disembarked in their mail of bronze.

. . . Psammetichos made friends with the Ionians and Carians and promised them great rewards if they would join him.⁽³⁾

The Egyptian sovereign placed them in two camps on opposite shores of the Pelusian branch of the Nile and “paid them all that he had promised.”

Moreover he put Egyptian boys in their hands to be taught the Greek

tongue; these, learning Greek, were the ancestors of the Egyptian interpreters.

The Ionians and Carians dwelt a long time in these places, which are near the sea, on the arm of the Nile called the Pelusian, a little way below the town of Bubastis.

Herodotus states they “were the first men of alien speech to settle in that country” (II, 154).

A glance at a historical map of the western shore of Asia Minor reveals that the tiny maritime states of Ionia and Caria jutted well into the border of Lydia, whose capital was Sardis. Gyges was able to provide Egypt with Ionian mercenaries because he had recently occupied Colophon in Ionia.⁽⁴⁾ Thus it appears that Ionians and Carians arrived at the shores of Egypt in mail of bronze, not because of a gale, but because of an agreement with King Gyges of Sardis, as stated by Assurbanipal.

Diodorus of Sicily, too, wrote about the first meeting of the Egyptians with the Greeks on the soil of Egypt, when Ionians and Carians arrived and were hired as mercenaries.

He [Psammetichos] was the first Egyptian king to open to other nations the trading places throughout the rest of Egypt. . . . For his predecessors in power had consistently closed Egypt to strangers.⁽⁵⁾

Diodorus also said that Psammetichos was a great admirer of the Hellenes and gave his son Necho (the future Ramses II), a Greek education.

Greek arms, utensils and vases, and the very bones of the Greek mercenaries in their peculiar sarcophagi, have been found in and near the Delta, often together with objects of the Nineteenth Dynasty.⁽⁶⁾

Formations of mercenaries from Sardis, called Shardana or Sar-an, were in the service of Seti the Great.

The time of Seti is, in the conventional scheme, the end of the fourteenth century; of Psammetichos, the seventh century. Herodotus, who lived in the fifth century, wrote that in the days of Psammetichos, only two hundred years before, Greeks for the first time came to live in Egypt. He must have been well informed, for not merely the history of Egypt was involved but that of his own people likewise: his birthplace was Halicarnassus in Ionia-Caria. Also, in Beth-Shan in Palestine, where the excavators

were able to determine the successive layers of the tell (mound), tombs of mercenaries from the Aegean-Anatolian region have been unearthed. “Doubtless among all these troops [of Seti] were many Mediterranean (Aegean-Anatolian) mercenaries, including the redoubtable Sherdenen [Shardana]; these must have formed the major part of the garrison left at Beth-shan by Seti. “⁽⁷⁾ Thus wrote the archaeologist of that place.

Does this mean that Lydians and Ionians were present in Egypt when the Israelites were there in bondage? If, as many scholars believe, Ramses II was the Pharaoh of Oppression, the presence of soldiers from the Aegean-Anatolian region in the Delta in his days in the days of his father Seti would signify a meeting of Greek and Israelite peoples in pre-Exodus Egypt. The problem thus stated will not appeal to those same historians.

The explanation of the presence of Greek mercenaries in the army of Seti, seven hundred years before Psammetichos, is simple: Seti was the Psammetichos of Herodotus and other Greek writers, and he lived seven hundred years after the time assigned to him by modern historians.

References

1. Luckenbill, Records of Assyria, II, Sec. 784.
2. *Ibid.*, Sec. 785. Assurbanipal called the Egyptian king who received military support from Gyges, Tusharniiki. It is known that at that time Psammetichos became the sole king of Egypt. The Assyrian kings occasionally gave Egyptian cities and Egyptian kings Assyrian names. Assurbanipal called Sais Kar-bel-matate.
3. Herodotus, II, 152 ff.
4. Herodotus, 1, 14. See E.M. Smith, Naukratis (Vienna, 1926), p. 14, n. 16.
5. Diodorus (trans. C.H. Oldfather, 1933), 1, 66-67.
6. See Naville, The Mound of the Jew (London, 1893), Plate 13; cf. A. Rowe, The Topography and History of Beth-shan (Philadelphia, 1930), pp. 2, 26, 39.
7. Rowe, Topography and History of Beth-shan, p. 26.





Seti Becomes an Ally of Assurbanipal

Two campaigns against Egypt and Ethiopia and one against Tyre, and Assurbanipal found himself surrounded by enemies. The instigator was his brother Shamash-shum-ukin, to whom Esarhaddon had bequeathed Babylonia, leaving Assyria to Assurbanipal. Shamash-shum-ukin corresponded with Tirhakah the Ethiopian until the death of the latter, and with the kings of Elam, Aram (Damascus), and other countries that were alarmed by Assyria's aggressive policy.

After a campaign toward Elam, whose king "plotted" against him, Assurbanipal became aware that his own brother was his chief enemy. "In these days Shamash-shum-ukin, the faithless brother of mine, king of Babylon, stirred to revolt against me the people of Akkad, Chaldea, the Arameans . . . along with the kings of Gute, Arnurru and Melukha [Ethiopia] ." [\(1\)](#)

Assurbanipal was no longer able to interfere in the affairs of Egypt, and Seti succeeded in overcoming the eleven vice-kings of the nomes and regained the throne of his father. The revolt stirred up all around Assyria absorbed Assurbanipal's entire attention. In the fraternal war he captured Babylon, and his brother Shamash-shum-ukin killed himself. But a number of years later a new opponent, an untiring avenger, arose in the person of Nabopolassar.

Nabopolassar, together with the king of the Medes, waged a protracted war against Assurbanipal, who desperately needed an ally. Assurbanipal found him in Seti, whose father had been pardoned and crowned by him. In this way Seti rose from the status of a vassal to that of a partner of the Assyrian king in a long war.

Seti may have numbered the years of his reign from the day he became the sole king of Egypt, or from the day he achieved independence for Egypt and was recognized as Assurbanipal's ally. This explains the fact that already in his first year Seti, in recording his accomplishments, could refer to his campaigns in Palestine, Arabia, and Libya. [\(2\)](#)

The princes of Babylon, Nabopolassar and his brother, revolting against Assyria, sent emissaries to Aleppo, Hamath, and Damascus, and to the chieftains of the unsettled

tribes of the desert, inciting them to create disturbances in the Assyrian domain. At that time, in the reign of Assurbanipal, the provinces were ruled more by anarchy than by the will of the despot. Usurper replaced usurper, to be assassinated in his turn, and there was neither order nor authority in northern Palestine and Syria. "They have taken to cursing and quarrelling, each of them slaying his neighbor," ⁽³⁾ wrote Seti.

He moved into Galilee. The land of the Ten Tribes was desolate after the exile, and the new settlers were unable to protect their habitations against bands from the desert or even against wild beasts (II Kings 17:25f.).

In the days of Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal, Menashe (Manasseh), son of Hezekiah, reigned in Judea. For fifty-five years he occupied the throne of Jerusalem. The Scriptures do not mention any war of Menashe, only his being carried away into a short captivity in Babylon. In those turbulent times fifty-five years could hardly have passed without involving Judea more than once in greater or lesser conflicts. Menashe certainly must have been successful in his politics if he could keep Judea out of war that long.

Seti repeatedly led military expeditions toward the Euphrates; he also took measures to secure the safety of the cities of Galilee and defended them against bands from the desert. His activities in Galilee and his numerous marches across the plains of the Philistines, close to Judea, might easily have infringed on Menashe's territorial rights. But apparently Menashe leaned toward Assyria and Egypt; he called his son Amon, a sacred name among the Egyptians. He tried to avoid a major conflict.

The latter part of Menashe's long reign coincided with the earlier part of the long reign of Seti, and it would be strange indeed if, in Seti's account of his march to Galilee and Syria, he did not mention Menashe. With this thought in mind, it is worthwhile to reread the annals of Seti. There we find Seti's boast that he had "set terror in Retenu [Palestine]," had taken from there "every costly stone of God's land," and had "beat down the men of Menate (M-n-ty)." The men of Menate, twice named in this passage of Seti's annals, ⁽⁴⁾ are the men of Menashe. We have here the name we had every reason to expect to find, inasmuch as Seti and Menashe were contemporaries.

The question, 'Why do the Scriptures not mention the presence of a pharaoh in Palestine in the days of Menashe?' is not the point. Although the Scriptures contain no reference to this fact, the historians admit that a pharaoh went with his army on a prolonged expedition to Palestine in the time of Menashe, but they call him Psammetichos, as Herodotus narrated.

The reason for the omission on the part of the Scriptures is at hand. Since the time of

Hezekiah, the father of Menashe, the land of the Ten Tribes had been settled by non-Israelites, and the Books of Kings and of Chronicles no longer occupy themselves with the history of the place, in respect to this or any other event.

"Not far into Asia, Seti apparently meets a fortified town, to which the relief gives the name Pekanan [Pekanon]. . . . Exactly what this name means here is not certain." ⁽⁵⁾
A scene on a bas-relief illustrates the occupation of the fortress Pekanon in Palestine. The accompanying inscription reads:

Town of Pekanan (P' -k' -n' -n'), Year I, King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Menmare (Seti). The destruction which the mighty sword of Pharaoh made among the vanquished of the Shasu (invading Bedouins) from the fortress of Tharu (in Egypt) to Pekanan, when his majesty marched against them like a fierce-eyed lion, making them carcasses in their valleys, overturned in their blood. . . ." ⁽⁶⁾

A few other places in the plain of Jezreel are also mentioned as having been occupied with the intention of repelling the invasion of the foreigners, but prominence is given to Pekanon.

No reference to the city of Pekanon is found in previous lists of Palestinian cities compiled by the pharaohs, nor had the Israelites found a city by that name when they occupied Canaan. Some scholars presume that it may mean Pi-Canaan or "The Canaan," but others disagree. ⁽⁷⁾ The name has the sign of a country, but it is pictured on the bas-relief as a city. This suggests that the city was the capital of a country.

The city of Pekanon must have existed for but a short moment. It is conceded that Egyptian documents before Seti (whose reign, according to the conventional chronology, started in -1310) do not know such a city. Hebrew annals containing a list of the Palestinian cities of the thirteenth century (the supposed time of the conquest by Joshua) do not know it either. In the Egyptian sources Pekanon is met once more on the stele of Merneptah (the grandson of Seti), who mentions the Israelites in Palestine. Thus the name Pekanon became a hopeless issue in historical geography.

Pekanon was a city fortified by Pekah, the next to the last king of Israel. ⁽⁸⁾ Cities built, rebuilt, or fortified by kings were often named in their honor. Pekah, son of Remaliah, reigned in Samaria

for twenty years (II Kings 15:27). He was a ruler eager for enterprises, from the day he slew Pekahiah, his master, until the day he slaughtered 120,000 people of Judah

and “carried away captive of their brethren two hundred thousand” (II Chronicles 28:8), only to release them shortly thereafter.

According to the reconstruction of history offered here, Pekah preceded Seti the Great by two generations. This order of things explains why, in the list of Thutmose III containing the names of hundreds of Palestinian and Syrian localities, the name of Pekanon does not appear, and why, in the biblical register of cities of Canaan, there is no mention of this name in the days of Joshua’s conquest or later. Judging by the significance attached to Pekanon in the records of Seti, it was an important city in or near the Esdraelon Valley, renamed by King Pekah, who rebuilt or fortified it.

References

1. Luckenbill, Records of Assyria, II, Sec. 789.
2. Breasted, Records, Vol. III, Sec. 81.
3. *Ibid.*, Sec. 101.
4. Breasted, Records, III, Sec. 118. On M-n-ty, meaning the tribe Menashe, see Ages in Chaos, 1,173.
5. Breasted, Records, Vol. III, Sec. 87. See W.M. Muller, Asien und Europa nach Altgyptischen Denkmälern, p. 205.
6. Breasted, Records, Vol. III, Sec. 88.
7. G. Steindorff, Journal of Egyptian Archaeology, XXV (1939), 32, supports this equation; Gauthier, Dictionnaire des noms géographiques contenus dans les textes hiéroglyphiques (Cairo, 1925-31), V, 187-88, questions it.
8. The form “Pekanon” is derived from Pekah, like Shomron from Shemer (I Kings 16:24). Pekanon could also be Shomron (Samaria) renamed by Pekah.





The End of Nineveh

Seti, who, as an ally of Assyria, took it upon himself to attend to rebellious Syria, moved with his army along the Esdraelon Valley and came to the city of Beth-Shan not far from the Jordan. A stele of Seti was found in Beth-Shan, the inscription of which reads:

The wretched enemy who was in the city of Hamath, he had collected to himself many people, was taking away the town of Beth-Shan...⁽¹⁾

The stele further states that the Egyptian army of Ra, called also “Many Braves,” captured the city of Beth Shan at the command of the pharaoh. The erection of the stele in that place indicates that Seti succeeded in conquering this city-fortress.

Beth-Shan guards the road from Gilead in Trans-Jordan and also from Galilee along the valley of the Jordan; consequently it is an important strategic point at a crossroads, protecting the eastern gate of the Esdraelon Valley against encroachment from the north and east.

In the days of Assurbanipal’s father, Esarhaddon, the Scythians came down from the steppes of Russia and, crossing the Caucasus, arrived at the lake of Urmia. Their king went to the help of Assur-banipal when the Medes and the Babylonians marched against Assyria.⁽²⁾

Herodotus⁽³⁾ narrates that the Scythians descended from the slopes of the Caucasus, battled the Medes who were pressing on Nineveh, and, moving southward, reached Palestine. There they were met by Psammetichos, the pharaoh, who for a long time tarried in Palestine.

Chapters 4-6 of the young Jeremiah are generally regarded as expressing the fear of the people of Palestine at the approach of the Scythian hordes. The prophet spoke of the evil that would come down from the north and a great destruction (4:6), of whole cities that would “flee for the noise of the horsemen and bowmen” (4:29), of “a mighty nation . . . whose language thou knowest not” (5:15). “Behold, a people cometh from the north country, and a great nation shall be raised from the sides of the earth” (6:22).

The Egyptian king, however, succeeded by persuasion in halting their advance toward Egypt. He, like the Scythians, was an ally of Assurbanipal. According to Herodotus, Psammetichos was besieging a city in Palestine when the Scythians reached that country.

I have identified Seti the Great with Psammetichos of Herodotus. Now we are bound to ask: What city was Psammetichos besieging when the Scythians descended from the north?

The translation of the Seventy (Septuagint) calls Beth-Shan by the name of Scythopolis;⁽⁴⁾ so do Josephus⁽⁵⁾ and Eusebius.⁽⁶⁾ Georgius Syncellus,⁽⁷⁾ the Byzantine chronologist, explained that the use of the name Scythopolis for Beth-Shan was due to the presence of Scythians, who had remained there from among the invading hordes in the days of Psammetichos.

As has been said above, Beth-Shan was besieged and occupied by Seti, and his steles and the graves of the Greek mercenaries who served with him were discovered there. Ramses II, his successor, also occupied Beth-Shan for some time, but no vestiges have been found there of Egyptian kings of later times. The conventional chronology compelled the archaeologists of Beth-Shan to conclude that after Seti and Ramses II the city was practically uninhabited until the time of the Neo-Babylonian Empire in the seventh century, although from the Scriptures we know that Beth-Shan was an important city in the days of Judges and Kings.

Seti-meri-en-Ptah Men-maat-Re, who left his steles in Beth-Shan, was Psammetichos of Herodotus. It was the seventh century.

There is a mural that shows Seti capturing a city called Kadesh.⁽⁸⁾ Modern scholars recognized that this Kadesh or Temple City was not the Kadesh mentioned in the annals of Thutmose.⁽⁹⁾ Whereas the Kadesh of Thutmose was in southern Palestine, the Kadesh of Seti was in Coele-Syria. The position of the northern city suggested that it was Dunip, the site of an Amon temple built in the days of Thutmose III. Dunip, in its turn, was identified as Baalbek.⁽¹⁰⁾

Following the Orontes, which has its source not far from Baalbek, Seti occupied the site of Tell Nebi-Mend near the village of Riblah and built a fortress. A fragment of a stele of his was unearthed there.⁽¹¹⁾ Then he proceeded farther to the north and fought in the valley of the Euphrates. In his war record on the wall of the Karnak temple he wrote that he fought in Mesopotamia (Naharin), but with the destruction of the upper row of his bas-reliefs the illustrations of this part of the campaign were lost.⁽¹²⁾

The war in the valley of the Euphrates is described by Seti, king of Egypt, by Assurbanipal, king of Assyria, by Nabopolassar, king of Babylonia,⁽¹³⁾ and by Greek authors.⁽¹⁴⁾ But there is still another description of this war. We have documentary sources in the so-called Hittite annals. The Annals of Mursilis describe the very same conflict as the Chronicle of Nabopolassar, Nabopolassar and Mursilis being the same person. However, I leave the narration of this last phase of Seti's long campaign for the volume *Ramses II and His Time*.

Nabopolassar, the Chaldean, was allied with Cyaxares, the king of the Medes and the prince of Damascus; Assurbanipal and after him Sin-shar-ishkun of Assyria were aided by Pharaoh Seti and for some time by the king of the Scythians. Egyptian troops are mentioned for the first time in Nabopolassar's year 10 (-616). For many years the fortunes of war changed camps. Then Nabopolassar and Cyaxares, the Mede, brought the Scythians over to their side. Their armies advanced from three sides against Nineveh. In August of the year -612 The dam on the Tigris was breached, and Nineveh was stormed. In a single night the city that was the splendor of its epoch went up in flames, and the centuries-old empire that ceaselessly carried sword and fire to the four quarters of the ancient world—as far as Elam and Lydia, Sarmatia and Ethiopia—ceased to exist forever.

“The shield of [the] mighty men is made red, the valiant men are in scarlet; the chariots are fire of steel. . . . The chariots rush madly in the streets, they jostle one against another in the broad places; the appearance of them is like torches, they run to and fro like the lightnings. . . . Hark! the whip, and hark! the rattling of wheels; and prancing horses, and bounding chariots; the horsemen charging, and the flashing sword, and the glittering spear; and a multitude of slain, and a heap of carcasses . . . and they stumble upon their corpses. . . . Nineveh is laid waste; who will bemoan her?”

Thus did Nahum, a contemporary seer, describe the end of Nineveh and Assyria.⁽¹⁵⁾

The Assyrian king Sin-shar-ishkun perished in the flames of his own palace. His brother Ashuruballit succeeded in escaping and with Egyptian assistance resisted Nabopolassar for a few more years.

Nabopolassar founded the Neo-Babylonian Empire and defended and strengthened it in endless wars. When he was struck by illness and after a time died, the empire was threatened with disintegration. But his young sons successfully defended it against all enemies. The most formidable among the latter was the new king of Egypt, the successor to Seti.

References

1. The stele was found by the expedition of the University of Pennsylvania in 1923. See Rowe, *Topography and History of Beth-shan*, p. 28.
2. Bartatua, the king of the Scythians, proposed an alliance to Assyria and asked a daughter of Esarhaddon for wife. Madyas, the son of Bartatua (Madyas, son of Protothyas, according to Herodotus), came to the help of Assurbanipal when Cyaxares of the Medes marched against Assyria.
3. I, 103 ff.
4. Judges 1:27; see also II Maccabees 12:29 ff.
5. *Jewish Antiquities*, V, 83 (“Beth Sana, now called Scythopolis”), and XII, 348 (“Beth-Sane, by the Greeks called Scythopolis”).
6. Eusebius, *Chronicle*, 237, 55. See also Pliny, *Natural History*, V, 74: “Scythopolis-where a colony of Scythians are settled.”
7. *Chronographia*, 1,405.
8. At Karnak, on the outside of the north wall of the Great Hypostyle Hall, top right hand register. Cf. Wreszinski, *Atlas*, II, pls. 34ff.
9. Breasted, *Records*, Vol. III, Sec. 140, note. Cf. *Ages in Chaos*, Vol. I, “Kadesh in Judah.”
10. Gauthier, *Dictionnaire des noms géographiques*.
11. M. Pézard, *Syria*, III (1922), 108ff.
12. Breasted, *Records*, Vol. III, Sec. 114 ff.
13. D. J. Wiseman, *Chronicles of the Chaldean Kings* (London, 1956).
14. See especially Diodorus Siculus, Bk. II.
15. Nahum chs. 2 and 3 (transl. of the Holy Scriptures by the Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, 1917)

